

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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EN ESPAÑOL  
PÁGINAS 21-24

## Historic Strike at Fresno State

BY MIKE RHODES AND PAULINA CRUZ

Faculty members at Fresno State and throughout the California State University (CSU) system went on strike to call attention to stalled negotiations. The California Faculty Association (CFA) has been bargaining with management since May 2023. In a press release, the CFA says that it has been bargaining for a CSU that centers student learning only to be met with disrespect and derision by management.

At the Fresno rally held on Jan. 22, John Beynon, president of the local CFA chapter, said that "this is an historic strike and we are striking for our students, striking for ourselves, but we really feel deeply about the mission of the CSU as being an accessible and affordable place where people of California can go to get an education. It is a people's university."

Beynon says that the administrators and executives have treated the university like a "cash cow" for a long time and that needs to stop.

Alternatively, "when the teachers are thriving the students are thriving. We have to have a situation where the working conditions are tenable for the faculty so the learning conditions can be optimal for the students," Beynon said.

Mattie, a freshman at Fresno State, said that "most of my classes are canceled. I have



Striking Fresno State faculty gathered in the rain to picket on Jan. 22. Photo by Peter Maiden

one professor who said she isn't part of the same union and can't strike because if she were she could get fired. I understand what that feels like because we're still expected to go to class regardless." Mattie did not want us to use her last name for fear of retaliation.

Another Fresno State student received an e-mail sent to students from Kent Willis, Ph.D., vice president for student affairs and enrollment management, encouraging students to cross picket lines. Willis wrote that "there may be picket lines. I

acknowledge it can feel uncomfortable to cross a picket line. You are welcome to choose an entrance that does not have one."

The same e-mail encourages students to still attend classes that have not been canceled and report professors who are striking and canceling class. This is supposed to "best assure continuity and fulfillment of instruction."

"In recent news reports, CSU management has only addressed our conflict over salary; they have completely ignored the issues of

workload, health and safety concerns, and parental leave," said Chris Cox, CFA vice president of racial and social justice (North region) and San José State lecturer.

"Management wouldn't even consider our proposals for appropriate class sizes, proper lactation spaces for nursing parents, gender-inclusive bathroom spaces and a clear delineation of our rights when interacting with campus authorities."

Continues on page 2

## Another Victim of Police Brutality

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

On Nov. 4, Max Sosa Jr., 33, was shot dead by Fresno police. Police responded to an apartment building in northwest Fresno due to a call for help regarding a situation in which Sosa was threatening to commit suicide. The person who made the call was identified as Sosa's wife, from whom he had separated months before.

The Sosa family's attorney, Kevin Little, said that Sosa had no police record and was going through a situation of mental stress and that the victim's behavior was not a danger to the officers.

The family asked the police to hand over the videos from the body cameras of the officers, but the police provided only part of the videos, arguing that the case is under internal investigation.

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A relative of Max Sosa calling for justice for a new victim of police brutality. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

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# Historic Strike at Fresno State

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More than 400 faculty, students and community members participated in the Fresno rally.

CFA members' efforts paid off with a tentative agreement with CSU management. The strike was called off, and faculty returned to work on Jan. 23.

"This historic agreement was won because of members' solidarity, collective action, bravery and love for each other and our students," reads a CFA statement.

CFA represents more than 29,000 tenure-line instructional faculty, lecturers, librarians, counselors and coaches on the 23 campuses of the CSU system, from Cal Poly Humboldt in the north to San Diego State in the south.

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

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



Fresno State faculty on a picket line as part of a statewide strike by the California Faculty Association. Photo by Peter Maiden

# Another Victim of Police Brutality

Continued from page 1

At a press conference on Jan. 12, attorney Little showed part of the police video in which it can be seen that Sosa was staggering from the effect of having received a Taser shot and that he was heading toward the officers with his arms down, not in an aggressive position. However, the police fatally shot Sosa and argued that Sosa was approaching them with scissors in his hand.

Little and Sosa's relatives who were present at the press conference say that Sosa was killed unnecessarily and question the police version. For example, first the Fresno Police Department (FPD) talked about the presence of three officers but later it was learned that there were four instead.

"As seen in the video, Sosa was falling forward, powerless from the impact of the Taser, with his head down...how dangerous can someone like that be?" asks Little.

Can't four police officers control a person injured by a Taser shot? Sosa's relatives asked. Also, why didn't the police call a specialist to deal with Sosa, who was the father of two children, ages two and four?

"The police gave us an edited video to justify what they did," says Selese Sosa, one of the deceased's sisters. "They had 89 minutes [before fatally shooting Sosa] to call a specialist in dealing with people with emotional problems. The call [to the FPD] was made by my brother's ex-wife, and she said to the dispatcher that he wanted to commit suicide, so they knew about the situation...Why did they kill him?"

Selese, like other members of her family, stated that Sosa needed help and was going through an emotional crisis, and yet the police acted irrationally.

Selese remembers her brother as a good father and good friend. "He loved his children very much, he dedicated time to them. And he also took my son to football, and he liked to cook."

Sosa studied mechanics in Sacramento and for a time worked in his father's mechanic's shop "to gain experience."



Attorney Kevin Little and relatives and friends of Max Sosa at a press conference on Jan. 12. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

Before dedicating himself to mechanics, Sosa thought about being a chef. "He loved to cook," said his sister.

"In October, he told us that he had already paid off his student loan, he was proud... 'I no longer have debt,' he said," says Selese emotionally. "He felt pain, he felt alone... But he is no longer with us."

The Sosa family filed a lawsuit against the City of Fresno for aggressive police conduct. Cases of police brutality continue to make headlines. When victims' families sue local police for abuse of force, the money comes from the City's General Fund, not the police department. This means that, ironically, citizens are the ones who pay for these abuses.

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

PROVIDE FEEDBACK. E-MAIL  
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## Patricia Brown Running for Fresno County Democratic Central Committee District 3

I am a Democrat who grew up with a mother raised by a single mother, parents who lived in a box car, and four sisters who had to face systemic misogyny. I was the first to attend college and UCSC, where I studied Politics and became a Progressive dedicated to fighting social injustice. I clerked for a federal judge. For 30+ years I have advocated for women and children as a family law attorney. The Democratic Party is a large, diverse tent, protecting rights and freedoms, a party always striving to make all of our lives better.

**Why am I running?** As an incumbent going into my 6th year on the FCDCC, we have so much more to do in this election year where we Democrats must win the down-ballot races, not just Congress and the Presidency. I bring long-term relationships with candidates and other FCDCC leaders, and my excellent writing skills for its resolutions, press releases, and articles in "The Fresno Bee" & "Community Alliance," where I have published many times. I am well-spoken on issues like gun safety, domestic violence, abortion, LGBTQ, voting rights, speaking at our Democratic clubs, political marches, schools, town halls, TV and radio stations.

**My 5 key goals & responsibilities of FCDCC:** 1. Welcoming. Train members & new candidates to organize effectively to win. Strengthen the membership of Democratic Clubs. Every member and alternate is required to be on at least 1 committee. Make more women more FCDCC leaders. 2. Refine and be aggressive in messaging the differences between our Democratic Party, the Republican and third parties. It is not hyperbole to say our democracy is threatened in 2024. 3. Fundraising. Our headquarters is a necessary hub for all Democrats in the County. We are critical in supporting candidates to win. 4. Winning elections: Keeping our standards for viable candidates, partnering with groups like Field Team 6 to register Democrats and Independents, Planned Parenthood, Moms for Gun Safety, Black Women Organized for Political Action, and CA Latina Dems. 5. Implement our existing FCDCC strategic plan. 6. Time and Committee commitments: I am on the fundraising candidate endorsement and by-laws committees. I have brought speakers to the FCDCC like Field Team 6, and as the speaker wrangler as VP of the Kennedy Club. I will continue to work weekly to make sure the FCDCC is strong. I am a past President of the Fresno County Democratic Women's Club, co-founder of the Democratic Women in Action club, co-managed the Hillary Clinton office within a union shop, attended CADEM conventions in SF, LA, Long Beach and Sacramento, and registered conventions in SF, LA, Long Beach and Sacramento, and registered voters at events like the Big Fresno Fair and Clovis Big Hats Days. I organized Town Hall on the Mueller, attended by 65 and opened it to the public. As a pro bono attorney, I helped secure an \$8.7 million state grant for a 49-acre park in my neighborhood benefitting students, seniors and families.

**Vote for me, Patricia Brown,** on March 5th if you live in Fresno County - FCDCC Area 3. Email: [bbpencraft@gmail.com](mailto:bbpencraft@gmail.com)



FROM THE EDITOR

# Biden and His Political Suicide



The 2024 elections will be crucial for the political and social stability of the country. If Trump wins, we will head toward a de facto dictatorship and a degradation of the country's fragile democracy. In itself, it is an aberration that someone who faces so many serious accusations in the courts can run for the White House. That speaks badly of our democracy.

Biden won the presidency by a wide margin in 2020. He got off to a good start in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and later handled inflation well. Employment improved, and the country's economic situation remains stable.

These are not small things. However, in recent months the political credit of these achievements has declined significantly due to Biden's behavior regarding the Gaza-Israel conflict.

Following the Hamas attack on Israel, on Oct. 7, the response of the Israeli government has been considered extreme and global indignation is expressed daily in massive demonstrations in favor of a ceasefire in Gaza and against the extermination of Palestine.

But Biden did not hesitate to hug the controversial Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu—a far-right politician, who like Trump faces corruption charges—and promise more military and financial aid to Israel, something totally unnecessary given Israel's significant military superiority in the region and the annual financial aid from the United States to Israel already in place.

For many, Israel's response against Gaza—the region from where Hamas attacked Israel—is excessive, with more than 25,000 Palestinian deaths, including thousands of children. The marches in favor of ending the war—which, by the way, Israel has extended to Syria and Lebanon—are the result of the global rejection of Israel's behavior. And many of the young people participating in the marches also repudiate Biden's support for Israel.

In other words, Biden and the Democrats are losing thousands of voters every day. They might not vote for Trump, but they could opt not to vote in November 2024. And that is a threat to Biden's reelection aspirations. Furthermore, these same young people do not feel represented by the obsolete, boring and uncreative structure of our government. And the Democrats are doing little or nothing to address this situation.

Therefore, demagogues' promise of "something different" is well received by thousands of young people.

Ignoring this situation is not a solution.

Democrats have problems and do not want to see them or act to fix them.

Since 1996, the *Community Alliance* has been an independent progressive voice for the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Community Alliance advocates for

- Racial, social, environmental and economic justice
- Equal rights for all, including immigrants, the unhoused and the LGBTQ+ community
- Access to a free quality public education for all
- Access to healthcare for all
- A living wage for all working people

Our goal is to expose racial, social, environmental, economic and political injustices. We will help to build a powerful progressive movement that will make all our communities safer, healthier, more equitable and more livable.

**EDITOR**

Eduardo Stanley  
editor@fresnoalliance.com

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Mike Rhodes  
559-978-4502

**NONPROFIT BOARD**

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PHOTOGRAPHY**

Peter Maiden  
maidenfoto1@gmail.com

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**COPYEDITOR**

Michael D. Evans

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Up to 200 words.

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## Letters to the Editor

### Stop Killing People With Our Tax Money

I recently sent a note to Rep. Jim Costa about the bombardment in the Middle East—not a "war" when one side is bombing the shit out of the other side, literally into the Stone Age—more a humanitarian crisis in the making.

In summary, I'm sickened by the Israeli Army's actions and by my government's support of them, so I was very disheartened by his tepid response to my rather anodyne comments about not wanting my government, through him, to be encouraging this disaster. He didn't once mention the Palestinians in a long form response.

I don't suppose we can find anyone soon to oppose him in the next election, but he needs to hear from others about this outrage. I later also sent a version of this to U.S. Senators [Alex] Padilla and [Laphonza] Butler.

Not that it makes any difference, but I have Jewish blood through both sides of my family, so anyone wishing to call me antisemitic can go to...you know where. I cannot be silent while we support Israel unequivocally and allow innocent civilians to be slaughtered using my/our tax dollars, while pretending to be critical of the indiscriminate use of cowardly shelling.

Never mind the long history of mistreatment of the Palestinians all over Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. If I were an Arab there, I'd likely be fighting the right-wing government of Israel also, maybe not physically, but through some other means.

I'm sure that if we told [Israeli Prime Minister Bibi] Netanyahu that we would not be selling them another fighter jet, etc., if they continued in this manner, tomorrow we would see a rush to negotiate or at least a ceasefire. Really not wanting to sound patronizing, but they are truly



Members of Peace Fresno unfurled a banner near the rally for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Fresno City Hall. It challenged Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno), who was speaking, to call for a ceasefire in Gaza. Photo by Peter Maiden

the "little brother" to our "elder brother." In addition, I will shortly be withdrawing my support for AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee)—OK, kidding.

My initial e-mail to Costa:

"I DO NOT want my government treading lightly on Israel's decimation of the people of Gaza, or any Palestinians. Israel is our little brother and would not have the temerity to pursue its destruction of the Palestinians without our implicit support. STOP IT. Enough! Basta!

"That's my message to Congress now, through you, my representative."

Gene Richards  
Fresno

### Staying Silent Is Unacceptable

The Democratic Party is and will continue to be the Party of the People. I am a proud Democrat and will continue to defend my "Democratic values" and convictions. On the other hand, I wouldn't say I like that my party is abandoning the core values of keeping agricultural working families together, helping our families to come out of the shadows and pushing for real immigration reform to allow our agricultural families to work legally, pay taxes and contribute to this Great Nation. Why is the Democratic Party not fighting for these core issues of utmost importance?

I was glad to see that [Rep.] John Duarte [(R-Modesto)] had the courage to talk about these crucial immigration issues. Kudos to him for the courage and taking the heat from his own party. Duarte's campaign flier mailed to voters [in January] was talking about issues that in the past were part of the core Democratic platform.

Politicians need to stop playing it safe; we are playing our politics so safe that our opponents score big political points using our Democratic

platform core issues of interest. I would like to see our elected officials from all parties keep the discussion going until real immigration reform action is reached. Staying silent is unacceptable.

I am advocating for statewide immigration reform for all agricultural families to help them come out of the shadows in California and throughout the nation. Our agricultural workers and families deserve better! Our Democratic elected officials at the local, state and federal levels can do better.

One more thing: Please don't let Democratic leaders and elected officials sell us "Slavery H2A Programs" as real immigration reform.

We want a comprehensive pathway for families to continue feeding America, pay taxes and work legally. *Ya estuvo suave* ("Enough is enough!").

Eliseo Gamiño  
President, Central Valley Leadership Round Table

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# MLK March in Fresno

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

On Jan. 15, hundreds marched in downtown Fresno in celebration of what would have been Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 95th birthday. It was the 40th march in the city's history, put on by Fresno's Unity Committee. The march started at St. John's Cathedral and ended at Fresno City Hall.



A marcher holds a sign at the rally celebrating the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Fresno City Hall. Photo by Peter Maiden



Preparing for the Jan. 15 march in Fresno in honor of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., alumni of a Black sorority bow their heads for a prayer. Photo by Peter Maiden

Support the *Community Alliance* newspaper by becoming a subscriber. See page 3.

## Reclaiming the Revolutionary MLK

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

Was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Chaplain to the Empire or Prophet of the Resistance? His own actions and words make clear his revolutionary prophetic vision, and resist all attempts to make him safe, to make him a powerless icon to be dusted off once a year in a meaningless hypocritical ceremony.

The real Martin Luther King was an uncompromising revolutionary, and this year Fresno folks joined together to keep it real. "Reclaiming the Revolutionary MLK: What Would MLK Say About the Gaza Genocide" was an event that brought a diverse community together in West Fresno on his Jan. 15 birthday to learn, to celebrate and to demand a ceasefire.

A standing-room-only crowd came to Free AME Church and Community Center to hear a panel discussion and share experiences and even cake. Pastor Floyd D. Harris Jr., who had the foresight to conceive the idea of a celebration that would not be co-opted or whitewashed, greeted the group and introduced the panel, after "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

The panel moderator, Hajj Reza Nekumanesh, is national director of clergy organizing for Faith in Action, and the panelists were Layla Darwish, a Palestinian-American who is co-founder of the Palestinian Freedom Project; Aline Reed, president of the Fresno Freedom School; Rafael Avitia, history teacher and co-chair of La Mesa Nacional de Brown Berets; and Dan Yaseen, Peace Fresno activist and

co-founder and host of the long-running KCFR radio show, *Speaking Truth to Empire*.

Panelists contributed from their lived experience and scholarship to offer insight into King's life and messages related to the events of today. Some common themes were as follows:

### The Concept of the Triple Evils

Racism/colonialism, war/militarism and poverty/predatory capitalism are forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle.

"We must see now that the evils of racism, economic exploitation and militarism are all tied together," said King. "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."

### Unity, Solidarity and Mutual Support

King stated, "I know that justice is indivisible, and injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. I'm concerned about justice for everybody the world over."

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Minority and indigenous communities have been on the receiving end of oppression, and we have to be able to identify and confront the oppressor. As Malcolm X el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz truthfully said, "If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."

Israel is a settler-colonial racist state. The history of conflict did not start in October 2023. There have been 100 years of Zionist colonization.

Palestinians are indigenous people on their own land. There is connectivity between indigenous struggles, the Black Liberation struggle, other anti-colonial struggles and Palestine.

Darwish clearly stated our role as people of the United States, as \$4 billion of our tax monies go as military aid to Israel, a military garrison state, constantly at war.

Nekumanesh pointed out that both King and Malcolm were killed after embracing an internationalist vision and acting on it to hold the United States accountable for its actions.

### Sticking to Principles: Truth Tellers versus "Truth Sellers"

King spoke the truth, regardless of whether others, even his allies, thought that it would be expedient to avoid speaking about issues other than racial discrimination in the narrowest sense. His "Beyond Vietnam" speech and anti-imperialist message, as Reed clearly pointed out, was unpopular, but it is only one of many examples showing that MLK would stand with the people of Gaza. He would say: No to Militarism; Ceasefire Now.

His message has been distorted, and it is white fragility that is at the core of whitewashing MLK.

Reed also noted that Fresno police have trained in Israel. "What do you need that military training for? Who are you going to shoot?" she asked.

### Education

Avitia and other panelists emphasized education and economic analysis. Where there are wars, some few people are making a lot of money. Where does the money come from? Where does it go? We need to educate ourselves and others, educate our children.

Questions from the audience included the illuminating "What one book would you recommend?" Some recommended books are as follows:

- *The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.* by Peniel E. Joseph, a book that disproves the widespread myth that Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X espoused diametrically opposed philosophies.
- *The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors* is a collection of essays by Dr. Francis Cress Welsing, a physician specializing in general and child psychiatry, focusing on the global system of white supremacy and strategies for coping with racism in modern society.
- *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* by Glen Sean Coulthard fundamentally questions prevailing ideas of settler colonization and Indigenous resistance.
- *The Atlas of Palestine (1917-1966)* includes maps and photos, along with analysis of the Mandate, the Partition Plan, Palestine borders, land ownership, population composition, the 1948 war, al Nakba, the Armistice Lines, war crimes, destruction of the landscape, the disposition and confiscation of Palestinian property, water and agriculture and the retransformation of Palestine's landscape.

Community leader Gloria Hernandez asked, "Why are they killing the journalists?" At least 83 Palestinian journalists and media workers were among the approximately 30,000 killed since Oct. 7. This is more than the number of journalists killed during the entire war in Vietnam. This is only in the last 100 days and does not include others like the



The panel talking about the revolutionary politics of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 15. From left to right: Rafael Avitia, Layla Darwish, Hajj Reza Nekumanesh, Aline Reed and Dan Yaseen. Photo by Peter Maiden

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# Reclaiming the Revolutionary MLK

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late Shireen Abu Akleh, a prominent Palestinian-American correspondent who was shot in the head and killed by a bullet fired by an Israeli sniper last year.

## Moving from Understanding to Action

Each panelist recommended an action:

- Yaseen: Sign the petition to Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno) calling on Costa to ask for a ceasefire now. Keep



Aline Reed was a panelist at a discussion of the revolutionary politics of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Photo by Peter Maiden



Haji Reza Nekumanesh moderated the panel. Photo by Peter Maiden

asking Costa to represent his constituents—all of them, not just some—and to let Biden know that we need a ceasefire now.

- Reed: Ask the City of Fresno for a ceasefire resolution.
- Darwish: Vote locally and bring good people in. Raise our voices and participate in protests and vigils.
- Avitia: Form a study group to read and discuss books that are real history. Leverage the power of organization and the use of social media.

Each year on the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., people who hated him and everything that he worked for, spoke and wrote for, went to jail for and ultimately died for, take his name in vain and cherry-pick his words to try to find something they can take out of context and distort to prop up their own sympathies with racism, war and economic injustice. Maybe some of this is ignorance, but—let's be blunt—it's willful ignorance.

"Whites, it must frankly be said, are not putting in a similar mass effort to reeducate themselves out of their racial ignorance," King wrote in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*. "It is an aspect of their sense of superiority that the white people of America believe they have so little to learn."

In Fresno, people came together to learn and to act on our knowledge, to share community and to celebrate the real revolutionary Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as well as to share the beautiful cake provided by Reed.

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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/)).

# Silent Suffering

BY THE MEADOWBROOK TENANT ASSOCIATION

As rents continue to increase across the San Joaquin Valley, renters are pulling together to form tenant unions to protect themselves from negligent and exploitative landlords. This is exactly what is happening at one tucked away apartment complex in central Fresno. In the six months since its tenant association was formed and began gathering resident concerns, owners and managers have refused to recognize the association and hold so much as an initial meeting.

## From Blissful to Bleak

A normal day in the life of the residents of Meadowbrook Apartments (near Shaw and Millbrook avenues) includes ignored maintenance requests, double rent charges, mail theft leading to identify theft, vehicle break-ins, vandalism, rodents, uncollected trash piling up, animal waste, dilapidated buildings and fencing, and property "managers" who do little other than collect rent.

Advertised as a secure, gated community, one or more of the complex's gates are often broken at any one time, leading to general decline in not only the appearance but also the feeling among residents about the complex.

It was not always this way. Many residents remember when Meadowbrook was considered to be one of the nicer apartment complexes in the area, full of long-term tenants who enjoyed the location, amenities and an atmosphere of shared community. The perceived vibrancy of this complex did not seem attributable to any particular difficult or secret method.

With the transition to Apartment Rentals LLC, tenants hoped that their way of living would continue. However, in the four years since the property changed hands and was turned over to this company, the beauty of the apartment complex has slowly faded away. Where there was once beautiful grass, there are now dead spots and clovers. Requests for maintenance seem to disappear into a black hole and often go unaddressed for months or years.

Many of the tenants are longtime residents who remember what it was like before the property was sold four years ago. In just a few years, the apartment complex went from blissful to bleak.

"The difference is night and day," complained one disabled resident, who cited issues with maintaining accommodations such as handrails and other small items that landlords are required to provide.

Not only have the past few years seen the quality of life and services rapidly decline, but Apartment Rentals LLC

has also been consistently gouging tenants with onerous fees and a host of unprofessional business practices, while consistently raising the rent to the maximum allowed by law.

At the core of resident complaints, aside from the specific issues mentioned, is the general disregard Meadowbrook residents feel from on-site management and the corporate office that oversees it.

"Imagine your rent is constantly being raised, and yet things are falling apart. The trash has not been picked up in weeks! There are sanitation and safety issues all around and all they care about is squeezing more money from us," says tenant organizer and local college professor Joshua Shurley, adding that "the worst aspect of all of this is not even the lack of services and response, it is the blatant disrespect."

In a recent survey of residents by tenant organizers in conjunction with Fresno Tenants Together, this sentiment was a constant refrain echoed by dozens of the tenants they spoke to. The new managers have doubled late fees and increased the use of "pay or quit" notices as justifications for levying these exorbitant fees for specious reasons.

## Pattern of Mismanagement

Maintenance issues continue to be an ongoing source of stress for tenants experiencing increasing rent demands and a marked decline in services. One such renter had experienced an electrical fire and needed siding replaced. More than two years later, the fire damage remains.

Security cameras once existed but now are inoperable, leaving no recourse to the massive increase in vehicle break-ins and car thefts that have occurred. On-site managers have placated tenants by claiming they have reported mail theft issues to the post office. Yet, when tenant organizers contacted U.S. postal investigators to follow up, they learned that no such contact had ever been made with their office.

Far from a one-off incident, this brushing off of resident concerns is an established pattern that Meadowbrook residents are all too familiar with. Pushing back against management has often seen what many perceive as retaliatory practices.

## Fed Up Tenants Organize

The Meadowbrook Apartments complex is by no means the worst example of negligent landlords in the Central Valley.

"We are increasingly seeing more upscale properties experience rapid decline as landlords feel they can get away with things they previously could not," said Shar Thompson, Central Valley regional coordinator of Tenants Together ([tenantstogether.org](https://tenantstogether.org)), a statewide nonprofit dedicated to housing justice issues, explaining that intransigence in



Tenant organizer Courtney Farm voices residents' frustration with the lack of security near her complex's mailboxes, which have become a frequent target for theft. Photo by Joshua Shurley

dealing with tenant unions is a common ploy that landlords engage in and needs to stop.

At some point, enough is enough. Tenant unions are experiencing a wave of success throughout not only in the Central Valley but also across California and the nation.

Apartment Rentals LLC manages about 20 other such properties in the area, which are listed as being owned by David H. Hussain. It is unclear to what degree these issues are understood by Hussain and how much of these disturbing business practices are the result of Apartment Rentals LLC.

As is typical with negligent landlords, the management company—in this case, Apartment Rentals LLC—refuses to recognize the newly formed tenant association and refuses to engage in open dialogue that might lead to the landlord being held accountable.

"As individuals, they can lie to us, ignore us and never lift a finger. But as a group, they know they can't keep getting away with this. Of course, they refuse to meet!" stated one resident who wished to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation.

# Dire Circumstances for the Unhoused

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Last winter in an e-mail to this reporter, Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer said that “some people may not believe it, but I really do care about homeless people.” In January 2023, Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias publicly lamented the fact that he sees lifeless bodies in the Tower District on his way to work because the “warming centers aren’t open.”

To their credit, Dyer, Arias and the City Council agreed to keep three warming centers open for extended periods during the wet winter of 2023. For the most part, there were few problems and the people who used the centers were grateful. Council Members Arias and Annalisa Perea visited the centers and agreed that they were at full capacity and were much appreciated as a safe, dry and warm place to sleep.

This winter, it’s a different story. Currently, the City of Fresno will only open warming centers for the unhoused when temperatures drop to 34 degrees, leaving unhoused people vulnerable to illness or even death. Last winter, several unhoused people did die from exposure and hypothermia.

While hypothermia is most common at extremely cold temperatures, it can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if you become chilled from rain, sweat or being in cold water. If you have a chronic condition such as diabetes, Parkinson’s, memory loss or thyroid problems, it can set in.

Many medicines make it hard to regulate body temperature, and if you have COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), you might have difficulty breathing in the cold. Many other health conditions put people at risk for hypothermia at temperatures higher than 34 degrees.

If you are unhoused, 37, 38 or 39 degrees is not much different than 34 degrees and you will have a miserable night without sleep at those temperatures. Unhoused folks often challenge the mayor and City Council members to sleep out on the cold winter streets of Fresno.

Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative effect on individuals that can result in death. Homelessness is much more than the absence of physical housing; it is a tension-filled, trauma-filled and treacherous condition that often results in injuries and fatalities.

Warming centers provide not only shelter from the cold but also a safe space to sleep. Sleeping centers should be available all year to give the vulnerable, especially women, a place safe from robbery, assault and rape.

The City should keep the current three warming centers open all winter. In addition, the City should restore a fourth warming center in north Fresno. Poverello House, the



The Fresno HART team is getting paid to chat in front of Poverello House every morning. Photo by Bob McCloskey

recipient of City funds to run the centers, should provide transportation to and from the centers.

The City should raise the temperature that triggers opening the centers to at least 40 degrees. And the centers should be open during wet weather. The centers should remain open on a consistent basis because when they are opened sporadically, people are not aware that they are open. In addition, unhoused residents are reluctant to pick up and move their possessions if a warming center is only open one night.

At the Jan. 11 City Council meeting, Arias claimed the warming shelters are open, knowing it was not true. The night before, Jan. 10, the temperature was 37 degrees and it was raining. All the warming centers were closed as per City policy.

Arias went on to say that unhoused people don’t want to use the warming centers and are “starting fires in the neighborhoods.” He seems to forget that he was at the warming centers last year and acknowledged then that they were at capacity.

Does Arias expect homeless people to passively die from the cold? People, obviously, build fires to stay warm. Arias could lobby to open the shelters all winter now to restore his credibility. There would also be a lot fewer fires if the centers were open.

The City has been the recipient of more than \$300 million in state and federal funding in the past few years. No permanent housing has been established. All the funding has gone to temporary shelters and services.

Much of the funding has gone to salaries and benefits for service provider executives and staff of organizations such as the Poverello House. Some of the funding has gone to the Fresno Police Department’s Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART), which harasses people, forces people to move and throws away people’s possessions, including their survival gear.

City policy allows for the confiscation and discarding of personal property, including tents, sleeping bags and other basic survival gear of unhoused individuals. The policy and the practices of HART violate the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It is cruel and unusual punishment.

Current policy provides for the opening of a warming center when temperatures drop to a chilling 34 degrees. A minimal amount of the City’s budget could be allocated

to saving lives by keeping the warming centers open all winter. The fact remains that people are dying on the streets of Fresno from hypothermia and chronic conditions exacerbated by cold nighttime temperatures.

**Supreme Court to Rule on Cruel and Unusual Punishment**  
On Jan. 12, the Supreme Court announced that it would hear the case of *Johnson v. Grants Pass, Oregon*. The case was filed by three unhoused individuals in Grants Pass based on the Sept. 18, 2018, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *Martin v. Boise, Idaho*. This decision held that punishing unhoused people for public camping violates the Eighth Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The appeals court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, however, the City of Grants Pass appealed the decision and it will now be heard by the Supreme Court.

It could be the most important Supreme Court case about the rights of unhoused people in years. The case will decide whether cities and counties are allowed to punish people for things like public camping and loitering. Currently, Fresno policies and practices punish the unhoused on a daily basis, as regularly documented by homeless advocates.

“The National Homelessness Law Center fully expects the Supreme Court to protect the rights of people who are forced to live outside and to follow the consistent precedents set by lower federal courts,” says Jesse Rabinowitz, campaign and communications director of the National Homelessness Law Center.

“Cities remain free to use any of the many evidence-based approaches that end homelessness, like housing. All this case says is that, unless everybody has access to shelter that meets their needs, they cannot be arrested, ticketed or otherwise punished for sleeping. The Court’s ruling will have a tremendous impact on the 250,000 people who sleep outside on a given night.”

As cases make their way through the courts, Fresno continues to ignore court decisions and precedents. The mayor and City Council continue to punish and violate the rights of the unhoused residents of Fresno.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

## Take Action!

The people of Fresno who have a heart and some sympathy for others need to step up and contact the mayor and City Council regarding the City’s treatment of the unhoused.

- Tell them to open all four warming centers all winter.
- Tell them to either abolish the Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) or order HART to stop violating the human rights and civil rights of those unfortunate enough to be on the hard, cold streets of Fresno.

**Mayor Jerry Dyer**  
Call 559-621-8000  
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**Fresno City Council Members**  
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# In Memory of Eddie Montoya

BY SALLIE MAGGARD

Eddie Montoya was found deceased on the streets of the Tower District in August 2023, and there was a memorial for him on Sept. 10. His name has been submitted to the National Homeless Memorial.

Eddie was a lovely person and a wonderful lead guitar player for many years here in Fresno. His passing hurts deeply. We were musicians, and we played together for almost 40 years. We were close friends.

We went through a lot together, and we made it to several of our friends' funerals and performed for them, which is not easy to do especially when you are in touch with this person, but the family is counting on you to perform for their loved ones who have departed.

Somehow Eddie and I made it through every one of those funerals. There was nothing in this world that Eddie wouldn't do for his fellow man or lady in the city. He played at many events for free; no matter what, he was there with me alongside willing to sing my heart out for whatever event we were doing for free.

Sometimes he played on the streets of the Tower District during the day. He had his own business as a gardener for many many years.

I'm going to be standing for my Eddie, and I wish things could have been different before he passed but sometimes this world is so cruel to where you can't breathe or think or know which way to go.

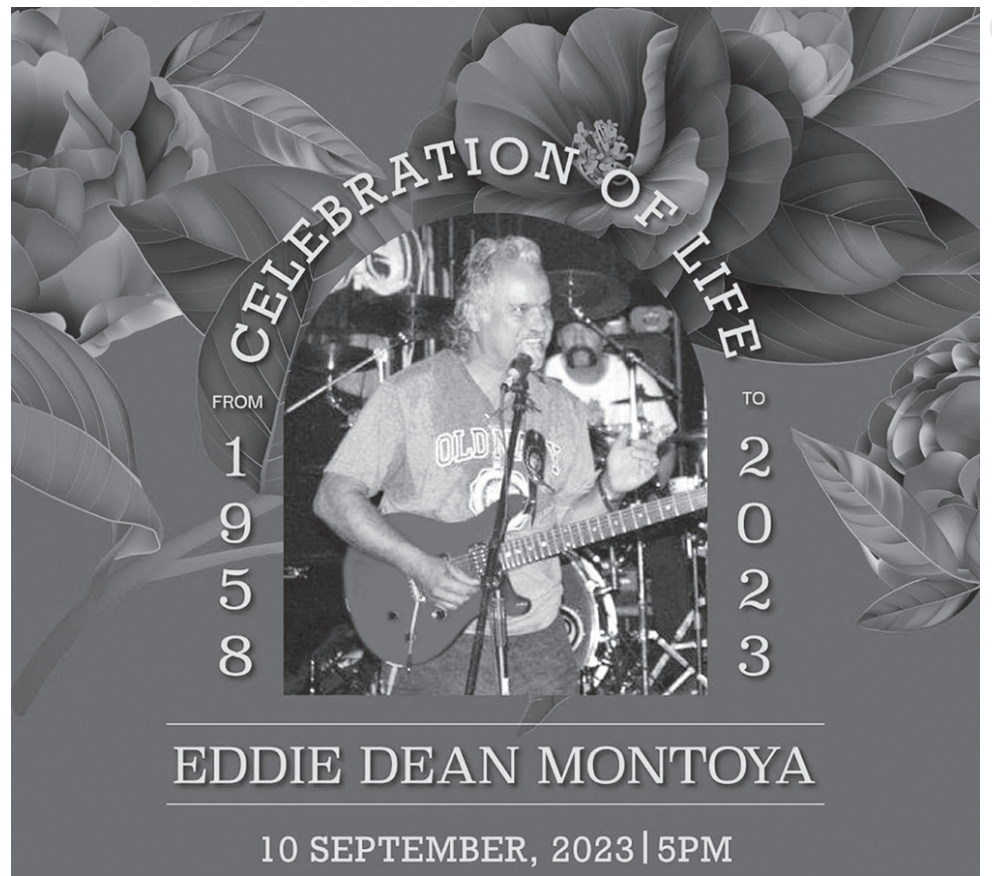
I hear all the time about all this money. About \$6 million given for the homeless here in Fresno, yet do I see it being used for the homeless. I don't see it. I hear about how they build apartments for the homeless, that they're affordable. What homeless person can afford \$1,200 a month for that apartment? If they could afford that, they wouldn't be homeless.

I live now in my car because I can't afford \$1,200 a month. I'm on SSI (Supplemental Security Income), and I'm disabled. I worked my arm to death plus I have lupus. I have severe bone arthritis. There's not a date that goes by when I'm not in pain.

I don't sing much anymore, I retired from the stage because no one wants to pay us what we're worth. I see their cash registers go ching ching ching, and yet they want to only pay us for the entertainment \$50, \$25, per man or lady, and that is not going to cover the cost of even showing up there.

There was a time in Fresno when we could make a decent living singing and performing, and showing our talents. Eddie and I had many disagreements on accepting an engagement to perform for someone or some club because of the money.

Musicians have to pay bills too, like anybody else, and it's not easy for us to devote ourselves financially, traveling and loading up the heavy equipment. I was blessed because the only thing I had to load was my microphone.



But to all the musicians who are struggling as homeless out there, the only thing I can say to you is love yourself, honor yourself and take care of yourself, and if I had the money I would take care of all of you. Maybe someday I will return to the stage, but for now I just pray to our Lord Jesus Christ and my savior that he will help me find a way in my own homelessness.

I mourn the loss of Eddie, the guitar player of my life. I will never forget the memories I hold dear in my heart, in my mind. The laughs, the cries that we had together sharing the secrets of our souls and spirit just waiting for the next performance.

I know when my day will come, Eddie will be there at heaven's gate to greet me for he was a generous man and one of the strongest men I knew, as well as a most talented man and a great lead guitarist.

I love you Mr. Montoya, rest in peace.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Sassafraz Bluez is the stage name of Sallie Maggard, a singer who is homeless in Fresno.*

# CVLRT Endorses Republican for Congress

BY STAN SANTOS

On Dec. 9, 2023, the Central Valley Leadership Round Table (CVLRT) met in Firebaugh to interview candidates for California's 13th Congressional District, which includes parts of Merced, Madera, Stanislaus, Fresno and San Joaquin counties. The district has historically benefitted from a huge Democratic registration advantage.

Since redistricting in 2022, CD13 remains a majority-minority population with a 14-percentage-point Democratic registration advantage. Whites are 34% of the district, whereas Hispanics, Asians and Blacks account for almost 60%.

The CVLRT began as the Westside Leadership Round Table with members mostly from Firebaugh, Mendota, Huron, San Joaquin and nearby cities and unincorporated communities. In 2018, it expanded its network of grassroots and community leaders to include Merced, Madera, Tulare and Kings counties.

CVLRT meetings provide an open forum for dialogue around community concerns, and decisions are derived from consensus. The Dec. 9 gathering to consider endorsements was well attended with more than 50 participants.

Democratic candidate Adam Gray spoke of the 10 years he served as an Assembly member and part of the California Problem Solvers Caucus, which brought Democrats and Republicans together. He stressed a bipartisan approach to protect water, workers and jobs.

When asked about his priorities, Gray responded, "water, water, water." He also acknowledged initiatives to assist workers regardless of legal status and provide access to healthcare.

Although Gray's presentation was scripted and lacked details, he reminded the audience that he is endorsed by State Senator Anna Caballero (D-Merced), Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria (D-Fresno) and the California Labor Federation.

Incumbent John Duarte (R-Modesto) had a more polished presentation, introducing himself as a farmer and businessperson. He reminded the audience that CD13 is a "Hispanic voting district" and claimed to have a relationship with thousands of Hispanics through his nursery in Stanislaus County.

Duarte says that he wants to "get water on the farms, drill American oil and get your cost of living under control again."

He stressed that "we need immigration laws that recognize the important contributions that you have made, and you'll see I have taken every stand I can to get DACA fixed, to get every family out of the shadows and have a legal presence here in America."

He claimed that he is "standing up to the Republican Party and bringing change."

The CVLRT acted immediately following the presentations and endorsed the Republican incumbent Duarte for Congress. A joint press statement released by the Duarte campaign and the CVLRT declared that "John Duarte is the first Republican to have been endorsed by the Central Valley Leadership Round Table."

CVLRT President Eliseo Gamiño stated, "I am pleased to have John Duarte's commitment to work with CVLRT members to improve the livelihoods of all of his constituency."

Duarte claims to have secured an increasing number of endorsements from Latino community leaders, businesses and organizations throughout the Valley.

Duarte's website states that he would vote to suspend gas taxes, which is conservative messaging when referring to high gas prices that are actually driven by oil company profits. Duarte also declares that he will fight against "gated-community career politicians" who want to "Defund the Police," branding Democratic legislators, the vast majority of whom have never uttered the words. He supports school choice "so our kids can find an environment that meets their needs."



Congressional District 13 Democratic candidate Adam Gray (center) in a publicity image. Photo courtesy of adamgrayforcongress.com

## Duarte's Votes

In 2023, Duarte voted to condemn efforts to defund or dismantle local law enforcement agencies. He voted against waivers and modifications of federal student loans. He voted against air pollution controls in new vehicles and heavy-duty engines and federal efforts to ban gas stoves.

Duarte voted against the classification of firearms with "stabilizing braces," which increased the efficacy of "short barreled" rifles like those used in recent mass shootings.

Duarte voted for the impeachment of President Biden for high crimes and misdemeanors (Dec. 13), as well as Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas for the same (Nov. 13).

Duarte voted to expand and strengthen the Abraham Accords and to urge normalization of relations with Israel. He also voted to stand with Israel and to reaffirm Israel's right to exist.

He voted "to condemn support for terrorist organizations at institutions of higher education, which may lead to the creation of a hostile environment for Jewish students, faculty and staff."

He voted against the expulsion of Rep. George Santos (R-N.Y.; Nov. 1) before he voted for it (Dec. 1).

## Duarte's Donors

Among his top 10 supporters are LLCs with global interests in real estate, agribusiness, philanthropy, financial asset management and investments in the media, communications and entertainment industries.

One notable donor is Energy Transfer Partners, a Texas-based natural gas and propane pipeline transport company and 35% owner of the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline, which was opposed by a popular movement of indigenous and environmental groups. It was a major test of the Obama administration, which halted the project. In his first month in office, Trump issued an executive order allowing the pipeline to go forward.

Another notable donor is Bernard Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot. Marcus helped finance the anti-abortion Turning Point USA and the Federalist Society, which engineered

*Continues on page 19*

# A Luta Continua: The Struggle That Must Be

BY MALIK SIMBA

Dr. Claudine Gay was appointed president of Harvard University on Dec. 17, 2022. She became the first Black president in Harvard's nearly 400 years of existence. Dr. Gay had been serving as the dean of the Edgerley Family Division of Arts and Sciences at Harvard.

In her acceptance speech, she stated that she was honored to be a child of Haitian immigrants and noted that her mother was a registered nurse and her father was an engineer. Because of her father's work with the Army Corps of Engineers, Gay spent some of her earlier childhood years in Saudi Arabia.

In her teen years, she matriculated at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, graduating in 1988. Her undergraduate education was at Stanford, with a degree in economics, and her B.A. thesis won the prestigious Anna Laura Meyers Prize. Gay earned her Ph.D. in government from Harvard in 1998, and her dissertation won the revered Toppan Prize. Later, she taught in that department as well as in Africana studies.

She became the dean in 2018 of the College of Arts and Sciences. During her time as dean, Gay achieved a reputation for being an innovative and remarkable leader, and those qualities served her well when she applied for Harvard's presidency. She attained her new position in a competitive search with more than 600 applicants.

Before her presidency, in 2015, she became the Wilbur A. Cowett Professor of Government. As dean of the largest College in the University, Gay developed a reputation for fairness and decisiveness in adjudicating unprofessional behavior of faculty. In one instance, she removed the emeritus status of a male faculty member accused by multiple women of sexual harassment and suspended two others for violating the faculty handbook on professorial decorum.

Dr. Gay's research partially focuses on how diverse demographic neighborhoods are shaped by racial and political attitudes, especially in bordering Black and Latino areas. That interest parallels her research concerns about the roots of the adversarial and cooperative dialectics between cross-cultural economic interests.

In 2019, Gay became a leading campus advocate for a Black Latino faculty who was denied tenure. As dean, she continued to be an advocate for diversity and inclusion.

Earlier, in 2017, she created the Inequality in America Initiative, with more than 70 affiliated faculty. The initiative called for funding research in the areas of social and economic issues.

Gay had the responsibility to implement the recommendations of the Presidential Committee on "Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery" and to market the "Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability." As president, she was also addressing a lawsuit against affirmative action filed by the Students for Fair Admissions—SFAA v. Harvard.

The SFAA is part of the right-wing reactionary movement a la the Heritage Foundation, Fox News, Trump's social media platform Truth Social, the Proud Boys, evangelicals, the right wing within the GOP itself and a plethora of motley, unorganized, hyper-politicized groups in every state, nook and corner of the United States. It was this amalgam's attack that led, on Jan. 3, 2024, Dr. Gay to resign from the presidency of Harvard.

For most, this resignation was due to an answer she gave before a Dec. 5, 2023, Congressional committee, set up to investigate antisemitic rhetoric within a pro-Palestinian student rally at Harvard. Dr. Gay answered that Harvard's free-speech code could prohibit such speech depending on the context.

That answer was considered unsatisfactory by reactionary Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), who asked if "calling for the genocide of Jews violates Harvard's code of conduct. Yes or no?" Gay, as with two other university presidents, gave answers that were weak and legalistic. These answers subsequently created a firestorm of controversy, with political conservatives across the nation calling for resignations of all three presidents.

Dr. Gay should have firmly stated that any reference to the "genocide of Jewish people" is morally abhorrent and should not be tolerated under any campus speech code. The contradiction is that the right wing itself has a history of antisemitism, and this question was just self-serving to their interest at the present.

However, one should reflect upon this essential point: If a right-wing MAGA faculty, a president or a student had said that "Negroes" should be lynched until none was left, the Liberal Left would have demanded the immediate firing or dismissal of this individual.

Sadly, the Harvard Board, in accepting Dr. Gay's letter of resignation, did not say whether a revised speech code would now prohibit "genocide speech" in reference to Jewish people.

Shortly thereafter, various faculty at Harvard and scholars elsewhere called for her resignation based on evidence that she plagiarized some of her publications. One prominent conservative, Christopher Rufo, admitted that "we launched the Claudine Gay plagiarism story from the political right."

Gay, in her resignation letter, noted that her case is a "single skirmish in a broader war to unravel public faith in pillars of American society." And several of Gay's colleagues felt she was "brought down by a mob" as noted by Professor Ryan Enos. In her letter of resignation, Dr. Gay said she is in the process of correcting errors in her published research, but she shined the spotlight on the right-wing, racist, reactionary cabal that orchestrated her dismissal.

One must keep in mind that the aim of right-wing racial conservatism, from the Confederate flag wavers inside and outside the Capitol to Elon Musk, is to preserve white over Black, Brown and all others. A little-known example of this racial conservatism is their attack on the Fearless Fund set up by corporations to assist the entrepreneurial efforts of Black women.

And for the matter of the Confederate flag and that hangman's lynch noose at the Capitol, not one GOP politician from the very top to the bottom has denounced such racist symbols. Then these same Republican political leaders bemoan the low percentage of Black voters supporting their banner.

While chairing the History Department at Fresno State, this author was asked to be an advocate for a junior faculty member accused of plagiarism. That faculty, after a personnel committee reviewed and confirmed the accused's publications were plagiarized, resigned.

However, at Harvard and at the University of New Orleans, two prominent cases of plagiarism involved famous scholars Doris Kearns Goodwin of Harvard and Stephen Ambrose. Neither was forced to resign after being caught plagiarizing.

Goodwin was a regular talking head on late-night television, and Ambrose's book on Easy Company, entitled *Band of Brothers*, which fought Germans in WWII, became an award-winning hit on cable television. Goodwin gave a public, heartfelt apology but lost her late-night spot; she and Ambrose continued to teach at their universities.

Given this backdrop, the ultra-right has made clear that as they defeat the use of affirmative action in higher education, they will also defeat its intellectual child, "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)." In fact, Fresno State just hired a full-time vice president to implement DEI.

Ironically, the now-accepted idea in higher education of "publish or perish" is of recent origins. Before the 1970s, for Fresno State and many state colleges, faculty tenure was driven by academic activities such as attending conferences and reading academic papers.



General view of Harvard Yard, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. The president of Harvard, Dr. Claudine Gay, resigned under pressure from the right wing and Congressional Republicans. Photo courtesy of The Commons

When this author was hired to chair the History Department, only one faculty, from my recollection, had published a book. The department was composed of all white men except for one Hispanic faculty who was hired from Chicano Studies. As the History Department and all others at Fresno State began to hire more women and minorities, the standard for tenure shifted, and new faculty were required to have at least three published articles in academic journals or a book.

A curious contradictory dilemma was created when older white senior faculty who had not published at all now sat in judgment to evaluate younger (DEI) publishing scholars. Therefore, the ultra-right attack on higher education, be it a Harvard president or others hired to diversify and include, is purely a political act to impede and stop the browning of American society at the white-collar level.

However, my experience in hiring qualified, new, young, diverse faculty who could step up their game and be publishing scholars reveals that DEI should be an acronym for Diversity, Excellence and Inclusion.

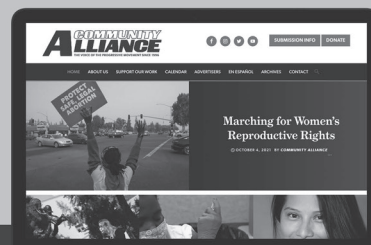
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Malik Simba, Ph.D., is emeritus faculty of Africana studies and history at Fresno State.

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The Central Valley Progressive PAC urges you to **SUPPORT AND VOTE** for the candidates we have endorsed in this election cycle. To learn more about the positions they take on issues that progressives care about, visit [cvppac.org/candidate-responses](http://cvppac.org/candidate-responses).

The next Central Valley Progressive PAC meeting will be in-person on Saturday, March 9, at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. We encourage you to help our endorsed candidates by financially contributing and working on their campaigns.



Stop the Board of Supervisors from changing the name of Yokuts Valley to a racist slur.

## These are our endorsed candidates



**Dr. Joaquin Arambula**  
State Assembly District 31



**Miguel Arias**  
Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 3



**E.J. Hinojosa**  
Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 3



**Bryce Herrera**  
Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 2

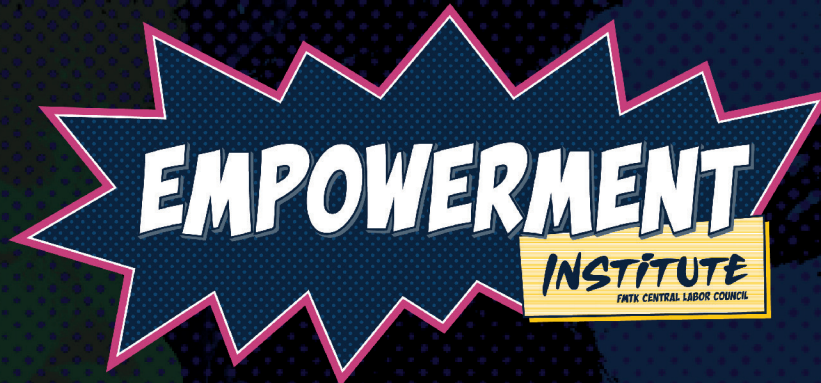


**Matt Gillian**  
Fresno City Council District 2



**Tyler Maxwell**  
Fresno City Council District 4

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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**Help us find you!**

Are you getting our announcements of meetings and events? Our contact list is sometimes badly out of date. Let us know your current info: Send an e-mail message to Teresa Castillo at [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com) or text 559-360-8054.

**MEMBERSHIP BRUNCH IN MARCH AND YOU ARE ALL INVITED!**

In celebration of Women's Herstory Month, YOU ARE ALL INVITED to our MEMBERSHIP BRUNCH this March. Details coming soon, but our contact list is old, so please let us know your current contact info so you don't miss out. Reply to Teresa Castillo at [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com) or text 559-360-8054.

**WHY WILPF?**

**Local, National and International Solidarity**

WILPF is a grassroots, community-based international organization of women and men dedicated to building a world free of violence and all forms of oppression. The Fresno Branch is part of WILPF-US, which is a national section of WILPF-International. WILPF Fresno has many activities, and some are listed below. New people are always welcome.

**Connection**

In WILPF, you have the opportunity to work together with other people in our community on the issues that are most important to you. We support each other and understand that it's all connected. In addition to our local actions and committees, there are national action committees that welcome your participation.

**Intersectionality**

In WILPF, intersectionality is the rule. This is an organization that understands and works with the interrelationships between peace, anti-racism, anti-imperialist struggles, women's rights, economic justice, environmental protection and justice, and more.



WILPF members Nancy Waidtlow and Gerry Bill march for Martin Luther King's vision of a just peace. Photo by LVR

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**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).

**WILPF MEETING**

Feb. 8 (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**  
 Feb. 28 (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**

Feb. 7 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at [skern@netptc.net](mailto:skern@netptc.net) or 559-349-3777.



**Decision-Making**

Who's in charge here? We are! This is a membership-run organization.

**Endurance**

WILPF is more than 100 years old and still going strong. Fresno WILPF is 59! We're not going away, and we are not going to quit even if the struggle is long, difficult and frustrating.

**Gender Perspective**

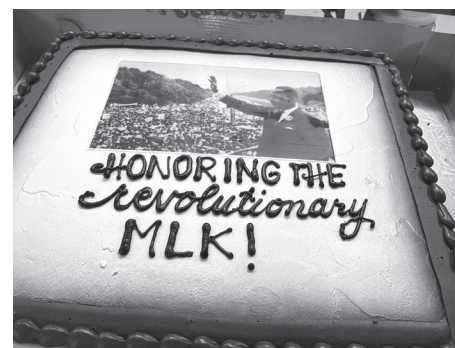
WILPF is rooted in the lived experience of women. We also welcome men who are able to work within that framework.

**RECLAIMING THE REVOLUTIONARY MARTIN LUTHER KING CELEBRATION**

We of Fresno WILPF were proud to be part of this event on the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I can remember WILPF Fresno activist-musician Patricia Wells-Solorzano expressing her disgust last year after an MLK Day observance with heavy participation by those who hated him and everything he stood for. Many of us felt the same way, although we recognize and honor the sincerity and dedication of some of those on the Unity Committee.

When Rev. Floyd Harris proposed a celebration of the real, unwhitewashed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we offered our support and participation. Well, it happened and a diverse standing-room-only crowd came to the Free AME Church and Community Center to hear a distinguished panel discuss "What would MLK say about the Gaza genocide?" (See article elsewhere in this issue.)



WILPF member Rev. Floyd Harris at the Free AME Church on Martin Luther King Day. Photo by LVR



Reclaiming the Revolutionary Martin Luther King cake, Jan. 15, 2024

**THE REAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SAID**

*"I know that justice is indivisible, and injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. I'm concerned about justice for everybody the world over."*

*"We've committed more war crimes almost than any nation in the world, and I'm going to continue to say it. And we won't stop it because of our pride and our arrogance as a nation."*

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ASKS COSTA TO SUPPORT CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION**

House Resolution 786 calls for an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire in Israel and occupied Palestine, and for the Biden administration to send and facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza. There are 17 co-sponsors; Rep. Barbara Lee is the only one from California. This resolution has been referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee, of which Rep. Costa is a member.

Our message reads: We expect that our representatives will support peace through humane and decent actions. We expect you to represent all of your constituents, without bias, by showing your understanding and support of an



Your WILPF newsletter editor, Leni Villagomez Reeves, on the corner for Palestine. Blackstone and Nees, Tuesdays at 5 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m.

immediate de-escalation in Israel and occupied Palestine. Our expectation is that you value the protection of all civilian lives enough to act with integrity and humanity by calling for an immediate, sustainable ceasefire.

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)).

# Security Implications of Climate Change

BY DEBAY TADESSE

After the open discussion on climate change and security at the UN Security Council in July 2011 during the German Council Presidency, and considering further developments, governments and nongovernmental organizations actively promoted this topic with a broad spectrum of global stakeholders.

Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable increase in the worldwide discourse surrounding the security implications of climate change. It is almost universally acknowledged that climate change is one of the biggest threats to human welfare, global economic growth, and peace and security.

Droughts, floods and the general deterioration of the agricultural base are among the climate scenarios that combine to further lay the groundwork for ongoing environmental decline and instability in human security. These circumstances could lead to heightened competition for resources such as food, land and water, resulting in consequences that frequently lead to confrontation.

Moreover, the 2014 Quadrennial Defence Review designated climate change as a “threat multiplier.” This implies that social conflicts, political unrest, poverty and environmental degradation—all of which are currently widespread worldwide—will most likely be made worse by climate change.

The globe is facing a security challenge from climate change. A study published in *A Journal of Peace Research and Action* by Peter Halden et al. concluded that climate change might pose a significant danger to global political and economic stability because it weakens nations and societies. Therefore, it can put a great deal of stress on nations’ and societies’ ability to plan, organize and communicate.

This weakening effect will severely harm human security and imperil livelihoods, development and health. A decline in “interaction capacity” is probably going to make it harder for governments and other institutions to stop criminal networks using large-scale violence.

Vulnerability is caused by events and a lack of resilience, especially the capacity to adapt. Adapting to climate change is crucial for development, institutional strengthening, raising public awareness and education, fostering social strength and improving governance. Inadequate response to climate change could jeopardize these initiatives.

Precarious situations in coastal communities are expected to deteriorate due to erratic rainfall patterns and rising sea levels. Global worries have been raised about food, energy and water shortages brought on by extreme weather occurrences such as storms, floods and droughts. More migratory movements are predicted as a result of climate change.

The changed rainfall patterns brought about by global warming are causing variances in the water supplies of many states. Although certain places receive intense rainfall, others receive less than average or no rain. As a result, areas with higher rainfall experienced record-level floods, whereas areas with lower rainfall faced relentless droughts.

Rivalry over the limited resources is probably going to rise. For instance, when food needs increase, arable land becomes more desirable far and wide. It is necessary to improve regional collaboration and alter current agreements to reduce the likelihood of confrontations. The main concern is that climate change threatens to overburden states and regions.

## Climate Diplomacy

Global concerns require global answers. Climate diplomacy is how states work together to address this complicated issue. One country acting alone will not be able to address the climate calamity.

A new paradigm in climate diplomacy is emerging due to the security implications of climate change. This paradigm includes existing policies, such as development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention, and mitigation and adaptation initiatives for climate change.

The primary purpose of climate diplomacy is to move from risk assessment to practical steps to alleviate climate change-related threats. With its focus on prevention, climate diplomacy can offer new opportunities for social and economic development by, for example, implementing sustainable solutions in the water and energy sectors and, more



In summer, some polar bears do not make the transition from their winter residence on the Svalbard islands (in the Arctic) to the dense drift ice and pack ice of the high Arctic where they would find a plethora of prey. This is due to global climate change, which causes the ice around the islands to melt much earlier than previously. The bears need to adapt from their proper food to a diet of detritus, small animals, bird eggs and carcasses of marine animals. Often, they suffer starvation and are doomed to die. The number of these starving animals is sadly increasing. Photo courtesy of The Commons

broadly, collaborating on the low-carbon economy and climate-resilient green economy strategies. It can also offer potential pathways for regional cooperation and benefit sharing.

Public participation in the discourse surrounding climate diplomacy is one of the Climate Diplomacy Initiative’s primary strategic goals.

Through implementing sustainable solutions in the water and energy sectors and collaborative efforts on low-carbon and climate-resilient green economy initiatives, climate diplomacy—which strongly emphasizes prevention—can offer novel avenues for social and economic advancement. In addition, it can provide opportunities for regional cooperation and win-win solutions.

With its enormous global ramifications, the climate crisis ranks among the most pressing issues of the 21st century. As things stand, our planet is going to get much warmer. Therefore, given the significant ramifications for U.S. foreign policy, a more active role for foreign policy in international climate policy is needed, mainly through climate diplomacy.

Global warming is a geopolitical issue that affects every nation. To solve this worldwide challenge, the State Department and its diplomats must collaborate with other nations through climate diplomacy.

## Conclusion

One of the most significant environmental, social, economic and political challenges of this generation is climate change, which is already happening. Climate change is also a threat multiplier that exacerbates current trends, tensions and instability. It is crucial to understand that there are risks beyond humanitarian concerns, including political and security threats that immediately impact society and governments. Furthermore, in keeping with human security, it is evident that several concerns about how climate change affects international security are interconnected and need thorough policy responses.

By tapping sustainable solutions into the water and energy sectors and, more generally, working together on the low-carbon economy and climate-resilient green economy initiatives, climate diplomacy and stress prevention can create new chances for social and economic progress.

Moreover, climate diplomacy can offer opportunities for regional cooperation and sustainable development. The diplomacy of the 21st century will need to set higher standards for the climate, design the required fundamental systemic changes, and encourage and support new forms of global cooperation.

\*\*\*\*\*

*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 is currently lecturing at Fresno City College and Fresno State.*

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# Perspectives on the War

BY EVA MAIDEN

It is more than 100 days since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, and the daily news bulletins of destruction raise painful emotions. For me, it was an additional shock to learn from an article in a local newspaper that an Israeli cousin of mine was taken hostage on Oct. 7. His grandmother is a Holocaust survivor from Austria who immigrated to then-Palestine in 1947. She carries a poster with his picture at demonstrations.

My immediate family landed in the United States as refugees from Austria when I was young. Since my teens, I have been interested in avenues to international peace. As a college student, I returned to Austria for a summer job. When I met children of Nazis there, I became accustomed to having difficult conversations.

Some time later, living near San Francisco, I had several opportunities to speak with Palestinian Americans about their attitudes on Israel. Until then, I only understood Israel to be a safe haven for Jews escaping persecution and a land of opportunity for developing modern agriculture and industry. When Palestinian colleagues described their biblical roots there and their generations of family homes, now lost, I began to understand their experience and attitudes.

There is a way to acknowledge a different viewpoint than one's own, without prejudice. I call it bifocal thinking. One part of one's lens focuses on one's own opinions and background. Another part of the lens is for making an effort to "get" what the other person's aspirations and grievances are—without having to buy into them. This is different from immediately concluding who's right and who's wrong.

Bifocal thinking does not necessarily result in changing opinions, but it might facilitate a constructive interchange. For example, we don't have to agree on everything in order to advocate for a ceasefire in the Middle East.

The Palestinian demonstration in Washington, D.C., promoting a ceasefire made a deep impression on me. Also, I find it valuable to follow a Jewish organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., called "J Street." Recently, it has been advising President Biden on non-military actions and future paths for coexistence. The name of the group comes from the irony that there is no actual J Street among the alphabetically named streets of D.C.—but that street can be imagined, like a future peace.

It can only be hoped that wise leadership will emerge to end the present war. Israel is a democracy, and the current prime minister will likely be ousted in an election next year. His actions ignore the will of many, perhaps most, Israelis.

Meanwhile the horrific death toll in Gaza must be stopped. The beleaguered residents of Gaza will need to choose a new democratic governmental structure, as the United Nations has been suggesting. This will require more support from Arab neighbors. The enormity of what is now called "the day after" is hard to fathom, but history shows us that it will come.

The executive director of J Street, Nadiv Tamir, states that "we've witnessed an incomprehensible level of destruction and pain metered out on Palestinian civilians in Gaza. It's been accompanied by truly disturbing, hate-filled rhetoric from members of the Netanyahu government, calling for wanton violence and destruction against families in Gaza who had no connection to the crimes of Hamas."

Recently, J Street has been advising President Biden on non-military actions and future paths for coexistence.

As we go to press, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is putting forward a resolution in Congress requiring that the State



A screen at the Azrieli Mall in Tel Aviv calls for the return of the hostages.  
Photo courtesy of The Commons

Department "report on potential human rights violations committed by Israel and evaluate the role that U.S.-supplied weapons have played in civilian deaths and injuries."

More and more Israeli groups are also demanding a change in Netanyahu's cruel policies. Although his term of office does not expire for a year and a quarter, early elections have been known to occur in Israel in some circumstances.

It cheers me up to remember a community that I got to know when visiting my relatives in Israel in the late 1900s. This group had developed a unique village where Israeli citizens of Jewish and Arabic descent could live among each other. They educated their children in a bilingual school (speaking both Hebrew and Arabic).

They named their village Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salaam. Their neighborly relations

were good during better political times. In a social crisis, they struggle with their emotions separately.

One of their successes was a program for groups of older high school students from both ethnic groups to get acquainted and develop ideas for future peace. There was often sharing of ethnic food and jokes, easing tensions. Skilled leadership is needed for such a venture.

Difficult as it is, maintaining hope is vital for our spirits during the current crisis. I believe it is possible to cultivate hopefulness as a deliberate act. Children watch their parents and grandparents reacting to news of the war. We need to help them visualize a better future.

\*\*\*\*\*

Eva Maiden is a retired psychotherapist.

# Fresnans Speak Out for Palestine

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Zahra Al, a teacher and Fresno State alumnus, told the Fresno City Council on Jan. 11, "I am here for Palestine, I am here for Gaza. I am here to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. I am not Palestinian, I am Native, Middle Eastern and Hispanic. But my heart is Palestinian.

"In the history of war crimes, genocide is regarded as one of the most grave crimes against humanity. Today at the International Court of Justice, South Africa, along with other nations, holds Israel accountable for the war crimes and genocide against the Palestinian people.

"[The genocide] is funded by us, the United States of America. [We need a] ceasefire now and to cease sending military aid in all forms. A minimum of \$3.8 billion is sent from our tax money to Israel every year. Our money is used to kill Palestinians; our money is aiding a genocide.

"Will we build the Palestinians a monument as we did the Armenians? Do we remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Say no to the bombing of innocent civilians.

"I ask you: Are you going to stand by and do nothing to stop this genocide of Palestinians? I implore you: Stand with humanity, stand with Palestine. Say no to genocide. Say yes to a permanent ceasefire. Stop military aid to Israel, end the occupation and allow humanitarian aid to enter and reach the Gazans that desperately need it."

Also speaking at the Jan. 11 City Council meeting, Lauren Lopez of Fresno said, "I stand before you today to address the recent statements made by [Council Member] Garry Bredefeld in the closing moments of our last City Council meeting. His words, as passionate as they were, are misleading. They have unfortunately been a blatant misrepresentation of the voices advocating for a ceasefire.

"Mr. Bredefeld has chosen to label those who call for peace 'advocates for hate,' specifically targeting those who seek a moral and just resolution for a permanent ceasefire in Palestine. He has utilized his platform to spread misinformation under the guise of defending freedom of speech, under the pretext of 'defending freedom.'

"Mr. Bredefeld has engaged in a form of doublespeak, perpetuating Islamophobic rhetoric that only serves to gaslight community members and create an atmosphere of fear. This tactic of conflating activism with hatred is not only disingenuous but it is also harmful to our community.

"Last [month] in Fresno, Palestinian organizers were attacked in public while spreading awareness on the vile and murderous atrocities committed by Israel. Your inaccurate portrayal of Palestinian liberation has only emboldened bad faith actors within our community.

"Mr. Bredefeld's story [begins in] October [and] neglects the decades-long aggression, occupation and the resulting human rights violations which Israel has carried out with unchecked destruction. Let's not act as if it is okay for one of the most powerful militaries in the world to indiscriminately carpet-bomb innocent civilians, leaving a wake of over 10,000 dead Palestinian children in their path and call that justified self-defense.

"I'm asking you to join the growing list of cities that have adopted a resolution for a permanent ceasefire in order to preserve the further loss of innocent life. Let Gaza live, free Palestine."

Miroku Nemeth, an adjunct professor of English at West Hills College and the College of the Sequoias attending the Jan. 15 MLK march, said, "I've noticed over the years of teaching teenagers, seniors in high school and community college students that almost nobody really watches mainstream news anymore. For quite some time, they're all been watching alternative news sources.

"I asked them in surveys on where they get their news from or what they read. Some don't even really know what a newspaper is anymore. They look at social media posts, they do deep dives into what they see in social media and they are better consumers, generally, of media.

"Social media is less controlled. There they can see, I think very overtly, that the lies that are put forth in the mainstream media are so egregious and so big. When you look at the reality, which they can see on social media, they can see children being killed. They can see because there's almost no filters.

"With this kind of technology and in the way in which the people are using it it's not controlled, it's not centralized, it's not the fourth branch of the government anymore. It still exists but it's being discredited."

As for criticisms of Generation Z, Nemeth thinks that is misplaced. "I think they are some of the most empathetic human beings. They have a morality-based sense of justice. They have a conscience, and it gives me hope. When I teach them to write about things, they find sources on TikTok or they find them on Instagram.

"We are in the midst of a genocide with 150 children a day being murdered. [These students] are gaining knowledge from social media outlets that aren't so biased."

Regarding the prospect of President Biden and Democrats losing the youth vote, Nemeth said, "Definitely yes, and in



Community members calling for a ceasefire resolution at the Jan. 11 Fresno City Council meeting. Photo by Bob McCloskey

the Muslim community we're not voting for Genocide Joe; there's no way. He's doubled down over the last 100 days.

"There are [more than] 30,000 dead Palestinian civilians. Personally, I know people who've lost 35 family members. Some have lost over 100 people in their [extended] families. People I have known for decades. This is not abstract to us.

"When we're protesting, most of the people who are supporting us are not even necessarily connected [to Palestine]. They just have heart. If a person has a heart they'll take action."

Linking the colonization of Palestine to the colonization of America, Nemeth said, "I teach Yokut history as much as I can. California history. Nobody knows of their [the Yokuts] genocide. I was obliged to teach about the Holocaust, which I'm proud to do, but I never had to teach about Yokut genocide, Central Valley genocide. The population went from 70,000 pre-colonization to 600."

These voices and others reflect the views and sentiments of many Fresno area residents. Hundreds have spoken at City Council meetings and demonstrated relentlessly for the past three months. People of conscience are requesting that the City of Fresno pass a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire. They are saying it's past time to end the occupation.

The community is increasing pressure on elected leaders at every level to take a stand on this humanitarian crisis. The question remains: Will they act?

\*\*\*\*\*

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

# Khalida Jarrar

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

Statistics are important. We can know the official count of the dead and realize that this represents only those who have been identified and that many more bodies remain, killed but unidentified and uncounted, under the bombed homes and hospitals, schools and refugee camps.

We can know that most people in Gaza are displaced—homeless, in fact—and hungry. The number of doctors killed, the number of reporters, the number of children injured and without medical care: These are important numbers. But numbers have no faces. I hope we can see ourselves in this short account of the complex life of a Palestinian woman, an activist and a scholar, who has recently been arrested yet again.

- Understand: She is a hostage, as are the thousands of Palestinians imprisoned without cause.
- Consider: If this is what happens to those Palestinians who struggle for liberation and freedom from occupation through education and nonviolent means, then what?

## Arrested and Imprisoned for Publishing a Paper

Israel again arrested Jarrar on Dec. 26. She is a prominent human rights and women’s rights activist and former Palestinian Legislative Council representative; she lives in Ramallah, in the West Bank. Occupation forces arrested Jarrar a few days after she published a research paper titled “Violations against Female and Male Prisoners during the Genocidal War on Gaza,” in which she detailed the violations and crimes committed against prisoners inside Israeli occupation prisons since Oct. 7.

## First Arrest: International Women’s Day Rally

She has been arrested and imprisoned numerous times, first in 1989, on the occasion of International Women’s Day. She spent a month in prison for taking part in the March 8 rally. Since 1998, Jarrar has been banned from traveling outside of the occupied Palestinian territories, after she attended the Human Rights Defenders Summit in Paris that year.

## One Imprisonment after Another

In 2015, she was seized in a pre-dawn raid by Israeli occupation soldiers who stormed her house in Ramallah. Initially, she was held in administrative detention without trial, but, following an international outcry, Israeli authorities tried Jarrar in a military court, where 12 charges, based entirely on her political activities, were made against her. Some of the charges included giving speeches, holding vigils and expressing support for Palestinian detainees and their families. She spent 15 months in prison.

Jarrar was released in June 2016, only to be arrested again in July 2017 in a raid on her home by Israeli soldiers, who broke down the door. She was also held under administrative detention. She was interrogated at Ofer Prison before being transferred to HaSharon Prison, where many Palestinian female prisoners are held.

During this period of imprisonment she developed a literacy program for Palestinian women prisoners. She was released in February 2019, after spending nearly 20 months in prison.

## Compassionate Leave Refused

She was rearrested in Ramallah in October 2019 and held without trial or charge until March 2021, when she bargained with the Israeli military court, “admitting” that she was a member of the organization Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in order to avoid indefinite detention. She was released in September 2021.



Khalida Jarrar

During this period of imprisonment, one of her two daughters died suddenly of a cardiac problem and Jarrar was denied even a compassionate leave to attend the funeral.

## Some Biographical Details

Jarrar was born in Nablus in the West Bank on Feb. 9, 1963. She has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and a master’s degree in democracy and human rights from Birzeit University. She served as a director of the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association from 1994 to 2006, when she was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)—the Palestinian Parliament.

She now heads the PLC’s Prisoners Commission, in addition to her role on the Palestinian National Committee for follow-up with the International Criminal Court.

She is married to Ghassan Jarrar, whom she met when they both were students. He was also an activist; he has been arrested 14 times and has spent about 11 years in administrative detention in Israeli prisons, without charges. They had two daughters, Yafa, who has a law degree, and Suha, who had an M.S. in climate change science and policy, and who died in 2021.

## Teaching Fellow Women Prisoners

Here is a small part of what she wrote about her prison literacy campaign, carried out during her own periods of imprisonment:

“I decided to make it my mission to focus on the issue of education for women who were denied the opportunity to finish school, whether as children or those who were denied such a right due to difficult social conditions...

“Just seeing the excitement on the faces of the girls when I floated the idea by them inspired me to take on the daunting task, the first such initiative in the history of Palestinian women prisoners in Israeli jails.

“We had few school supplies. In fact, each class had to share a single textbook that was left by Palestinian child prisoners before they were transferred by IPS to another facility. We copied the few textbooks by hand; this way, several students were able to follow the lessons at the same time...

“In July 2017, the Israeli military arrested me again, this time for 20 months. I returned to the same HaSharon Prison. There were many more female prisoners than before. Immediately, with the help of other qualified prisoners, we began preparing for the fourth group to graduate. This time, nine female prisoners were studying for the exam. There were more volunteer teachers and administrators. The prison had suddenly bloomed, turning into a place of learning and empowerment.

“The prison administration went crazy! They accused me of incitement and began a series of retaliatory measures to shut down the whole schooling process. We accepted the challenge. When they closed our classroom, we went on strike. When they confiscated our pens and pencils, we used crayons instead. When they hauled away our blackboard, we unhooked a window and wrote on it. We smuggled it from one room to another, during the times that we had designated for learning. The prison guards tried every trick in the book to prevent us from our right to education. To show our determination to defeat the prison authorities, we named the fourth group ‘The Cohort of Defiance.’ In the end, our will proved mightier than their injustice. We completed the entire process. All the girls who took the final exam passed with flying colors.

“In the end, we did more than fashion hope out of despair. We also evolved in our narrative, in the way we perceive ourselves, the prison and the prison guards. We defeated any lingering sense of inferiority and turned the walls of prison into an opportunity. When I saw the beautiful smiles on the faces of my students who completed their high school education in prison, I felt that my mission has been accomplished.”

“Hope in prison is like a flower that grows out of a stone. For us Palestinians, education is our greatest weapon. With it, we will always be victorious.”

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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/)).*

## To Gaza, Palestine: “Your Pain Is Our Pain”

A POEM BY ZAHARA AL

With the first blast that shattered your peace, we cried “Genocide!”  
An oppressor’s cruel act, their war crimes cannot hide.  
Each explosion they unleash, in their ruthless, unchecked stride,  
We stand firm in our charge, “It’s Genocide!” we chide.

Gaza we feel you, but do you feel us?  
Gaza we see you, but do you see us?  
Gaza we hear you, but do you hear us?

To visit you, to step foot on your land  
To visit you, and walk on your great sand

To visit you, and hold your peoples hand  
To visit you, and pray on your holy land

A dream of ours, a dream so sublime  
A dream of seeing your moon shine, along your Gaza coastline  
A dream of freedom from crimes, against your bloodline  
A dream of justice, that they can not undermine

We didn’t need a dandy man in a suit,  
We didn’t need his fancy degree,  
We didn’t need his plea,  
We didn’t need his royal decree,  
We didn’t need his foresight to clearly see you bleed

We see your tears, We hear your screams,  
We see your people flee, we see your people bleed

Oh Palestine, you have captured our hearts,  
Oh Palestine, you have controlled our minds,  
Oh Palestine, we are indefinitely intertwined

Palestine, an Arab land so grand,  
Palestine, a holy land, so beautifully planned.  
Within Jerusalem, an old city’s span,  
Every inch holds a tale, since time began.  
On this sacred soil, each handspan and step,  
An Angel has graced, a memory we’ve kept.  
Prophets have walked, and God’s Messengers have stepped,  
Echoes of the pious, in every corner, their holy footprints are etched.

Stand great, stand strong, stand tall.

Labiek ya Aqsa, Labiek ya Aqsa  
Labiek ya Gaza, Labiek ya Gaza  
Labiek ya Rasool Allah, Labiek ya Rasool Allah

“To Gaza, Palestine” poem, presented at Woodward Park by Zahara Al





# SIERRA CLUB

## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

The Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter has just completed our annual election for our Executive Committee, with members given a choice of voting online or by mail. The new ExCom and leads are listed below.

Our chapter is an entirely volunteer organization, and welcomes all enthusiastic newcomers. Contact Gary at 559-790-3495 and tell us about your interests and we will direct you to others who share your concerns. We can also help to select a specific issue or project for you to focus on, if you're not already engaged with one.

Specific projects coming in 2024 include: holding our elected officials accountable for the future planning of Fresno County, including our transportation network, air and water pollution, water usage. We demand a rapid response to the climate crisis, shifting our economy to solar, wind, and geothermal power, instead of oil and gas.

The Sierra Club cares deeply about the harms done to our San Joaquin Valley and Sierra foothill residents, especially from air and groundwater pollution. We recognize that construction of distribution centers and factories harms our community members' health, especially when new industry is targeted at low-income neighborhoods

with significant populations of Latinos and other historically underserved residents.

Here are our newly elected leaders for 2024:

**Chair:** Olivia Seideman  
**Vice-Chair:** Pilar Calderon  
**Secretary:** Brenda Markham  
**Treasurer:** JoAnne Clarke

**Executive Committee:** Emily Brandt, Pilar Calderon, JoAnne Clarke, Bill Fjellbo, Carlos Garcia, Gary Lasky, Ron Martin, Olivia Seideman, and Gerald Vinnard

And here are our Executive Committee's newly appointed leads:

**Conservation Committee Chair:** Ron Martin

**Conservation Issue Leads:**

- Air Quality: Carlos Garcia, Emily Brandt
- Climate Change: Connie Young
- Energy/Oil: Ron Martin
- Environmental Justice: Olivia Seideman
- Kings Canyon National Park: Bob Turner
- Land Use/Agriculture: Dan O'Connell
- National Forests: Gary Lasky
- Transportation: Olivia Seideman
- Water: Laura Rosenberger
- Wilderness: JoAnne Clarke
- Yosemite National Park: Theresa Ho

And here are our other appointed positions:

**Honors & Awards:** Bob Turner, Karen Hammer  
**Legal:** Jeremy Clar, Gary Lasky  
**Membership/ Newsletter Distribution:** Karen Hammer  
**Outings Coordinators:** OPEN  
**Political Chair:** Bill Fjellbo  
**Political Compliance Officer:** Gary Lasky  
**Programs/Publicity/Hospitality:** Karen Hammer/Bob Turner/Brenda Markham  
**Tehipite Topics Editor & Website Administrator:** Bob Turner

**National Council of Club Leaders**

- Delegate: Ron Martin ;
- Alternate: Carlos Garcia ;
- Executive Committee: Gary Lasky

**Sierra Club California**

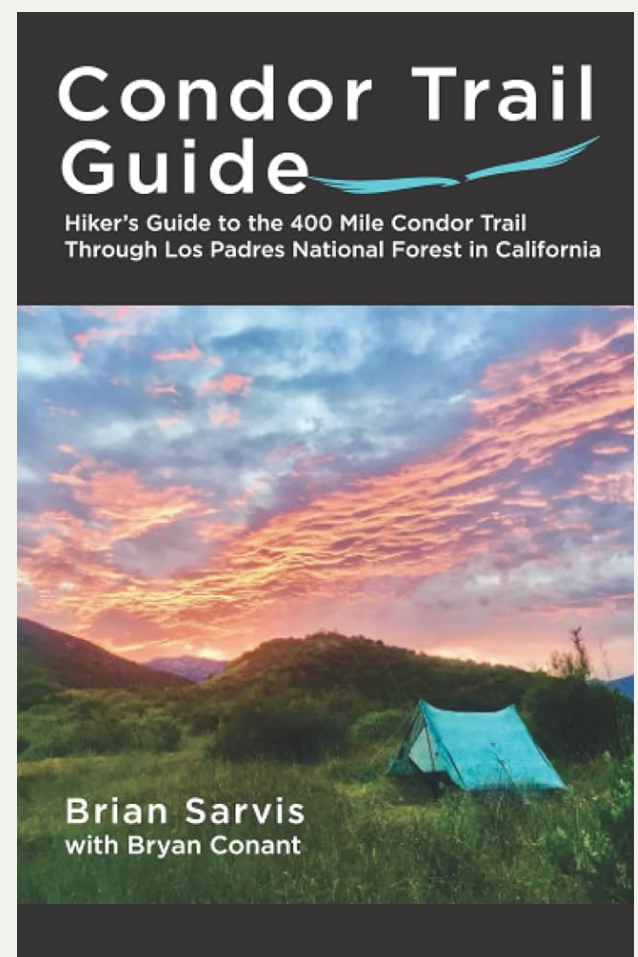
- Executive Committee Delegates: Ron Martin, Emily Brandt, Gary Lasky, Laura Rosenberger Haider
- Conservation Committee Delegates: Ron Martin, Emily Brandt; Alternates: Gary Lasky, Laura Rosenberger Haider

### Condor Trail: Hiking 400 Miles Through Los Padres National Forest

Thursday, February 22 at 7:00 PM  
Woodward Park Library, 944 E Perrin Ave, Fresno

The Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter invites the public to our February meeting with Brian Sarvis, co-author of *Condor Trail Guide: Hiker's Guide to the 400 mile Condor Trail Through Los Padres National Forest*. Brian will share his adventures on this trail that runs through seven wilderness areas, highlighting some of the outstanding natural features, wild and scenic rivers, hot springs, and wildlife sanctuaries. Brian is the second person to complete a thru-hike of the entire trail and has written a guidebook so others can enjoy the trail too.

Join us for this unique program!



**HOWARD'S HOPEFULS**

Here are my voting recommendations for the March 5th Primary. However you vote, please do so. Thank you. Howard K. Watkins, retired attorney. howardkwatkins@gmail.com.

**FEDERAL**

President	BIDEN
U.S. Senate x2	PORTER x2
Congress 8th	BARKLEY
Congress 13th	GRAY
Congress 20th	WOOD
Congress 21st	COSTA

**STATE**

Assembly 27h	SORIA
Assembly 31st	ARAMBULA
Assembly 33rd	RUIZ
Proposition 1	YES

**CITY OF FRESNO**

Mayor	DYER
City Council #2	KARBASSI
City Council #4	MAXWELL
City Council #6	BONAKDAR

**COUNTY OF FRESNO**

Dem Central Com #1	GAMINO
Dem Central Com #3	COBLE + BARNES
Dem Central Com #4	GOMEZ
Dem Central Com #5	GUDINO + GIBSON + JOHNSON + ROWELL + KREN
Superior Ct. Judge #1	FREEMAN
Superior Ct. Judge #2	SANTOS
Superior Ct. Judge #3	NEGIN
Superior Ct. Judge #4	MUNOZ
Superior Ct. Judge #5	TERRENCE
Superior Ct. Judge #6	KALEMKARIAN

**COUNTY OF FRESNO**

Superior Ct. Judge #7	IDIART
Superior Ct. Judge #8	DOLAS
Superior Ct. Judge #9	MANGANO
Superior Ct. Judge #10	SKILES
Superior Ct. Judge #11	WILSON
Superior Ct. Judge #12	LOR
Supervisor Dist 2	HERRERA
Supervisor Dist 3	ARIAS
Supervisor Dist 5	CRUZ
MEASURES A & E	YES
MEASURE B	NO

**VOTE**

**DR. DAREN MILLER**

FRESNO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY



Tuesday, March 5th  
Primary Election

**DECADES OF PROVEN LEADERSHIP**

**STOP THE POWER GRAB!  
Names Matter! Support Yokuts Valley!  
VOTE NO ON MEASURE B**

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors have placed Measure B on the March 5 primary election ballot. Their proposal would give the authority to themselves to "establish or change geographic feature or place names within the unincorporated portions of the County of Fresno."

Voters beware! This is not about local control of place names. This is about the federal and state decisions to ban the word "squaw" from all place names because it is a racial slur, and to rename the unincorporated town formerly known as Squaw Valley (93675) with the new name Yokuts Valley. In 2021, the word "sq..." was banned from nearly 650 places nationwide (Federal Order 3404), and by 2025, must be replaced throughout California (AB2022). All the new names were finalized in 2023, based on 2 years of local public input, prioritizing the opinions of local Native Americans.

- For decades, Native Americans have argued against the use of the word "sq", which disparages Native women and perpetuates prejudice and discrimination. The "sq..." word is finally banned from place names just like the "n..." word was in 1963.
- The new name Yokuts Valley was already decided by the rules we have in place, after 2 years of local resident input that prioritized local Native American opinions.
- Now, the County Supervisors seek to ignore federal and state law, and usurp the decision-making power for themselves, which will result in needless litigation that we will all pay for.

SUPPORT YOKUTS VALLEY! Vote No on Measure B. Honor and respect 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

**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



# Isabel De La Torre Murdered by the Clovis Police

BY MIKE RHODES

A police dog was used by the Clovis Police to extract 35-year-old Isabel De La Torre, an unarmed woman, from her bathroom. The dog bit and drug the woman out as officers quickly forced her face down on the floor. De La Torre was handcuffed, and multiple officers put their full body weight on De La Torre's back while others held her arms and legs.

Within minutes, she was dead, the autopsy citing homicide as the cause of death. What started out as a medical crisis ended in asphyxiation and the needless death of De La Torre. Would things have turned out differently if a mental health professional had been sent to the De La Torre home instead of heavily armed police and a K-9 unit?

On Dec. 19, an attorney for the De La Torre family, Kevin Little, announced the City of Clovis had agreed to pay \$1.9 million to settle the case. At a press conference, Little and attorney Rodolfo Gonzalez made the following statement.

"The De La Torre case arose from a March 26, 2022, incident in the City of Clovis, during which Isabel was experiencing a medical emergency. Officers were told when they arrived on scene that Isabel was not armed, and that she just had a seizure. Isabel needed emergency medical help, not excessive force. She had committed no crime. Isabel also was a small individual, who was outnumbered eight to one by trained, armed police officers.

"Despite the non-criminal nature of the incident, Isabel's being unarmed, and greatly outnumbered, the involved Clovis officers devised a paramilitary response that made the use of force their first option. Isabel was forcefully kept in a bathroom by officers, who held the door shut until a K-9 was in place to attack her. Then, without any advance warning to Isabel, the K-9 immediately attacked Isabel as the officers allowed the bathroom door to open, even though video proof shows that Isabel emerged from the bathroom unarmed and did not attack any officers.

"The K-9 continued to bite Isabel even after she was prone, face-down on the ground. The justification for the continued use of force on Isabel was that she was holding an officer's foot, but the video evidence shows that was nothing more than an instinctive act of desperation of a

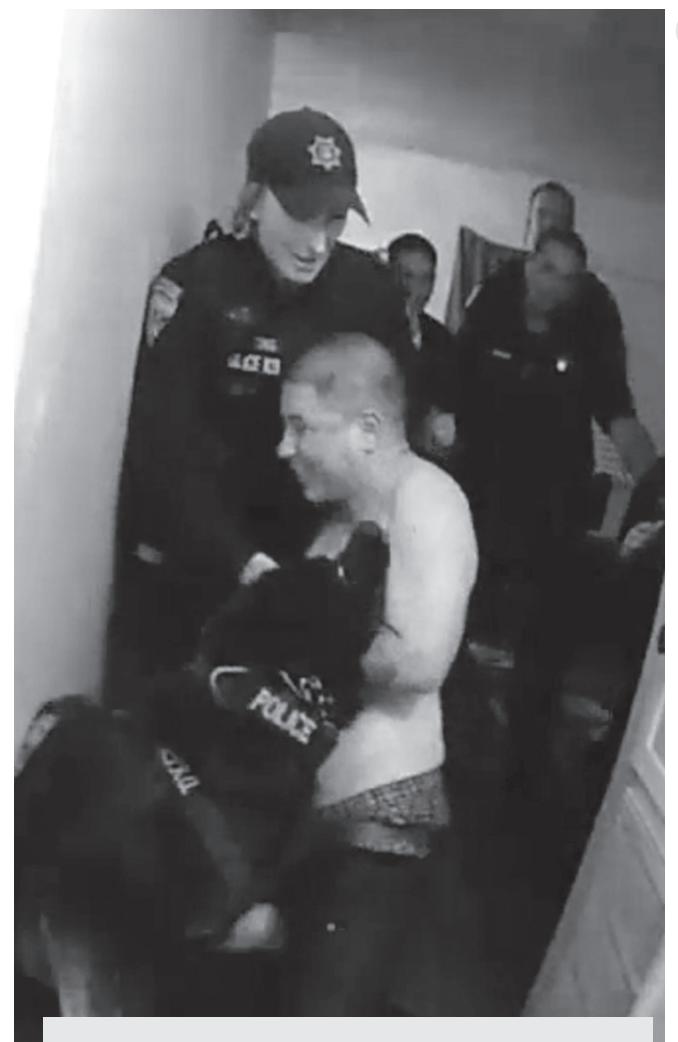
woman who was being attacked by multiple officers and felt her life slipping away."

De La Torre's aunt, Raquel Berumen, speaking at the press conference, said if "any person is calling for help, [the police] should come to them and help, not kill."

Little noted that "anyone else who would have acted as the officers in the De La Torre case did would at minimum be facing manslaughter, if not murder, charges. The maximum penalty for manslaughter is 11 years in prison,



Isabel De La Torre was killed by Clovis police officers who responded to a mental health concern by using lethal force. The autopsy report listed the manner of death as a "homicide" and the cause of death as "positional and compressional asphyxia due to prone restraint." Photo courtesy of Kevin Little



A Clovis Police K-9, such as the one shown here, was used to drag Isabel De La Torre out of the bathroom of her home. Screen grab from a Clovis Police Department bodycam

and the maximum sentence for murder is either 15 years to life if second degree and 25 years to life if first degree."

The *Community Alliance* newspaper has submitted a California Public Records Act (CPRA) request to the City of Clovis and will post the requested video (from the officers' body cameras) at [fresnoalliance.com](http://fresnoalliance.com) when it is available. The autopsy report, a short video of the incident and the full statement by the attorneys for the De La Torre family can be viewed at [fresnoalliance.com](http://fresnoalliance.com).

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Mike Rhodes is the executive director of the *Community Alliance* newspaper.



## Happy Valentine Days Fresno Center for Nonviolence February 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



### Wars is the Root of all Money

If only more leaders felt the travesty, the destruction and death they unleash when going to war, maybe they would realize that the cost of war in human lives was too great. After one great battle of the Civil War, President Lincoln quiet but filled with dread as an officer reported the casualty from that battle. His mind, spinning in sorrow, the multitude of men dead and severely injured. He felt the room, slowly filling with their blood until he himself was drowning in their bodily essence. The officer stopped, noticing the president gripped in anguish and unmovable. Until his wife Mary, she was the only one who lead him back to his bed.

"Face it, we can't make TV's, stereos, or cars; but we can make wars. And why not, we are very good at it. And like any other famous fast-food giant, we have over 700 franchises all over the world. We are ready for it, anywhere, any place any time, and just like any other burger joint we'll lie to you by saying that it's good for you, part of everyone's special diet. And we have discounts for everyone, the young, the not so young, women, ethnics varieties and senior citizens too. We don't really care who we kill because at least half of every gun, rocket, bomb, or weapon that kills anywhere in the whole world is made here in the good old USA. All because of the profit margins; money, money, money, the cost is inhumane. Why the American military budget is and has been for decades, larger than the next ten countries combined. I wonder how much of that money goes to military personal, military armaments and payments to the big CEO? Profits whether heavenly sent or devilish destructive are big, bigger, and the biggest. "

President Harry Truman was worried that he would be known as the World's Worst Mass Murderer after he looked at the pictures of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing. The same man who at the end of the first World War, wrote in his diary that the Allied Forces should sweep into Germany and kill every man, woman, and child, because all Germans are monsters or will become monsters. A comment throughout the ages believed that by eliminating the enemy, wars would be ended forever. But for a moment he discovered the true monster, he ordered no more bombings and accepted the Japanese "unconditional" surrender which the Japanese government agreed to if only the emperor was spared any criminality. A condition not shared by Americans. Then he called the State Department and ordered that shipment of food, medicine and clothing headed to Moscow, be diverted, and now sent to Greece to help the British occupy that country. And so it goes, the business of war.

with inspiration by George Carlin, - Editor.



**88.1 FM KFCF**

**Stir it, UP!**

**Next show is**



**Wednesday February 14th at 3 pm.**

Our host Joshua Shurley and hopefully, Rabbi Rick as possible guest to follow up after Reza's appearance in December. 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 January, Joshua Shurley engaged with advocate and organizer Marc Woodruff, the director of the Community Justice Network and program strategist for Advance Peace in Fresno. Discussion on alternatives to traditional models of "criminal justice," the importance of "decolonizing" currently favored by the status quo, as well as how we bring about narratives that increase mutual trust and build community. To hear again go to: <https://on.soundcloud.com/NRrRn>.



## Peace & Social Justice Calendar February 2024

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

**THU 01** **ArtHop Downtown/Tower District** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit FACarthop on Facebook.

**ArtHop Fresno Pacific University** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Ewert Art Gallery, Warkentine Culture and Arts Center, 1717 S. Chestnut Ave. “Anne Whitehurst: Latent Common Denominators.” Reception. Whitehurst’s agricultural-themed social realist artworks explore the impact of manmade landscapes. Exhibition through March 1. For more info, contact 559-453-3677 or wayne.steffen@fresno.edu.

**Janzen Writers Series** 7 p.m. Lin Family Performance Studio, Warkentine Culture and Arts Center, Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut Ave. Fresnan Anthony Cody, a Latinx poet, has lineage in the Bracero Program and the Dust Bowl. Cody will speak to his upbringing and how his own identity has shaped his work. His latest collection is *The Rendering*. His debut collection, *Borderland Apocrypha*, won a Whiting Award and an American Book Award. Cody teaches in the MFA program at Randolph College in Lynchburg, Va. For more info, contact 559-453-3677 or wayne.steffen@fresno.edu.

**FRI 02** **CineCulture: Chinatown Rising** 5:30 p.m. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Josh Chuck (director). Against the backdrop of the Civil Rights movement of the

mid-1960s, a young resident of San Francisco’s Chinatown, armed with a 16mm camera and leftover film scraps from a local TV station, turned his lens onto his community. His exquisite unreleased footage captured a divided community’s struggles for self-determination. It presents the Asian American movement from the perspective of the young residents on the front lines of their historic neighborhood in transition. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**Screening: Rhythms of the Land** 5:30 p.m. Dante Club Fresno, 6176 N. Grantland Ave. Special kickoff event for Black History Month. This documentary sheds light on the narratives of Black sharecroppers, farmers and gardeners, providing a powerful and often overlooked perspective on Black agrarian life. Screening followed by a panel discussion with special guests: Dr. Gail Myers, a cultural anthropologist, creator of *Rhythms of the Land* and co-founder of Farms to Grow, Inc., and a panel of Black farmers and chefs. Hosted by the African American Farmers of California. For more info, contact 559-232-7001 or natijohnson27@gmail.com or visit tinyurl.com/AAFCscreening.

**SAT 03** **Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: California gubernatorial Candidate Betty Yee. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or claval@comcast.net.

**Black History Month Celebration** 5:30 p.m. Golden Palace Event Center, 2625 W. Vassar Ave. Honoring Our Local Trailblazers. Honorees: Paul Forte Jr., Robert Golden, Rev. Chesney McGensy, First Lady Janet McGensy, Trustee Yolanda Moore, Brenda L. Starks, Dorothy Thomas and George H. Wilson Jr. Jesse McDonald Jr. Community Dedication: Debbie Darden. Passing the Torch: Desirae Washington. Shining Star: Staci Jones. \$125/person. For tickets, visit aahcmsjv.com. For more info, contact 559-544-1857 or aahcmsjv@gmail.com.

**TUE 06** **National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. Speakers: Dee Barnes and Patty Cappelluti. Topic: Let’s Get Ready to Vote! 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.

**Candidate Forum** 6:30 p.m. Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 2 candidates, 7:45 p.m. Fresno City Council District 6 candidates. Hyatt Place, 7333 N. Fresno St. Hosted by Fresnoland in partnership with Valley Public Radio, the League of Women Voters and CMAC. Streaming on CMAC for those who cannot attend in person. For more info, contact 559-202-3656 or danielle@fresnoland.org.

**WED 07** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up!** 3 p.m. Community Alliance radio show hosted by Daren Miller. Guest: Hajj Reza Nekumanesh, executive director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**THU 08** **Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** 7 p.m. Online/in person, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or taca\_03@ymail.com.

**FRI 09** **CineCulture: The Old Oak** 5:30 p.m. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Dave Turner (lead actor). The Old Oak is a special place. Not only is it the last pub standing, it is the only remaining public space where people can meet in a once thriving mining community in northeast England that has now fallen on hard times after 30 years of decline. The landlord’s hold is endangered even more when the pub becomes contested territory after the arrival of Syrian refugees who are placed in his village. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**SAT 10** **Day of Remembrance Noon.** Fresno County Historical Museum, Big Fresno Fairgrounds, 1121 S. Chance Ave. Program/luncheon. 2024 Distinguished American Award: Judge Johnny Gogo. Guest speaker: Kerry Yo Nakagawa. Hosted by the Japanese American Citizens League Central California District Council. \$40/person. For more info, contact 559-281-6497 or briant@csufresno.edu.

**Tower District Mardi Gras Parade** 1 p.m. Olive Avenue parade route. For more info, contact 559-292-3999.

**MON 12** **Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact swgamble@aol.com.

**Candidate Forum** 6 p.m. John L. Dodson Theater, 700 Van Ness Ave. Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 3 candidates. Hosted by Fresnoland in partnership with Valley Public Radio, the League of Women Voters and CMAC. Streaming on CMAC for those who cannot attend in person. For more info, contact 559-202-3656 or danielle@fresnoland.org.

**TUE 13** **Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or 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.

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

**WED 14** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up!** 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**THU 15** **ArtHop Metropolitan/Fresno Metro Area** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit FACarthop on Facebook.

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

**FRI 16** **CineCulture: Armenian Short Films Program** 5:30 p.m. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: Tatiana Boudakian and Arman Ayvazyan (directors). The

films are as follows:

*Dehatsi-I Was Another Place:* Anoush is a young Armenian woman who travels to Brazil without a return ticket. Once she is welcomed and inserted into the Armenian community in São Paulo, her biggest challenge is to adapt to the large and cosmopolitan city, so far from her roots.

*Crossing the Blue:* Anoush, an emigrant who fled from her abusive husband in the post-Soviet era, faces eventual deportation years later.

*Sunset:* With sunlight quickly fading on the horizon, a student goes on a fantastic journey contemplating the importance of happiness and budding friendships versus their studies.

*Stones:* As the brutal Nagorno-Karabakh War of 2020 ended in a Russian-mediated ceasefire forcing Armenia to cede territory it had controlled to Azerbaijan, days before the handover deadline, a group of volunteers risk their lives to enter the Lachin region to search for and save beautiful sacred

ancient Armenian stone inscriptions, known as “khachkars,” from destruction.

*The Road:* This international art-film collaboration catches you from its opening, luring you into a liminal desert space, blurring the bounds between diorama and reality. Circumnavigate these stories of isolation and connection.

*The Mud:* Rafael finds a goose at the entrance to his home. Shortly afterward, his wife returns home and sees disappearing footprints and feathers on the floor and a mystery unfolds.

Sponsors: Armenian Studies Program, Armenian General Benevolent Union–Greater Fresno Chapter and AGBU Arts’ Armenians in Film Series. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**MON 19** **California Latina Democrats–Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact chaircalatinadems@gmail.com.

**TUE 20** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**WED 21** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Speaking Truth to Empire** 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

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

**THU 22** **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.

**Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter** 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Speaker: Brian Sarvis, co-author of *Condor Trail Guide: Hiker’s Guide to the 400 Mile Condor Trail Through Los Padres National Forest in California*. Sarvis will share his adventures on this trail that runs through seven wilderness areas, highlighting some of the outstanding natural features, wild and scenic rivers, hot springs and wildlife sanctuaries. For more info, contact ecuagirl45@yahoo.com.

**FRI 23** **CineCulture: Ludi** 5:30 p.m. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Edson Jean (director). A young Haitian immigrant works day and night as a nurse at a private nursing

home. Her goal is to earn money for her family back in Haiti while struggling to find out what she wants and needs for herself. “America is the land of opportunity,” they say. “You can make it here,” they say. That’s the biggest lie ever told. Black people and immigrants, surviving paycheck-to-paycheck while supporting their families, is what America is truly about. Sponsors: French Program and the Department of Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures. For more info, contact mhusain@csufresno.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**MON 26** **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.

**TUE 27** **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.

**WED 28** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up!** 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**APR 06** **Save the Date!** Stop the Hate Summit at Fresno City College

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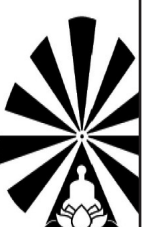
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# Fresno Oppression, Cruelty Ignored

BY KEVIN HALL

*"The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."*

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Photos splashed across the Internet of smiling politicians, police and pacifists celebrating together at the Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast held in Clovis last month offered a gallery of epiphanies. One photo would have been enough, as each was tagged as hosted by the Clovis Police Department and held at California Health Sciences University (CHSU) located just off Highway 168.

How many blows against the African American community must land before this event's organizing committee develops a King-like consciousness of injustice and the conscience to stand against it? Clovis police, the CHSU and Highway 168 are a trifecta of social justice disasters.

Flocks of professional managerial class members have flown to the city of 123,000 on Fresno's northeast edge, while residents of working-class neighborhoods across south Fresno have subsidized—with their money and health—this flight to the land of brown street signs, rodeos and self-proclaimed (wink-wink) "way of life."

The Clovis Police Department was cited just 18 months ago by the Fresno County Grand Jury for its "still very white" force and failure to recruit minority officers. "The department has hired one African-American officer in the past five years, bringing the number of officers in that demographic to two, or about 2% of the force," the report says of numbers from 2020. Clovis police are 74% white, 21% Hispanic and 3% Asian, the report notes. In comparison, the Fresno Police Department is about 45% white, 41% Hispanic, 6% African-American and 5.5% Asian, according to the report," wrote Thaddeus Miller in the *Fresno Bee*.

And that's the least of the breakfast's problems. King not only condemned good people for their silence; in his 1967 speech, "The Three Evils of Society," he said, "The problems of racial injustice and economic injustice cannot be solved without a radical redistribution of political and economic power."

But the CHSU event site is the local embodiment of concentrated political and economic power. It's difficult to imagine a worse place to commemorate King's birthday. A limited liability corporation controlled by the Assemi brothers Farid, Farshid and Darius, the private school, which has struggled with accreditation, is directly connected to the largest land-use and financial scandal to hit Fresno since Operation Rezone.

Committee members might want to check their planning meeting notes to see who is representing the Assemi family's interests. The event conference room was no doubt donated, and presumably the organizers decided they couldn't ignore the savings. Public relations is an Assemi hallmark.

But at what cost to King's dream? Locally, about a billion dollars in hospital funds alone, according to one estimate, all from south Fresno.

*Bee* reporter Yesenia Amaro broke the scandal in 2022 and wrote an update in May 2023: "CHS used federal and state funding generated by the downtown Fresno hospital for treating Medi-Cal and uninsured patients to fund a massive expansion of its Clovis campus in an affluent area. Less than a mile away from the Clovis hospital sits California Health Sciences University—a for-profit medical school owned by Assemi and Flo Dunn, another longtime CHS board member who continues to sit in on CHS board meetings as a guest. Community members who spoke with the *Bee*, including a local elected official, said changes on the board have only exacerbated concerns that the nonprofit hospital corporation is not serving the interests of Fresno."

Sorry to say it, but these are not good people. Assemi investments also include vast agricultural holdings where an internal dispute over financial improprieties and breach of contract has led next-generation family member Kevin Assemi to sue his father and uncles. Robert Rodriguez reported in the *Bee* on Dec. 20:

"Defendants had run Assemi and the Assemi Affiliates, including Maricopa into the ground. In their own words, the Assemi empire was near bankruptcy, and the Assemi brothers were simply trying to stay afloat," the lawsuit states. The 88-page lawsuit contains 31 causes of action against the defendants. Attorney Stan Blyth said in a news release that his client tried four times to mediate these issues with relatives to try and reach a resolution. "But each time he was dealt with in bad faith, with relatives only placing



Clovis police officers pose for a photograph outside the Martin Luther King Jr. community breakfast held in January at California Health Sciences University. A June 2022 grand jury report criticized the department as "still very white."  
Photo from the Clovis Police CA Facebook

importance on his assets, their value and their ability to stave off insolvency for a little longer."

Finally, Highway 168 is the freeway that Fresno County voters said they wouldn't support when the original Measure C half-cent transportation sales tax was put on the ballot in 1986. They got it anyway. A convenient loophole was crafted to allow politicians to change the list of priorities approved by voters, and hundreds of millions dollars later, Clovis had its freeway. Much needed road and pedestrian safety improvements throughout south Fresno were pushed back by decades, and air pollution allowed to worsen.

As author Catherine Liu pointed out in her 2021 book, *The Virtue Hoarders*, concentrated political and economic power is maintained by elite workers who "labor in a world of performative identity and virtue signaling"—the Professional Managerial Class. They stand in the way of social justice and economic redistribution "while making a virtue out of taste and consumption habits."

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

# CVLRT Endorses Republican for Congress

Continued from page 7

the conservative takeover of the U.S. Supreme Court. He is also the international chair of the Israel Democracy Institute. Marcus has donated almost \$64 million to Republican candidates in recent years, including Donald Trump, and declared that he would do so again in 2024.

For the 2023-2024 campaign, Duarte has raised more than \$1.728 million. Gray, as of the last reporting period, had raised \$235,000.

## Current Political Context

There is an emerging pattern in local and national elections: Historically disenfranchised ethnic and social groups and working-class families are disillusioned with the Democratic establishment. The traditional party structure appears to lack the vision, values and commitment for their continued support and loyalty, and many feel their votes are taken for granted.

During the 2016 Clinton campaign, a precinct walker in a Fresno Latinx neighborhood observed more than one Spanish speaking household expressing, "¿Qué pasó con el señor de pelo blanco?" or "What happened to the old guy with white hair?" The primary challenger Bernie Sanders resonated with many of them, and would probably have won, but the Democratic establishment ignored the appeals of wide swaths of their base.

Hillary Clinton suffered a predictable defeat by the worst of opponents, and the nation, particularly workers, women, the poor, LGBTQ+ and immigrants, paid dearly.

Another outcome of that election can be found in the human tragedy that is unfolding in Gaza. Trump demonstrated unconditional support of Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu, including recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and declaring that Israeli settlements in occupied territory were not illegal.

Trump officials also brokered the Abraham Accords, which recognized Israel's sovereignty over Palestine and supported increased annexation and new settlements. Those actions emboldened Israel and sparked fury across the Arab world, setting the stage for what is happening today in Gaza.

The Biden administration and representatives in Congress allow billions in weapons and logistics support to flow to Israel and a rapidly escalating regional conflict. Seventy-four percent of Democrats younger than 35 sympathize with the Palestinians, and those numbers are growing. Although these same voters are unlikely to vote for Trump, what will happen if many of them simply refuse to vote? Will there be a repeat of the "Hillary phenomenon"?

Back in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, local concerns are now part of national and international struggles for justice. Community leaders are determined to hold candidates accountable and will no longer harvest votes for someone who won't respond to their needs.

One more stumble or stutter on Biden's part could determine the outcome of the presidential election, and control of Congress depends on a handful of races. In their outcome will lie the hopes and destiny of the poor and disenfranchised here, and perhaps the people of Palestine in their homeland.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

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# 2024 Primary Election Endorsements

CANDIDATE GRID	DEM	REP	Labor	Chamber	Stonewall	CVPPAC
U.S. Senate	—	—	Lee/Porter/Schiff	—	Schiff	—
Congressional District 5	Barkley	McClintock	Barkley	—	—	—
Congressional District 13	Gray	Duarte	Gray	—	—	—
Congressional District 20	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congressional District 21	Costa	Maher	Costa	—	—	—
Congressional District 22	Salas	Valadao	Salas	—	—	—
State Assembly District 8	—	—	—	Tangipa	—	—
State Assembly District 27	Soria	—	Soria	—	—	—
State Assembly District 31	Arambula	—	Arambula	—	—	Arambula
State Assembly District 33	Ruiz	Mathis	Ruiz	—	—	—
Board of Supervisors District 2	Herrera	*	—	Brandau	Herrera	Herrera
Board of Supervisors District 3	—	*	Chavez	Quintero	Arias	Arias/Hinojosa
Board of Supervisors District 5	Cruz	*	*	Magsig	Cruz	Cruz
Fresno Mayor	—	*	—	Dyer	—	—
Fresno City Council District 2	Karbassi	*	Karbassi	Karbassi	Karbassi	Gillian
Fresno City Council District 4	Maxwell	*	—	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell
Fresno City Council District 6	—	*	*	Bonakdar	—	—

BALLOT MEASURE GRID	DEM	REP	Labor	Chamber	LWV
Prop 1: Mental Health Services Bond	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	No
Measure A: County of Fresno Charter Amendment - Section 15	No	*	—	—	*
Measure B: County of Fresno Charter Amendment - Section 12	No	*	—	—	*
Measure E: Fresno State Transactions and Use Tax	No	*	—	Yes	*
Measure G: Fowler Unified School District Bond Measure	—	*	—	—	*
Measure O: Orange Cove Police and Fire Special Tax Measure	—	*	—	—	*

\*Endorsements not posted as of our publishing deadline.

**Measure A:** Sheriff and District Attorney Election Timing Charter Amendment: Would amend the county charter to require elections for sheriff and district attorney to be held during gubernatorial, nonpresidential election years.

**Measure B:** County Board of Supervisors Duty to Name Geographic Features and Places Charter

Amendment: Would authorize the Fresno County Board of Supervisors to name or change the names of geographic features or places.

**DEM:** California Democratic Party & Fresno County Democratic Party

**REP:** California Republican Party & Fresno County Republican Party

**Labor:** California Labor Federation & Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council

**Chamber:** California Chamber of Commerce & Fresno Chamber of Commerce

**Stonewall:** Fresno Stonewall Democrats

**CVPPAC:** Central Valley Progressive PAC

**LWV:** League of Women Voters



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## Can We Prevent a Frightening Prospect?

BY RUTH GADEBUSCH

It has long been said that all great empires come to an end. Is that to be our fate? Yes, we are an empire even though we seldom apply that word to the American Dream. I fear that we are about to get a hard lesson that just calling a nation a democracy does not make it so.

There is little left when the top court of the land needs an enforceable ethics code, when the Congress disintegrates into party political plays forgetting compromise, when it threatens to let our government shut down by not paying our legally encumbered debt and when a former president is under indictment for 90-some serious crimes. Can this unhappy state of affairs be stopped?

For a nation formed by immigration, the current contention regarding the issue is more than just sorrowful. The nation long the refuge for oppressed people throughout the planet is not just closing its doors but is adding oppression on top of oppression: Evil on top of evil! Regardless of one's ideas as to our policies intended to protect us, what is being done now by two states is totally disgraceful.

Granted, the states on our southern borders are being overwhelmed but that is no excuse for the political stunts supposedly designed to discourage the uncontrolled efforts of those seeking refuge creating chaos. We fought a war to cement the idea that we are one nation.

When a state joins the union, it is a binding contract. Our Civil War/War Between the States, regardless of what it is called, supposedly settled the idea of unity. Even without that idea, sending already suffering people to other parts of the nation with no provision for care whatsoever is not our nation. It is absolutely inhumane, cruel beyond words even

without addressing the splitting of families and other abuse.

This does not even consider the conditions that create our own homeless. Nor is that an excuse for the treatment of those unfortunates seeking citizenship/life in this nation better than anywhere else on the planet. Is there any other place more able to share resources?

Even if we feel limited in our ability to care for the needy, be they domestic or immigrants, surely we are clever enough to find a better answer than the cruelty of sending them to ever more challenging living conditions weather-wise or what else to be encountered. To continue on our current path is guaranteed to backfire on us.

Where are the responsible adults? Who put the current office holders in office? Who continues to support them? Who is financing their campaigns to continue in office? Why are so few citizens willing to hit the brakes?

The questions are not profound within themselves, but failure to address them carry serious consequences. There is opportunity in the various elections to be held in 2024.

We can focus on the age of one candidate while overlooking the fact that he is qualified by experience and commitment as well as the protecting provisions when an officer holder is no longer able to function, or we can focus on a man who in his own words and actions has demonstrated over and over that his focus is more ego and power than a unified nation operating as our constitution intended.

Let us also remember those in the lesser offices who have their contribution to the whole. That is our choice. Which will it be? Will we choose the personal power seekers or the citizens committed to that document that despite whatever weakness it might have is still the best ever designed?

Incidentally, how many of us native born can pass the citizenship test?

\*\*\*\*\*

*Ruth Gadebusch, a former naval officer, has long been known as a community activist including election as a trustee of the Fresno Unified School District and serving in a variety of community organizations civic to cultural from local to national.*

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# Regreso a Casa: Impresiones de

## mi Viaje a Nicaragua

Continúa de página 22

? Se enriquece la familia gobernante como alegamos muchos? Me atrevo a decir que sí. Son dueños de estaciones de televisión, de radio, de otras empresas y socios de varios y jugosos negocios. ? Tiene la gente miedo de hablar mal del gobierno? Creo que sí. Existe la democracia en Nicaragua? Actualmente no y nunca ha existido. Lo que siempre existió fueron gobiernos ladrones disfrazados de demócratas. Esto último me consta.

Aparte de lo escrito arriba visité los lugares de rigor como playas, lagos, restaurantes y las tumbas de mis padres. Platiqué con algunos amigos, pero varios más ya se fueron de este mundo. Lastima. Hablando de lagos, el gobierno dragó el lago de Managua y construyó un complejo de restaurantes tanto para los que tienen plata como también para los que carecen de dinero. Todo esto me dejó ver que bajo el actual gobierno hay lugar para todos, menos para los opositores al gobierno, de los que no se ven muchos. A la orilla del lago hay un puerto que ostenta el nombre de Salvador Allende, en honor del fallido presidente chileno. En la actualidad hay un par de sacerdotes presos así como dos seminaristas, según el gobierno. Es cierto que no hay prisiones en las calles y que solo están permitidas dentro de las iglesias. No es cierto que haya muchas iglesias cerradas por falta de sacerdotes. Hay personas que no están de acuerdo con que se persiga a miembros del clero. En cuanto a los nicaragüenses deportados por el gobierno, la población de Nicaragua y del país ya se olvidó de ellos hace rato, según encuestas. No siento ni pena ni gloria por los religiosos desplazados por el gobierno, pero sí por los jesuitas. Para el país es una pérdida enorme

En la noche del 31 de diciembre de 2023, en el Treinta aniversario del levantamiento del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), el subcomandante Moisés reitero la nueva etapa del movimiento: "Porque solos hasta ahorita hemos descubierto ese nuevo camino que vamos a seguir: el común".

En la entrevista publicada el 20 de diciembre entre el capitán Marcos y Moisés, aparecieron importantes reflexiones sobre la nueva propuesta y fase para el movimiento zapatista: "establecer extensiones de la tierra recuperada como del común. Es decir, sin propiedad. Ni privada, ni

ejidal, ni comunal, ni federal, ni estatal, ni empresarial, ni nada. Una no propiedad de la tierra".

? De donde proviene esta idea y práctica? Como se entiende en el actual contexto social de Chiapas donde paramilitares y narcotraficantes intentan imponer su ley?

En lengua maya tojolabal el concepto de trabajo proviene de la palabra a'tel y con la terminación tik, da cuenta de "lo nuestro". El concepto de 'alaj es significativo de milpa que da sustento alimenticio a las comunidades mayas de Chiapas. El concepto kalajtik da cuenta de "nuestra milpa", pero es trascendental porque incluso en la experiencia vivencial en las comunidades el sentido es sagrado, en castellano quiere decir "nuestra milpa para la vida". Por ello, la frase ja a'tel'ik ja kalajtik significa en español: nuestro trabajo de nuestra milpa. La propuesta zapatista en específico supone el komon 'alajtik, es decir, "nuestra milpa en común" que también incluye el trabajo. (Carlos Lenkersdorf, Diccionario tojolabal-español 2).

La lengua tojolabal como la tsotzil son ergativas, por lo que en sus estructuras lingüísticas, a diferencia de las indoeuropeas, no se puede construir objetos ni mercantilizan, por ello todo en la cosmovisión etnolingüística tiene vida, energía y corazón. Una manera radical de realizar un efectivo proceso descolonizador de las estructuras de la modernidad capitalista y el liberalismo económico es a través de la lengua indígena que ha resistido desde hace 4 mil años. Por ello, Moisés recuerda que incluso en la reunión y consulta a los pueblos, el camino fue trazado: "el de nuestras abuelas y abuelos".

Selva Lacandona. La penetración de los cárteles de la droga jalisco Nueva Generación y Sinaloa, por sólo mencionar dos de ellos, en esas regiones además de la franja frontera con Guatemala, dan cuenta de una configuración social diferente al paradigma autonómico previo. "No hay comisariato o agente a quien comprar, asesinar, desaparecer. Lo que hay son pueblos que trabajan y cuidan esas tierras. Y las defienden", explicó Moisés sobre la nueva etapa. Con esta propuesta, el EZLN intenta proteger a sus bases de apoyo y aquellos miembros civiles de su organización que eran visibles ante



Niños posando frente a un mural en Bluefields, Nicaragua, en 1984. El gobierno nicaragüense ha aumentado el apoyo a la niñez en todo el país por medio de desayunos escolares gratis y actividades recreativas. Foto cortesía de The Commons

desthacerse de ellos y su expulsión de la universidad Católica (UCA) será sentida por mucho tiempo, siendo el más afectado el estudiantado. Irónicamente varios comandantes Sandinistas fueron egresados de dicha universidad.

En suma, el gobierno actual tiene su mira en ayudar a mejorar a la clase Media, Ingeniería Civil y Agrícola y también oficios como Albañilería, Electricidad, Ebanistería, Carpintería, Mecánica y otras más.

"Cosas Veredes", Sancho Amigo

Carlos C. Martínez (pseudónimo del autor de esta nota) nació en Nicaragua y reside en el Valle de San Joaquín desde hace varios años.



Imagen captada en 2024 del subcomandante insurgente Moisés (izq) y el capitán insurgente Marcos del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) durante la presentación del baile originario kurdo en el tercer día de la Celebración del Treinta Aniversario de la Guerra contra el Ovido. Foto de Juan Trujillo Limones

gobiernos oficiales e incluso paramilitares. Los antecedentes puntuales: El 4 de diciembre de 2020, Manuel Gómez Vázquez, fue detenido arbitrariamente y sometido a tortura física y psicológica por un delito fabricado por las autoridades oficiales y para 2021 dos integrantes de la Junta de Buen Gobierno de este caracol 10, José Antonio Sánchez Juárez y Sebastián Núñez Pérez fueron secuestrados por la ORCAO.

En la entrevista Moisés continúa: "Las reglas son sencillas: tiene que ser acuerdo entre los pobladores de una región. No cultivar drogas, no vender la tierra, no permitir la entrada de ninguna empresa o industria. Quedan excluidos los paramilitares". Que los municipios autónomos y las juntas de buen gobierno hayan desaparecido formalmente para trasladar el mando y la coordinación de la autonomía a los pueblos y comunidades, supone continuar la práctica local de democracia directa que ya existía, pero que antes contaba con los órganos e instancias a nivel regional donde se dirimían conflictos con organizaciones y gobiernos. Ante los retos de la conflictividad en Chiapas incluso con el narcotráfico, es evidente que el EZLN protegerá a sus miembros civiles de cualquier atentado, secuestro, engaño, pretexto o cobro de piso que pudiera existir alrededor de la geografía rebelde. "Y salió que la inmensa mayoría estaba haciendo desde hace años", explicó.

En el entonces municipio autónomo Vicente Guerrero y su región estaba haciendo desde hace años", explicó. básica y trabajada por bases de apoyo pero en tierras compradas por familias desde la década de 1980 trabajaban tanto zapatistas como los que no lo eran. Existen algunos familiares que habían decidido aceptar la militancia en el Partido de la Revolución Institucional, Partido Verde o Morena. La actual propuesta del EZLN supone hacer énfasis en establecer relaciones de convivencia pacífica entre las familias que incluso están enemistadas por la opción y práctica política. Moisés finalmente expresa: "Y nosotros lo que hicimos fue, pues, proponer un camino para poder cruzar la tormenta y llegar con que juntos como pueblos originarios que somos". Se trata en tiempos de tinieblas, de una generosa propuesta que como necesidad social de sobrevivencia para las comunidades, al mismo tiempo abraza a aquellos que dejaron la resistencia o que incluso han sido adversarios de la lucha indígena zapatista.

Juan Trujillo Limones es un antropólogo y periodista mexicano.

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

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### EDITOR

Eduardo Stanley  
editor@fresnoalliance.com

### DIRECTOR EJECUTIVO

Mike Rhodes  
mikerhodes@fresnoalliance.com  
559-978-4502

### MESA DIRECTIVA, SECCION NO LUCRATIVA

Beverly Fitzpatrick  
Olga Loza  
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### COMPAGINADORA

Ashley Harper

### DISTRIBUCIÓN/ FOTOGRAFIA

Peter Maiden  
maidenfoto1@gmail.com

### PUBLICIDAD

I. smiley G. Calderón  
714-290-6651 (text)  
smileycalderon@gmail.com  
(También hablo español)

### CORRECTOR DE PRUEBAS

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# Muere Gil García de la radio y el gigante en español

*Continúa de página 23*

con un premio a la trayectoria para conmemorar sus 40 años en los medios.

## Estrenó su programa en 1989 en Telemundo

"El Show de Gil García Padrón" debutó el 21 de abril de 1989 en Telemundo, de Fresno, antes de mudarse a Azteca América y luego a Estrella TV. "Consideramos que Gil es la principal personalidad de habla hispana [de la radiodifusión local]", dijo el gerente de la estación Azteca América, Federico Galindo, cuando el programa se mudó allí en 2002. "Ha demostrado con su continuidad que tiene muchos seguidores".

El programa de entretenimiento, que contó con videos musicales y entrevistas en estudio con músicos como Selena, Ramón Ayala y Lupillo Rivera, tuvo más de 2,000 shows hasta el año 2020, dijo García Padrón en una entrevista. "Nunca me he tomado un descanso. Siempre hemos producido", le dijo a Vida en el Valle en una entrevista de 2020. Durante el mes de noviembre de 2023, el programa se mantuvo con repeticiones y su presentador se tomó libre

## Cristina Pacheco, 1941-2023

POR CLAUDIA CRUZ

El pasado 21 de diciembre falleció la célebre escritora, conductora, comunicadora y periodista Cristina Pacheco, toda una institución del periodismo en México. Una inteligente mujer, trabajadora, excepcional y excelente contadora de historias, nacida el 13 de septiembre de 1941, la hija menor de 17 hermanos la cual carecía de libros pero tenía a la mejor narradora de cuentos que era su madre. Rodeada siempre por las letras, estudio

letras españolas, casada con el también escritor y poeta José Emilio Pacheco.

En el año de 1977 llega al canal 11 (administrado por el Instituto Politécnico de México) el cual que se convertía en su casa iniciando con los programas "Así fue la semana" y "De todos modos Juan te llamas" al que le seguiría en el año de 1978 el programa que duraría más de 45 años al aire el cual supo y pudo mantener llevando por nombre "Aquí nos tocó vivir", el cual fue reconocido por la UNESCO, catalogado como memoria del mundo de México por registrar la vida de la capital mexicana.

Pacheco poseía un gran don ya que podía hacer cada entrevista agradable interesante y muy amena que capturaba la atención de su audiencia. Cada entrevista en la calle se convertía en una charla divina y digna de contar.

En el año de 1985 ganó el Premio Nacional de Periodismo. Su trabajo como escritora quedó plasmado en más de 20 títulos que le sirvieron para ganar el premio Bellas Artes de Literatura Inez Arredondo en el año 2022. Entre sus libros están *Zona de Desastre*, *Los Sueños de la Noche*, *La Luz de México*, *Sopita de Fideo*, *La Última Noche del Tigre*, *Para Virir Aquí*, entre otros. Durante su vida cubrió prensa, televisión y radio En 1997 lleva los personajes al foro de televisión haciendo lo que mejor sabe hacer: sus excelentes entrevistas; este programa llevó como nombre "Conversando con Caritina Pacheco". Ella siempre decía, "contar la vida vale la pena", por eso se convirtió en una contadora profesional de la vida. Pacheco, por razones de salud, se despidió de la televisión con mucho pesar aproximadamente 15 días antes de su fallecimiento, dejando a sus compañeros y audiencia muy conmovidos. Al despedirse de su programa dijo; "estaremos juntos siempre". La llevaremos siempre en nuestros corazones, hasta siempre Cristina Pacheco.

## Regreso a Casa:

## Viaje a Nicaragua

POR CARLOS C. MARTÍNEZ

Actualmente hay más carreteras que hace unos años y me atrevo a decir que son mejores que las de California. Se puede ahora viajar en autobús hasta la Costa Atlántica, algo que antes era imposible. En suma hay carreteras por donde uno quiera viajar. Esto a su vez favorece a los pequeños agricultores que ahora pueden vender sus productos sin intermediarios, como ocurría antes.

Además existen pequeñas cooperativas que elaboran sus productos y compiten con productores más grandes. Esto se debe a la ayuda que brindaron organizaciones de Suecia, Dinamarca, Holanda y Alemania, entre otras. Es una gran ayuda para los pequeños agricultores ya que mejora y hace más atractivos sus productos.

El gobierno, encabezado por Daniel Ortega y Rosario Murillo, sigue en marcha con el proyecto de dar desayuno gratis a los niños. De esa forma tienen más energía para dedicarse a sus estudios. En este proyecto participan además en forma conjunta los padres de los niños con el Departamento de Educación. Los padres se encargan de cocinar y limpiar y a su vez el gobierno facilita el arroz, frijoles, aceite, sal, azúcar, leche, frutas de la temporada y el gas para cocinar.

en diciembre por motivos de salud. "Me tomaré un mes de descanso durante todo el mes de diciembre. Estaremos de vuelta hasta enero de 2024, si Dios quiere", anunció García Padrón en su página de Facebook.

García Padrón nació en Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México. Creció en Merced, donde se especializó en comunicaciones de masas en Merced College y se convirtió en un elemento básico de la estación de radio KYOS de Merced antes de mudarse a Fresno por consejo de un colega de radio. García Padrón trabajó brevemente para el noticiero de KFTV Unision, de Fresno, cuando todavía el estudio de esa emisora estaba en Hanford, antes de pasar a la estación de radio KXEX, de Fresno, misma que le ofreció una mayor remuneración.

**El salto a las promociones**

Gracias a García Padrón, los medios locales de radiodifusión en español finalmente pudieron afianzarse en la publicidad de automóviles, según el ejecutivo de Unision Fresno, José Elgorriaga. "Durante unos 5 ó 6 años, Gil fue el líder de Auto World", dijo Elgorriaga. "Fue el primer concesionario de coches usados que superó el límite de la publicidad de automóviles". En esa época—la década de 1990—esas empresas "gastaban entre \$2,500 y \$5,000 al mes", dijo Elgorriaga. García Padrón y Auto World lo destrazaron vendiendo casi 400 automóviles al mes cuando el concesionario gastaba hasta 80,000 dólares mensuales. Elgorriaga dijo que García Padrón demostró

la mejor narradora de cuentos que era su madre. Rodeada siempre por las letras, estudio

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Durante los meses de verano buses sin tolda (techo) llegan por las tardes a los barrios más pobres para llevar a los niños a jugar en los nuevos y atractivos parques y darles a la vez un sándwich, alguna fruta y jugo—todo sin ningún costo para los padres. Hay nuevos y modernos parques en toda Nicaragua. Lo anterior se lleva a cabo en Managua y otras ciudades, pero hay planes para ampliar el proyecto al resto del país. Los usuarios del transporte público tienen ahora techo y bancas para descansar mientras esperan el bus y guarecerse de la lluvia y protegerse del ardiente sol. Antes nada de eso nada de eso existía. Hace pocas semanas llegaron a Managua 200 buses de transporte público manufacturados en China.

Se han construido nuevos estadios en Managua y Masaya y ya ha comenzado a construirse un nuevo y extenso campo deportivo en Managua; se está dando mucho énfasis al fútbol en todos los departamentos, algo que antes existía sólo con el beisbol.

Las empleadas domésticas gozan de protección del estado. Antes laboraban desde las 5 de la mañana hasta las 9 ó 10 de la noche, 7 días a la semana. Ahora solo trabajan 10 horas y si ponen más horas tienen que pagarles extras. También los patrones tienen la obligación de cotizar para el Seguro Social y así gozan de atención médica y jubilación. La mujer está protegida. Si alguien le pega lo llevan a pasar la noche a la cárcel y al día siguiente al juez. El logo en la casa de la mujer dice así: "sola, invisible, unidas, invencibles".

A las familias sin recursos se les da un modesto subsidio mensual más una canasta familiar de alimentos consistente en arroz, frijoles, aceite de cocinar, harina, sal y azúcar.

como invertir en el mercado latino podría dar resultados. "La gente entraba y veía a Gil después de que él decía 'Gracias por su confianza'", dijo Elgorriaga. "Era un tipo muy agradable y tenía una buena personalidad". Elgorriaga se encontraba en la estación Fresno Telemundo cuando ayudó a García Padrón a lanzar su programa de entretenimiento. La fórmula del espectáculo era simple: combinar chismes de la industria musical con videos musicales y entrevistas con casi todos los artistas mexicanos que recorrieron el Valle. "Esto le dio ese poder de estrella aquí en el Valle", dijo Elgorriaga.

**Rechazó oferta de sindicalización nacional**

García Padrón dijo a Vida en el Valle que rechazó una solicitud en 1991 para sindicalizar su programa de televisión. Lo rechazó porque estaba ocupado con la promoción de conciertos. "Ni siquiera lo consideré. No me arrepiento", dijo José Luis Alvarado, "El Globito", le da crédito a García Padrón por compartir su conocimiento radiofónico que lo ha ayudado en la industria. Él tenía un segmento en el programa de García Padrón enfocado en noticias del entretenimiento. "Estuve en su programa durante casi seis años y le agradezco mucho a él y a su esposa, Maricruz, por darme la oportunidad de estar en su programa", dijo Alvarado, quien actualmente trabaja tiempo completo en Radio Campesina, la cadena de la United Farm Workers. En los últimos años, García Padrón instaló un estudio en su casa donde grabaría el programa. Su esposa, Maricruz, dirige y produce. Le sobreviven su esposa, un hijo y una hija.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Juan Esparza Loera es el editor del periódico Vida en el Valle, de Fresno.*



La escritora Cristina Pacheco durante una presentación en la XIII Feria Internacional del Libro del Zócalo de la Ciudad de México, en 2013. Foto cortesía de la Secretaría de Cultura de la Cd. de México/The Commons

\*\*\*\*\*

*Claudia Cruz fue columnista del periódico El Sol del Valle de San Joaquín, de Visalia, editora de la revista Bienes Raíces y más. Le gusta escribir poesía y literatura enfocada en problemas que afectan a la comunidad latina.*

Además las familias cuyas casas tienen techos que no sirven el gobierno les manda instalar techos de zinc gratuitamente. No obstante, debido a denuncias de que algunas familias arrancaban el zinc para venderlo, el gobierno usa ahora una táctica mediante la cual ya no pueden arrancarlo.

La Universidad (UNAM), cuenta ahora con extensiones en varios departamentos y se puede estudiar medicina en Estell. Antes solamente podían estudiar esa carrera en León. Y los estudiantes de ingresos limitados no podían costear los gastos para residir en la ciudad de León. Vale la pena notar que los estudios en la UNAM son gratis pero los estudiantes tienen que costear los textos. Hay varias universidades en Managua, pero son privadas y caras.

La atención para la salud es gratis en hospitales del gobierno pero algunas medicinas son escasas y los pacientes se las tienen que arreglar para comprarlas, lo que no es fácil debido al limitado presupuesto familiar. Existen varios hospitales privados en la capital y en varios departamentos. Las prótesis para la gente pobre, así como las operaciones de cataratas son sin ningún costo para los pacientes. Los pacientes que antes se sometían a estas clases de cirugía tenían que contar con ciertos recursos económicos pues se llevaban a cabo en clínicas privadas. Las Brigadas Médicas Cubanas ayudaron a entrenar a médicos locales en esta clase de operaciones las que actualmente se llevan a cabo por todo el país completamente gratis.

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# Trump: una Amenaza Real Para los Migrantes y la Democracia

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mentira. También minimizan los hechos del 6 de enero de 2021, cuando una turba de sus seguidores atacó el Capitolio federal intentando evitar la certificación del legítimo triunfo de Joe Biden en esa elección.

El pasado 6 de enero se cumplieron tres años del lamentable, vergonzoso y sangriento incidente que cobró vidas, que demostró la fragilidad de nuestra democracia y que expuso de lo que es capaz Trump, quien ahora lidera la batalla republicana por la nominación presidencial de ese partido, pese a los más de 90 cargos criminales que pesan en su contra.

# La Mesa Redonda de Líderes del Valle respalda al Republicano Duarte

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que quieren "desfinanciar a la policía" titlando a los legisladores demócratas, aunque la gran mayoría de los cuales nunca se han pronunciado al respecto. Apoya a las escuelas particulares subvencionadas (charter) a pesar de que estas desvían recursos de las escuelas públicas.

Los votos de Duarte: En 2023, Duarte votó para condenar los esfuerzos para establecer restricciones en los presupuestos de las agencias policíacas. Votó en contra de la cancelación de las deudas de los Préstamos Estudiantiles Federales. Votó en contra de los controles de contaminación del aire en vehículos nuevos y motores pesados. Duarte votó en contra de la clasificación de las armas de fuego con "tirantes estabilizadores" como los utilizados en recientes tiroteos masivos.

Duarte votó para destruir al presidente Biden por "delitos graves y delitos menores" (13/12), así como al secretario de Seguridad Nacional, Mayorkas (13/11). Duarte votó a favor de los "Acuerdos de Abraham" y por el derecho de Israel a existir. Votó suprimir las voces en los colegios y las universidades que critiquen a Israel porque "puedan conducir a la creación de un ambiente hostil para los estudiantes, profesores y personal 'judíos'".

Votó en contra de la expulsión del representante George Santos por estafador y criminal (11/11) antes de votar a favor (12/11). Donantes de Duarte: Entre los diez principales se encuentran corporaciones con intereses globales en bienes raíces, agonegocios, filantropía, finanzas e inversiones. Un donante notable es Energy Transfer Partners, una empresa de transporte de petróleo con sede en Texas y propietaria en un 35% del controvertido oleoducto Dakota Access. Se opuso a un movimiento popular de grupos indígenas y ecologistas contra ese proyecto y que la Administración Obama finalmente detuvo. En su primer mes en el cargo, Trump emitió una orden ejecutiva que permite que el oleoducto siga adelante.

El otro donante notable es Bernard Marcus, cofundador de Home Depot. Marcus ayudó a financiar la organización antabortista Turning Point USA y la Sociedad Federalista, que contribuyó al control conservador de la Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos. Es el Presidente

# Muere Gil García de la radiodifusión en español

FORJUAN ESPARZA LOERA

(Nota del Editor: Este artículo fue publicado originalmente por Vida en el Valle, de Fresno, y se reproduce con el permiso respectivo de la publicación)

Gil García Padron—cuya fluidez frente al micrófono de radio o televisión lo impulsó al éxito como presentador del programa de entretenimiento más antiguo del Valle de San Joaquín—murió el día de Año Nuevo. No se ha revelado ninguna causa de muerte. Tenía alrededor de 60 años. Su hija, Jacqueline García-Trujillo, anunció su muerte el lunes 1 de enero de 2024 por la noche. "Con gran tristeza estoy aquí para anunciar el fallecimiento de mi papá", publicó en Facebook. "¡Mi padre era un hombre maravilloso que trajo alegría y felicidad a tanta gente con su hermosa vida!" Después de los servicios fúnebres celebrados el pasado 10 de enero, García Padron fue enterrado en el cementerio católico de San Pedro. Los amigos recurrieron a las redes sociales para ofrecer sus condolencias. "Por fin hoy me despido de alguien a quien siempre consideré como un 2do Padre/Amigo, el mejor guía y que estuvo siempre pero siempre a mi lado", dijo Tony López, un viejo amigo. "Voy a extrañar tus charlas, consejos y llamadas mi Gil... Me quedo con un hueco de tristeza en el corazón." "Pero al mismo tiempo celebró la alegría que Dios me dio y haber compartido este día como amigos y familiares por más de 40 años! Te extrañare mucho mi amigo".



Imagen de Gil García Padron captada el 11 de diciembre de 2009. Foto cortesía de Juan Esparza Loera/Vida en el Valle

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El cantante local Roger Amezola, en Facebook, dijo: "Con la triste noticia de que ya no tengo a mi gran amigo que siempre fue un ejemplo a seguir, digno de admiración y respeto. Fue el locutor favorito de mi mamá". Palomita López, disc jockey de Fresno desde hace mucho tiempo, publicó en Facebook: "Hoy mi corazón está triste por la partida de un gran amigo y ser humano, un 'icono' del Valle Central... Gil García, gracias por darme la oportunidad de trabajar en

Stan Santos es un activista por los derechos laborales de los trabajadores y de los inmigrantes. Contacto: commorkeradvocate@gmail.com.

Otro resultado de esas elecciones puede encontrarse en la tragedia humana que se está desarrollando en Gaza. Trump demostró su apoyo incondicional al primer ministro israelí Netanyahu, reconociendo a Jerusalén como capital de Israel y apoyando los asentamientos israelíes en territorio Palestino. Sus funcionarios negociaron los "Acuerdos de Abraham", que reconocieron la soberanía de Israel sobre Palestina, y la anexión para nuevos asentamientos. Esas acciones envalentonaron a Israel y provocaron furia en todo el mundo árabe, preparando el escenario para lo que está sucediendo hoy en Gaza. La administración Biden y los representantes en el Congreso permiten que miles de millones en armas y apoyo logístico fluyan a Israel y a un conflicto regional que se intensifica rápidamente. El 74% de los demócratas menores de 35 años simpatizan con los palestinos, y esas cifras van en aumento. Aunque es poco probable que estos mismos voten por Trump, ¿qué pasará si muchos simplemente se niegan a votar? ¿Se repetirá el "fenómeno Hillary"? De vuelta en el corazón del Valle de San Joaquín, las preocupaciones locales son ahora parte de las luchas nacionales e internacionales por la justicia. Los líderes comunitarios están decididos a responsabilizar a los candidatos y ya no cosecharán votos para alguien que no responda a sus necesidades. Un tropiezo o tartamudeo más por parte de Biden podría determinar el resultado de la elección presidencial, mientras el control del Congreso depende de un puñado de contendidas. En su resultado radicalcan las esperanzas y el destino de los pobres y marginados aquí, y tal vez del pueblo de Palestina en su tierra natal.

la comunidad LGBTQ y los inmigrantes pagaron caro. peor de los oponentes, y la nación, en particular los trabajadores, las mujeres, los pobres, de amplias franjas de su base. Hillary Clinton sufrió una derrota predecible por parte del señor de pelo blanco? El rival en las primarias, Bernie Sanders, resonó con muchos de los latino de Fresno observó a más de un hogar de habla hispana expresando: "¿Qué pasó con Duarte la campaña de Clinton de 2020, un caminante de precinto en un vecindario continuo apoyo y lealtad, muchos sienten que sus votos se dan por sentados. tradicional del partido parece carecer de la visión, los valores y el compromiso para su familias de clase trabajadora están desilusionados con la jerarquía demócrata. La estructura y nacionales: los grupos étnicos y sociales históricamente privados de derechos y las familias de clase trabajadora están desilusionados con la jerarquía demócrata. La estructura

¿Cuál es el contexto político actual? Hay un patrón emergente en las elecciones locales el último período del informe, había recaudado \$235 mil dólares. Para la campaña 2023-2024, Duarte ha recaudado más de \$1,7 millones. Adam Gray, en que volvería a hacerlo en 2024. Internacional del Instituto de Democracia para Israel. Marcus ha donado casi \$64 millones de dólares a candidatos republicanos en los últimos años, incluido Donald Trump, y declaró

Maribel Hastings es asesora ejecutiva de America's Voice y David Torres es asesor de medios en español de America's Voice.

Aunque suene dramático, es una amenaza real. \*\*\*\*\* nación, ni su historia, ni sus logros, ni su futuro. perseguir a sus opositores. Sería como coronar su eterna egolatría, en la que no cabe esta de dar rienda suelta a sus aspiraciones de autocracia y de emplear el aparato del Estado para no pudo lograr en su primer período, no solo en inmigración, sino en otros rubros, y a tratar Eso representa una amenaza crítica si se considera que Trump vendría a completar lo que republicana y si derrotara a Biden en noviembre. la renovada amenaza del potencial retorno de Trump al poder, si ganara la nominación legalización de los millones de indocumentados que están entre nosotros. Y también pulula una reforma migratoria sería y sensata que aborde todos los elementos, incluyendo la En resumen, 2024 es un Año Nuevo con viejos problemas; entre otros, la falta de cuando sus conservadoras huestes ganan. los privilegios que solía tener con total impunidad y donde las elecciones solo son válidas mundo "trumpiano" donde, por ejemplo, solo es aceptable la supremacía blanca y todos de democracia hasta convertirlo en un sinsentido, en algo que no tiene validez en el Ese es otro de los peligros que acechan con el expresidente, que es torcer el concepto

# LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

## COMUNITARIA

# LLAMAZA

### Trump: una Amenaza Real Para los Migrantes y la Democracia

POR MARIBEL HASTINGS Y DAVID TORRES

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Dicen que "Año Nuevo, Vida Nueva". Pero ese no es el caso para los miles de migrantes que siguen llegando a la frontera, muchos en busca de asilo, ni para los que el gobernador republicano de Texas, Greg Abbott, sigue enviando en autobuses y aviones desde ese estado a

ciudades demócratas como si fueran mercancía.

El partido republicano no busca soluciones

Tampoco parece haber cambios a nivel político con los republicanos del Senado, quienes insisten en minar las leyes de asilo y revivir políticas migratorias polémicas de Donald Trump a cambio de liberar la ayuda a Ucrania.

Este círculo vicioso que ha dado tantas vueltas parece

aceptar de nuevo su engranaje para evitar que se llegue a una solución en el ámbito migratorio, como si se tratara de un acto malévolo en sí mismo que tiene como objetivo afectar negativamente a cientos de familias que solo buscan la mejor de las vidas posibles, como millones de migrantes antes que ellos.

A eso se suma que entramos de lleno al año electoral, cuando la política, y no la sensatez, suele dominar el discurso y la narrativa de candidatos y precandidatos, los problemas migratorios, sino explotarlos en beneficio propio y de su precandidato presidencial favorito, Trump. El mismo que ha hecho todo lo posible por pintar la peor de las imágenes en torno a los migrantes, gracias a lo cual el



La elección presidencial de noviembre de 2024 es de gran importancia para el futuro de la democracia en Estados Unidos. De ganar Trump, los inmigrantes serán blanco de ataques raciales e insultos. Foto cortesía de The Commons

para asistir a los estados y ciudades que están absorbiendo a migrantes y refugiados. Es que el objetivo de los republicanos no es solucionar el problema. Es exacerbarlo para generar el caos que dicen querer combatir.

Es una guerra racial y Trump una amenaza

Y no les importa utilizar la más inhumana de las estrategias, que es culpar al más vulnerable y ponerlo en peligro junto a sus familias ante un sinsín de desequilibrados que han absorbido las absurdas teorías conspirativas, como la del "gran reemplazo", acabando con vidas inocentes.

Porque en realidad, lo que encabeza Trump es una guerra racial en la cual inmigrantes y minorías son satanizados con fines políticos. De igual modo encabeza una cruzada contra la democracia porque al sol de hoy él, sus aliados republicanos y sus seguidores insisten en afirmar que le "robaron" la elección en 2020, a pesar de que saben que es

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### La Mesa Redonda de Líderes del Valle respalda al Republicano Duarte

POR STAN SANTOS

El 9 de diciembre de 2023, la Mesa Redonda de Liderazgo del Valle Central se reunió en Firebaugh para entrevistar a los candidatos para el 13.º Distrito Congressional de California, que incluye partes de los condados de Merced, Madera, Stanislaus, Fresno y San Joaquin.

Historicamente el Distrito se ha beneficiado de una enorme ventaja de registros electorales demócratas. Desde la redistribución de distritos en 2022, el Distrito 13 sigue siendo de una población minoritaria mayoritaria con una ventaja de registro demócrata del 14%. Los blancos comprenden el 34% del Distrito y los hispanos, asiáticos y negros representan casi el 60%.

La Mesa Redonda de Liderazgo del Valle Central (CVLRT, por sus siglas en inglés) comenzó con miembros en su mayoría de Firebaugh, Mendota, Huron, San Joaquin y ciudades cercanas y comunidades no incorporadas, pero ahora incluye a Merced, Madera, Tulare y Kings. Las reuniones de CVLRT proporcionan un foro abierto para el diálogo en torno a las preocupaciones de la comunidad y

las decisiones se toman por consenso. La reunión del 9 de diciembre, dedicada a considerar los respaldos electorales, fue muy concurrída, con más de cincuenta participantes. El candidato Adam Gray habló de los diez años en que se desempeñó como representante en la Asamblea, donde formó parte del Caucus de Solucionadores de Problemas de California, que reunió a demócratas y republicanos. Hizo hincapié en un enfoque bipartidista para proteger el agua, los trabajadores y los empleos. Cuando se le preguntó sobre sus prioridades, respondió: "... agua, agua, agua". También reconoció las iniciativas para ayudar a los trabajadores independientemente de su estatus legal y proporcionar acceso a la atención médica. Aunque la presentación de Gray fue escrita y carecía de detalles, recordó a la audiencia que cuenta con el respaldo de la senadora estatal Anna Caballero, la representante de la Asamblea Esméralda Soría y la Federación Laboral de California.

El actual diputado John Duarte tuvo una presentación más pulida, presentándose como agricultor y hombre de negocios y afirmó tener una buena relación con miles de hispanos a través de su vivero en el condado de Stanislaus. Sobre sus prioridades expresó, "llevo agua a las grandes granjas, perforemos el petróleo estadounidense y volvamos a controlar el costo de vida". Enfatizó la necesidad de reconocer contribuciones de inmigrantes y arreglar a DACA. La Mesa Redonda de Liderazgo del Valle Central decidió apoyar al republicano John Duarte para el Congreso. Un comunicado de prensa conjunto emitido por la campaña de Duarte y CVLRT declaró: "John Duarte es el primer republicano que ha sido respaldado por la Mesa Redonda



El apoyo de Biden a Israel en su ataque destructor a los ciudadanos palestinos de Gaza podría costarle las elecciones a los Demócratas en 2024. Foto de Peter Maiden

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