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“Are They Supposed to Kill Themselves?”

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Huge Loss at the Supreme Court

On April 22, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case of *Johnson v. Grants Pass*, a case challenging a long-standing Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision called *Martin v. Boise, Idaho*. The *Martin* decision established that those experiencing homelessness cannot be fined or jailed for camping on public property if no shelter or housing is available.

On June 28, the Supreme Court announced a 6-3 decision declaring that people experiencing homelessness can be arrested and fined for sleeping outside when there are no safe alternatives, effectively overturning *Martin*. In a dissenting opinion, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor said, “Where do we put them if every city, every village, every town lacks compassion and passes a law identical to this? Where are they supposed to sleep? Are they supposed to kill themselves not sleeping?”

Continues on page 2



Activists hold up a banner in the Fresno City Council Chambers before a public hearing on a new homeless ordinance criminalizing the unhoused. Photo by Peter Maiden



Partial view of the Clovis Community Medical Center. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

Lawsuit Wants to Know Why Fresno Hospital “Lost” \$1 Billion

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

On Aug. 7, Cultiva La Salud and Fresno Building Healthy Communities filed a lawsuit against the Community Health System (CHS) for the misuse of \$1 billion in public funds. CHS operates both the Fresno Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC), which is the Fresno downtown hospital, and Clovis Community Medical Center.

According to the lawsuit, CHS has diverted substantial resources from Fresno CRMC, the region’s safety net hospital that serves a wide population of workers and low-income residents, to Clovis Community Medical Center, a medical facility that serves a more affluent population.

“First, we want to know how the money was spent,” says Genoveva Islas, executive director of Cultiva La Salud.

“Apparently, important resources were taken away from Fresno to invest in Clovis.”

Some numbers provided by the plaintiffs are astonishing: \$1 billion was invested in Clovis CMC for capital projects, including new facilities and upgrades, whereas only \$400 million was invested in Fresno CRMC. Overall, 70% of all net patient revenue for both hospitals is generated by Fresno CRMC.

Why did the board of directors of CHS decide to funnel such a big chunk of money from one hospital to the other?

“We would like to know more about this; we know that some developers are part of the board of directors and apparently some decisions were taken behind closed doors,” says Islas.

“In 2023, Fresno Hospital had 685 beds and got over 116,000 ER visits, which shows the importance of this hospital in comparison with Clovis. On top of that, Fresno has a Trauma Center, where injured people—either by accidents or acts of violence—are sent.”

No data are available about the impact of the closure of Madera Hospital, which resulted in more patients being sent to Fresno—particularly victims of accidents or violence.

“We also need to consider some demographics here,” says Islas. “Many of the Fresno Hospital patients are immigrants, people without health insurance or low income, while Clovis doesn’t have this population, like people living in poverty...So why was so much money ‘transferred’ from one hospital to the other?”

Islas insists that the plaintiffs are interested in a “better distribution” of the funds among hospitals, based on the needs of the patients.

There is a clear difference in the experience at the two hospitals: Clovis, is newer, just remodeled, with new equipment, and is comfortable, with almost no wait to see a doctor. Fresno is the opposite despite receiving a much bigger volume of patients.

“A very important point for us is that we want accountability regarding the use of funds,” says Islas. “We would like to know how patients at the Fresno Hospital are impacted by this situation of less resources; we want their testimonies.”

For more details about your local hospital, the lawsuit and/or to submit your testimony, visit care4fresno.org.

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“Are They Supposed to Kill Themselves?”

Continues from page 1

Fresno First to Ban Sleeping

On Aug. 15, a harsh anti-camping ordinance that basically bans all unhoused people from being anywhere at any time in the city 24 hours a day was passed as part of the Fresno City Council’s consent calendar.

Any member of the City Council could have pulled the ordinance item from the consent calendar for possible revision and further consideration, but no one did. It passed 5 to 1.

Although Council Member Annalisa Perea made a statement that the language was “too broad” and voted against it, that was a symbolic gesture as she did not pull the item from the consent calendar. Council Members Miguel Arias, Tyler Maxwell, Nelson Esparza, Mike Karbassi and Garry Bredefeld all supported the ordinance. There were shouts of “recall” from the audience as it passed through the consent calendar approval vote process.

The ordinance codifies that “no person may sit, lie, sleep or camp in public places at any time.” The ordinance calls for arrests, fines of up to \$1,000 per occurrence and jail time for up to a year, at the cost of about \$100 a day, or \$36,500 per year, per unhoused individual prosecuted. There will be additional, yet unknown, court and policing costs.

Ignoring Constituents and Years of Research

After two lengthy public hearings where dozens spoke in opposition and after receiving more than a hundred online and e-mail comments in opposition, the Council voted to move forward. The ordinance will be implemented on Sept. 15.

Decades of social scientific research show that the criminalization of our unhoused brothers and sisters is expensive, cruel and counterproductive. Sometimes it is deadly, for example, as when the Fresno Police Department’s Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) sweeps seize life-saving medications or displace people to hazardous locations, such as the area around Poverello House.

As at previous Council meetings, unhoused residents of Fresno have spoken about police abuse. At the Aug. 15 meeting, Orlando, currently unhoused, said, “I’m here to address the Fresno HART and their approach toward homeless people. They are acting outside their scope of duties. They take everything from us over and over again. How can we combat that?”

Several women testified how dangerous the Poverello area is, saying that gangs and drugs are prevalent.

Constant Fear of Rape and Being Robbed

Homeless advocates have documented the consistent HART abuse and Fourth Amendment violations. Advocates have pleaded with the City to stop forcing people to move to the Poverello area, where there is rampant crime and drug dealing.

Desiree Martinez of We Are Not Invisible, an advocacy and support group for unhoused people, made a brief, but moving, statement at the Council meeting.

“I’m up here to talk about the drugs,” said Martinez. “Inside the homes and outside the homes. I’m tired of everybody blaming the homeless. So, I did some research and found some data. I want to pay respect to those that died from overdoses in Fresno.”

She then proceeded to drop one marble for each person who died into a coffee can, producing a dramatic audio effect. She used the rest of her three minutes of comment to drop 120 marbles into the can.

As many of the speakers pointed out, the ordinance leaves it to the discretion of the police to determine who to fine or arrest. Undoubtedly, common stereotypes will be used.

Sean, who is unhoused, said, “This ordinance is simply not going to work. Now I can’t be out on the sidewalk because I’m documented to be homeless. I am going to be forced to go to jail because I use services like hygiene facilities, shelter services [and] food services. Now I’m identified as being homeless.”

Apparently, the City is intent on jailing unhoused people despite knowing that it will result in criminal records and fines the arrestees can’t pay, as well as make it much harder for unhoused people to exit homelessness.

The City also knows the ordinance will be expensive. One recent study of the aftermath of local criminalization ordinances in 100 major U.S. cities concluded that the measures did not lead to a decrease in the number of people counted as homeless. The measures did, however, lead to increased court and jail costs.

Take Action!

Contact Fresno’s mayor, the Fresno City Council members and the County supervisors. Tell them to quit punishing poor people and to stop scapegoating and abusing such a small segment of our population. Tell them to provide less costly solutions to the housing crisis such as the establishment of safe camps and tiny home villages.

Newsom’s False Outrage

“We’re done with the excuses,” said Governor Gavin Newsom. “The last big excuse was, ‘Well, the courts are saying we can’t do anything.’ Well, that’s no longer the case, so we had a simple executive order: Do your job.”

“There are no more excuses. You’ve got the money (not true), you’ve got the flexibility, you’ve got the green light, you’ve got the support from the state and the public is demanding it of you.”

Standing in front of a cleared homeless encampment in Los Angeles, after holding a weird photo op holding a shovel, Newsom vowed to start taking state funding away from cities and counties that are not doing enough to move people out of encampments.

“I want to see results,” Newsom told reporters at a news conference. “I don’t want to read about them. I don’t want to see the data. I want to see it.”

Newsom’s fake outrage could be a tactic to shift blame away from him. Blame for his failure to establish oversight of and direction to establish permanent housing with huge sums of public dollars. We have exposed the lack of state oversight of more than \$24 billion for the unhoused of California in our previous coverage.

The Hoover Institution recently reported that “since 2019, California has spent about \$24 billion on homelessness, but in this five-year period, homelessness increased by about 30,000, to more than 181,000. Put differently, California spent the equivalent of about \$160,000 per person (based on the 2019 figure) over the last five years. With this level of spending, it was reasonable to expect that homelessness would decline substantially. What went wrong?”

The report continues: “There are three major problems with California’s homelessness policies that are facilitating this increase. One problem is a significant lack of oversight



The Fresno City Council presides over the torture of those without housing.
 Photo by Bob McCloskey

and information about homelessness spending. The state auditor recently evaluated this spending and submitted a report that highlights the failure of the state to track spending and outcomes.”

Governor Newsom is to blame for this fiasco. The governor was urged to begin auditing homeless service providers in 2017. He did not. The governor’s latest directive to sweep all encampments in California is a recommendation, not an order, after years of his mismanagement. Both the city and county of Los Angeles are rejecting Newsom’s directive.

“Just by sweeping people off the streets [and] off sidewalks and putting them in jail is not going to settle this issue,” Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis said at a recent press conference.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass also condemned Newsom saying that “removing encampments would criminalize homeless people without getting to the root problem of homelessness.”

Fresno First (To Bully)

The City and County of Fresno are the first in the nation to implement such a harsh anti-camping ordinance. Despite overwhelming opposition, the Board of Supervisors is moving forward after giving unanimous approval at a first reading of a similar ordinance. It passed unanimously on Aug. 20. County and city politicians are implementing ordinances that bully and over-police the elderly (more than half of those on the streets are 50 or older) and the poorest of the poor.

These morally bankrupt “leaders” are attacking the most vulnerable human beings in the city and county. They claim they represent the small business community and that business owners are complaining about too many unhoused residents near their businesses.

Several of those attending the Aug. 15 Council meeting pointed out that past and current City policy of breaking up encampments on the outskirts of town has been the main factor in the influx of unhoused folks into shopping centers and near business areas throughout Fresno.

Understandably, business owners and residents have legitimate concerns, such as open drug use near their businesses and homes. Incarceration is not the answer.

Manuel Torres of the Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability says that “the ordinance is not a solution. The City and County should focus on providing [more] mental health services and open [more] detox centers.”

Instead of establishing safe camps, safe lots and tiny home villages, it appears plans are being made to jail people. As soon as the Council approved the anti-camping ordinance, it went into a closed session to discuss the use of a facility currently owned by the County to jail unhoused people.

Council Member Arias brought forward a proposal to use the abandoned Elkhorn Correctional Facility near Caruthers, 15 miles south of Fresno and currently owned by Fresno County, to incarcerate poor people.

Although Fresno County Sheriff John Zononi has stated publicly that “we don’t want to arrest [unhoused] people,” the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office has said that “arrests are a last resort, but we will take that initiative if needed.”

Wes White of the Salinas/Monterey County Homeless Union told the City Council, “You’re all domestic terrorists if this passes. What are you going to do, bury them alive? People still have inalienable rights, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. [Yet, they] are denied food, clothing, shelter, running water and electricity.

“Even in the Steinbeck days [the Great Depression], the government offered housing and running water. Nowadays, it’s just getting out. You’re not allowed anything. You’re going to cite them and put them in jail!”

Another speaker, James, said, “it seems to me that you are putting up a facade, like you’re doing something about it, but you are just perpetuating it. I’m here because I care about people, and you should too.” Any normal human being would care.

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

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Fresno: The Jurassic Park of Politics

Rural areas are predominantly conservative. Local governments look at new ideas with distrust, something we witness constantly at Fresno County Board of Supervisors meetings. Supervisors can taunt a speaker who presents "liberal" ideas. They don't argue, they attack.

Such public meetings are meant to be a forum in which elected officials and community members argue and debate ideas about how to implement policy that affects all the residents. Unfortunately, that is not our reality.

City of Fresno governance isn't much different, even though here and there City Council members show some "modern" gestures, albeit misguided.

For instance, on Aug. 15, a harsh anti-camping ordinance was approved that basically bans homeless people, threatening them with jail time and fines (see our front-page story, "Are They Supposed to Kill Themselves?"). Fresno received plenty of funding for several years to resolve the issue but did little. And now it has decided to go after the homeless.

This is bizarre behavior, a backward culture of making others pay for the City's own incompetence and lack of goodwill and basic intelligence. But it's not a surprise.

Fresno is growing fast, and new neighborhoods are being built continuously. Such construction is mostly for the middle and upper classes, with little or no affordable housing, deepening the class gap and pushing hundreds of people to homelessness.

Developers control the City of Fresno. New construction is popping everywhere to the point that you can't see an empty spot anywhere.

And the houses are all the same, all tight with a little separation in between.

And no green areas. None. Where are the children of the families populating those new neighborhoods supposed to play? The lack of green areas, or play areas, is a basic component of our daily life. Major cities have parks and plazas for the population to walk and socialize. But not in Fresno. More cement and less green also means more heat.

City Council members are afraid to demand that developers make a plaza or a small park every, let's say, 100 houses. They are afraid because developers are good campaign donors.

Remember that one of the main developers in Fresno, Darius Assemi (of Granville Homes), donated generously to defeat local Measure P (parks), which ultimately passed a few years ago. This measure will help to remodel existing parks and build others in underserved areas, but it can't obligate developers to build parks when creating new developments.

New houses—in reality, small houses, condos and/or apartments—are continually being built in Fresno without green spaces nearby. Thanks to our City Council members for that.

Till next month.



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.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Election 2024

Your August *Community Alliance* was excellent!

Your editor's comments are right on target. This November's election certainly is one of the most critical elections of our lifetimes, as we've spent 10 years of total chaos, violence, hatred and vitriol at the hands of Trump/MAGA insanity.

I've been politically active since before I could vote. We protested Vietnam (and helped finally stop that war) and marched for civil/human rights. We've tried to get people to pay attention to the destruction of our planet/the environment since the 1960s to no avail.

But we are now saying "enough"! Kamala Harris and Tim Walz now have a critical opportunity to make positive change for younger generations if voter suppression and greedy corporate billionaires can be kept at bay. Now is the time. We must win in November, and I finally think we can with positivity and hope.

Forward—we are not going back!

Susan Schmale
Sanger

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Your Vote

BY LAURA GARCIA

(Editor's note: We reproduce the following article with the permission of the El Tribuno del Pueblo.)

OK, we get it. Some people are saying that these presidential elections, like the previous ones and the ones before that, are just voting for the lesser of two evils. We're not going to argue about that.

But what we are going to say is that the 2024 presidential election is probably the most consequential in our lifetimes. The election is generating a great deal of hope that our developing movement for rights and democracy can push back the far right, allowing our fight for a better world for all to flourish.

We know this means to keep Trump—and the Project 2025 plan he represents, plus his own Agenda 47—out of the White House. This is not an endorsement of the Democratic Party. We have been driven backward over many years by both Democratic and Republican administrations. Growing millions are now saying they will not be driven backward any further, and they are fighting for the little democracy that we still have.

Donald Trump is openly telling America and the world what he is going to do if he wins: mass deportations and filling up the detention centers with immigrants and migrants. And if there is not enough room to keep your neighbors, relatives and children locked up, then open up the local jails and prisons for anyone who opposes Trump, citizen or not.

As if violating the human rights of millions of migrants and immigrants isn't enough, Trump will go after you. It's all in Project 2025. Here is a partial list of what he proposes:

- Abandon strategies for dealing with climate change, including repealing regulations that curb emissions, downsizing the Environmental Protection Agency and abolishing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Roll back civil rights protections, including cutting diversity, equity and inclusion-related programs and LGBTQ+ rights in healthcare, education and workplaces.
- Limit access to federal food assistance.
- Eliminate the Head Start early education program.
- Ban abortion nationwide.
- Furthermore, privatize Medicare and stop efforts to lower prescription drug prices.

Keeping Trump Out of the White House

Again, this is not an endorsement of the Democratic Party, which has continued to fail the American people in numerous ways, but rather a call to defend what little democracy remains in the United States.

Focusing on stopping Trump does not mean we stop applying pressure to the Democrats on our issues, such as ending the genocide in Palestine, stopping global warming, adopting a humane immigration policy, securing voting rights and reproductive rights, ending homelessness and poverty, racism, police killings and so on. It simply means that when we vote, we vote to defeat Project 2025.

Without preserving our little democracy, it will be even harder to wage the struggle to build a real democracy. A broad movement against corporate power and for democracy, peace, justice, equality and prosperity for all is rising in this country. It will not let anyone stand in its way as it pushes forward to secure our vision of a United States that is a free society that nurtures and protects all its people.



Photo courtesy of grandbrothers/Shutterstock

The Way Forward

"As working-class people, we are up against the most powerful forces in the world, and our mission is to take that power back. The deck is stacked against auto workers, educators and working-class people everywhere. But we have one thing that the billionaires in the corporate class will never have. We have solidarity. So, we have the power to come together in a common cause to defeat the forces of corporate greed. In the name of economic and social justice, we have solidarity."—United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain

We agree with Fain. It's up to the laboring masses to bring about change. To do so, they must have hope and faith in themselves. No matter how unreachable that vision appears to be, the working masses can bring about change. History has proven it.

When the yoke of the British monarchy became unbearable, Americans rallied and forged a movement to get rid of it. They fought hard and established a republic. This

republic wasn't perfect, but it paved the way for further change.

It inspired revolutions for democracy in Latin America, Haiti and México against the yoke of European (Spanish and Portuguese) imperialism.

Enslaved people in the United States rallied and forged a movement to get rid of the shackles of slavery. Slavery was abolished, though not without shedding rivers of blood.

When women couldn't stand the subjugation of second-class citizenship anymore, they rallied and forged a movement for their right to vote, thus ending their second-class status.

These are only a few examples of what the masses of this country can achieve when they rally together in solidarity and fight for the nation they aspire to.

Laura Garcia is the editor of *El Tribuno del Pueblo* (tribunodelpueblo.org).

Statewide Ballot Measures—The First Five

BY RACHEL YODELMAN

Your Nov. 5 ballot will include 10 measures for Californians to decide on, ranging from bond measures to cover repairs in public school buildings to repealing the 2008 same-sex marriage ban, which, though not enforceable, remains on the books. Other issues, including climate-action and prisoner labor measures, will also be presented to voters for important, consequential decisions.

We neatly summarize each proposition and let you know who supports or opposes each one to help you make your choices this November. These measures will determine how Californians will live their daily lives, so every vote counts. Remember: Not voting is still a vote—for the other side.

Here are the first five (Propositions 2–6) of November's 10 ballot propositions; the remaining five (Propositions 32–36) will follow in next month's issue:

Proposition 2: Public School Buildings Bond Measure

Nutshell: Provides \$10 billion for construction and modernization of K-12 public schools and community colleges, to be financed via bonds.

Background: Funds from the most recent bond measure, passed in 2016, are pretty much depleted. Voters rejected a March 2020 \$15 billion school bond measure, with only 47% approval. A simple majority is needed to pass, and this time, legislators have trimmed the cost of the proposed bond to \$10 billion.

School districts urgently need to repair dilapidated buildings, upgrade science labs, modernize septic systems, fix leaks and the like. Some school districts suffer from long-festering and potentially dangerous conditions of disrepair.

Gov. Gavin Newsom was faced with a choice between two bills—this one, or one that included funding for public universities. In the end, AB 247, the Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Schools and Local Community College Public Education Facilities Modernization, Repair and Safety Bond Act of 2024, whose chief author was Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance), won out.

The bill originally asked for \$14 billion, but the total was capped at \$10 billion, which will encourage voters to cover the most urgent needs of public schools across the state. The proposition allows for \$8.5 billion for K-12 renovations and new construction—10% of which is to be dedicated

to smaller school districts—while community colleges are allocated \$1.5 billion.

Who supports it: Association of California School Administrators, California School Boards Association, California Teachers Association, Coalition for Adequate School Housing, California Retired Teachers Association, Community College League of California and most California school districts

Who opposes it: Some poorer school districts oppose the measure because they feel the funding mechanism—school districts receive matches for what they can raise themselves—entails a built-in disparity, as wealthy districts are able to raise money more easily than poorer ones. Public Advocates, a nonprofit law firm, while recognizing the need for investment in public schools, says that the measure "prioritizes higher-wealth students and districts," as affluent districts can raise more cash and thus receive equally high funding matches.

Proposition 3: Right to Marry—Repeal Proposition 8

Nutshell: Replaces language in the state Constitution that still defines marriage as "between a man and a woman," with the more general concept of "the right to marry."

Background: Despite current federal protection of same-sex marriage and the unenforceability of a state law still on the books that bans same-sex marriage, proponents warn that this precautionary step is necessary because of potential action by the reactionaries and conservatives on the Supreme Court, who have hinted at repealing the right to marry.

A "yes" vote repeals Prop 8 (passed in 2008), a ban on same-sex marriage, which defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman. In addition, a "yes" vote affirms that the state Constitution will declare that "the right to marry is a fundamental right."

Predictably, reactionaries and religious zealots are opposed to the measure, asserting that God has already defined marriage and, furthermore, that it would somehow encourage sibling or parent-child marriages.

Who supports it: California Labor Federation, California Democratic Party, ACLU of Northern California, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California

Who opposes it: California Family Council, California Capitol Connection

Proposition 4: Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness and Clean Air

Nutshell: A \$10 billion bond measure to fund response to climate-related disasters, such as fires, drought, flooding and extreme heat, as well as water infrastructure projects and state and local parks.



Convicts working with axes and singing in a woodyard, Reed Camp, South Carolina, 1934. Prop 6 would prohibit slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime in California. Photo by Alan Lomax/Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ61-1348]

Background: Californians in recent history have approved four of six parks-and-environment measures. This measure will require that 40% of the bond revenue will be used to fund projects in lower-income communities or those communities affected by environmental disasters. If approved, Prop 4 would be California's biggest-ever investment in addressing climate change.

Who supports it: California Labor Federation, Clean Water Action, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council and dozens of climate-related and civil justice organizations under the umbrella nonprofit, ClimateBondNOW

Who opposes it: Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

Proposition 5: Lower Supermajority Requirement to 55% for Local Bond Measures to Fund Housing and Public Infrastructure Amendment (making it easier to pass housing and road bonds)

Continues on page 11

Palestinian Lives Don't Matter and Neither Does Yours

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

As the unabated slaughter continues in Gaza and the threat of regional war looms, the 79th Hiroshima Commemoration was held on Aug. 6 at Fresno State. The event was sponsored by the Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley in conjunction with Veterans for Peace, Peace Fresno, the *Community Alliance* newspaper, Fresno Japanese American Citizens League (JAACL) and several faith organizations. Speakers included Norman Otani, president of Hiroshima Chuka Kenjinkai; Dr. Saul Jiminez-Sandoval, president of Fresno State; the Honorable Dale Ikeda; and Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno).

All the speakers spoke passionately and eloquently of the need to seek peaceful resolutions to conflict and to end all wars. Many who spoke called for the abolishment of nuclear weapons and of the immense risk of nuclear war. "Never again" was the theme of the program.

The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* released a statement on Jan. 23 that said the nuclear war Doomsday Clock was reset to 90 seconds to midnight, citing ongoing wars, nuclear proliferation, bio threats, the climate crisis and disruptive technologies.

At the commemoration, Costa said, "It's 'we the people' that will ultimately determine better ways to achieve our goals for a more peaceful earth." He cited current "clouds of conflict" that threaten all of us.

Following the event, asked about the threat of a regional war, Costa responded that he had called for a ceasefire with the hostages released. He said that he voted for humanitarian aid for Gaza and called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech before Congress "unhelpful." Costa added that he does not support an arms embargo and ending military aid to Israel. He claimed that Congress is "putting pressure" on the Netanyahu government.

Costa has failed to meet with local Palestinian American community members and other concerned constituents regarding the genocide in Gaza. "We've attempted to do that, and we still want to," Costa said. "It became clear the first [attempted] meeting was going to be hijacked by others who have a different agenda.



Rep. Jim Costa (center) with the speakers and organizers of the Hiroshima commemoration. Photo by Bob McCloskey

in Lebanon and Iran signal that the Israeli government is willing to start a regional war. A regional war in the Middle East, where Israel and Pakistan both possess nuclear armaments.

Al Jazeera News reports that "a top commander of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, Fuad Shukur, was killed in a neighborhood in Beirut on July 30. Israel says it carried out the 'targeted strike' in response to a rocket that killed 12 young people in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights on July 30. They were members of the Druze community.

"Hezbollah denies they launched the rocket and are considered allies of the Druze. When Israeli government officials went to the funerals of the young victims of the explosion, the Druze villagers asked them to leave. Some experts and others say that it could have been an Iron Dome missile that failed or even a false flag operation."

On July 31, Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, was assassinated along with his personal bodyguard in the Iranian capital of Tehran by an Israeli attack. Haniyeh was killed in his apartment either by a rocket attack or a pre-planted bomb. He was also the chief negotiator in the peace talks with Israel. This could end all chances for a ceasefire at this time.

It's clear that as the genocide in Gaza continues, as Israeli escalation destabilizes governments and as Israel launches attacks with U.S. supplied armaments that could lead to wider war, everyone's life is at risk. Our lives matter, Palestinian lives matter. We all need to take action to end the war on Gaza and all wars.

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

Take Action!

Call Rep. Jim Costa and Sen. Alex Padilla at 202-224-3121 (Capitol switchboard).

Ask them to support an immediate ceasefire with hostage releases, massive humanitarian aid to Gazans and an end of military aid to Israel.

Join the demonstration in front of their offices every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 2440 Tulare Street in Fresno.

Only we can save ourselves.

"I want to have a conversation with those that have so many heartfelt concerns that I share, however, we have issues we have to deal with. They involve security here [and] for my staff."

This reporter has attended many demonstrations and has never witnessed any violence whatsoever and mentioned that in response. Costa continued, "I was a classmate of [former Rep.] Gabby Gifford." (Gifford was shot on Jan. 8, 2011. She was injured and severely disabled by an assailant at a campaign event in Arizona.)

"Threats to members of Congress have increased 400% over the last 18 months, two years, that's a fact," said Costa. Several activists who have attempted to schedule a meeting with Costa expressed outrage at his implication of threats of violence from constituents.

Does President Biden, Rep. Costa and most of Congress care about Palestinian lives? Do they care about inciting a regional war that could lead to nuclear conflict? Do they care about ending all life on earth? Do they care about your life? Recent Congressional action and unending support for Israel seem to indicate that they don't.

As the U.S. Congress approves another \$20 billion in arms shipments to Israel, the unbelievable carnage continues. Regional war or even nuclear war could break out. Tensions are rising every day throughout the region. One cannot blame the people and governments of the region for feeling outrage. Outrage directed at Israel and the United States.

All over the Middle East and North Africa, 360 million people are getting reports such as this:

"The bodies of Palestinians killed in the latest Israeli [air strike] massacre in Gaza were destroyed so far beyond recognition that doctors have only been able to give grieving families an anonymous bag of human remains to bury," said Tareq S. Hajjaj on Aug. 11 on the Mondoweiss news service.

On Aug. 10, this Israeli strike on a Gaza school killed more than 100 people. Authorities in Gaza said Israeli bombs hit the school-turned-shelter as people were praying. To date, the Gaza Health Ministry reports more than 40,000 Palestinian deaths in Gaza and the *Lancet Medical Journal* recently predicted that there will be more than 180,000 deaths due to disease, lack of access to medical treatment, malnutrition and starvation.

The recent escalation of Israeli Defense Forces attacks on Hezbollah fighters and civilians in Lebanon near the border and assassinations by Israel of Hezbollah and Hamas leaders

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Demonstrations: Saturdays 6pm at Blackstone & Nees

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Fresno's MAGA Death Squads

BY KEVIN HALL

Pro tip: If you're relying on the Supreme Court's extreme right-wing majority for guidance, you're doing it wrong.

But that's exactly what the Fresno City Council and Fresno County Board of Supervisors did in August as they rushed through harsh new ordinances intended to violate people's constitutional protection against cruel and unusual punishment. Their actions followed the court's 6-3 decision in June to overturn the *Grants Pass* case, named for the Oregon town that enacted a law targeting homeless people with criminal penalties.

Rather than heed the words of liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Democrats have joined Donald Trump's MAGA movement in attacking people at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, in this case the poorest of the poor. Writing for the three-person dissent, she pointed out the homeless crisis stems from a variety of "interconnected issues, including crippling debt and stagnant wages; domestic and sexual abuse; physical and psychiatric disabilities; and rising housing costs coupled with declining affordable housing options."

Sotomayor could have been writing about Fresno specifically and its politicians' long history of ignoring affordable housing needs while in service to profiteering developers. "The only question [before the court]," she wrote, "is whether the Constitution permits punishing homeless people with no access to shelter for sleeping in public with as little as a blanket to keep warm."

Instead of listening to the voice of reason, a new generation of ambitious politicians has eagerly returned to Fresno's tough love roots as home of the now infamous Three Strikes and You're Out law, which mandated long prison sentences for people who committed nonviolent crimes, inflicting generational harm on thousands of poor families statewide.

Whipping up hysteria is the MAGA way, and it's a movement with red and blue wings where ideology supplants critical thinking and opinion becomes fact. Every sitting City Council member is either currently running for higher office or will be.

Local political wisdom has it that the tougher on crime you are the more voters like it. But crime is down while homelessness is up, so unhoused people now serve as convenient targets and must be criminalized. Their lives have become political stepping-stones for County Supervisor candidates Garry Bredefeld and Luis Chavez; Tyler Maxwell in his campaign for mayor; and Annalisa Perea, Miguel Arias, Nelson Esparza and Michael Karbassi's reach for the Statehouse.

The direct result of their blind ambition will be the cruel deaths of people forced to live on the streets, and high temperatures will become the primary cause. July was the hottest on record in Fresno as global average temperatures set four new records in a single week amid a run of the 13 hottest months ever. And it's only going to get worse.

Capricious local Democrats and Republicans continue to ignore the inescapable realities of climate change and the need to radically alter their current political priorities. According to CalMatters reporter Lynn La's July article, extreme heat is costly and deadly in California, "Low-income communities, older adults and outdoor workers are disproportionately harmed by extreme heat... Black, Native American and Hispanic Californians also had the highest heat-related death rates compared to Asian and white residents."

The people that elected officials have condemned to death are not strangers. Three out of four are locals, their former neighbors. As La's colleague Marisa Kendall reported in her July article "6 Myths About Homelessness in California":

"The vast majority of people who are homeless in California are from California—and most are still living in the same county where they lost their housing, according to a recent large-scale survey of unhoused Californians conducted by the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. The survey found 90% of participants were from California (meaning they lived in California when they

CLIMATE POLITICS

became homeless) and 75% lived in the same county where they were last housed. And 66% were born in California, while 87% were born in the United States."

Other major myths, several of which City Council members and County supervisors used as justification for their votes, include the following:

Myth: Everyone living on the street is addicted to drugs or mentally ill

Myth: People who are homeless don't work and don't want to work

Myth: People who are homeless don't want shelter or housing

"We, the community behind me, put you in those seats, and you're sitting there right now using your power to kill us. Every unhoused individual out here right now is walking on death row. You have now signed every unhoused individual in Fresno their death certificate," Dez Martinez told the Council as reported on ABC30 Action News by Nic Garcia and Kate Nemarich.

"If you guys cared about anybody else, you guys would work with a solution to figure this out instead of just criminalizing people," said Krystal (no surname given), who has lived in a shelter for two years. "It's just really hard. When you get to become homeless it's hard to come out of it. Especially when you have to do everything just to survive. I didn't think it was actually going to be that hard until I became homeless myself."

And the planet, the state, the valley and every town in it will continue to see increased impacts—and the accompanying deaths—from an increasingly destabilized weather system and a society that casts aside the injured and incapacitated, pathetically represented in office by a political class running on myth, superstition and fearmongering.

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.

Narratives That Harm: Stories as Weapons

BY STEVEN ROESCH

Nowadays you don't hear much about Sigmund Freud.

Even a few decades ago, his thoughts about human behavior still commanded a lot of attention. In the 21st century, though, they're rarely discussed.

And yet the legacy of Freud's thought plays a key role in Annalee Newitz's recent book, *Stories Are Weapons: Psychological Warfare and the American Mind*, in which she probes—and sheds some light on—the disconcerting times that Americans now find themselves in.

Freud, who made seminal contributions to the field of psychology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, aimed to heal his clients' neuroses by using a "talking cure" that would guide them to confront forces in their unconscious and, over time, lead more rewarding lives.

But some of those who studied Freud's theories had other goals in mind.

A psychological procedure that arose from laudable intentions, it seems, can be readily subverted to promote ends that are anything but.

Or, as Newitz puts it, "many enthusiastic Freudians used his work in contexts that the doctor never intended, like advertising and wartime propaganda."

Prominent among such enthusiasts was Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew. His book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, explored how the mass media could be harnessed to appeal to people's unconscious biases—and, by extension, to substantially influence their behavior.

One example is Bernays' advertising campaign for Lucky Strike cigarettes in the late 1920s. The campaign, which targeted young women, drew on Freud's model of the unconscious and deftly linked his target audience's yearning for freedom with smoking cigarettes.

Unlike his uncle's beneficent intentions, Bernays had developed "a system for manipulating people into behaving irrationally."

It turns out that similar techniques have since found a place in other areas—including politics.

During World War II, three researchers at UC Berkeley put together a new sort of personality test and administered it to thousands of Americans. They named it the F-scale test.

The test's purpose: to assess the chances that an individual might develop fascist leanings.

The trio determined "that certain people do have a measurable disposition that primes them to follow strongman leaders with racist and antisemitic tendencies," and they suggested that certain educational reforms could hinder the growth of such tendencies.

But, as in the case of Bernays, psychological insights can be appropriated not to promote mental well-being, but for completely different agendas.

Flash forward to the 21st century and a British company called Cambridge Analytica.

Like their Berkeley predecessors, the Cambridge Analytica team sought to identify people with (often unconscious) authoritarian impulses.

Unlike their Berkeley predecessors, however, they wanted to nurture those impulses with the right sorts of input.

By examining people's "likes" on Facebook, they theorized, you could gain deep insights into their personalities—and devise ways to influence their attitudes and behaviors.

And so they constructed a personality-test app that could be used on Facebook—a social media Trojan horse of sorts that would gather data for their research.

Their game plan worked out quite well.

Once the app was available, they collected information about those who took their so-called Big Five test—including those people's "likes." In addition, they could access comparable information about all of those people's friends.

In this way, although only roughly 270,000 actually took the app's personality test, they were able to Hoover up intel about a whopping 87 million Facebook users.

As Newitz puts it, "Knowing people's likes and dislikes would make them ripe for manipulation, as long as the right political messages were crafted to trigger them."

The researchers began to test out messages—stories, as Newitz calls them—that could increase support for right-wing candidates.

According to Christopher Wylie, the whistleblower, some of Trump's 2016 slogans, among them "Make America Great Again" and "Drain the Swamp," were the result of this research.

Someone who was closely involved with Cambridge Analytica's project: Steve Bannon.

Two people who supported the company with millions of dollars: the right-wing plutocrats Robert and Rebekah Mercer.

Rebekah Mercer and Bannon even served on the company's board.

In other chapters of *Stories Are Weapons*, Newitz traces how related methods have been used in military conflicts—to demoralize the enemy, for example, or to spread misinformation.

To learn more about such "psyops," or psychological operations, she consulted someone who had taught this subject for the U.S. Army for several years.

To preserve his anonymity, she gives him the moniker Han Solo.

One key point that Han Solo stressed to her: "We do not conduct PSYOPS (psychological operations) against U.S. citizens. We cannot do that. That's a bright red line you cannot cross."

Why aren't such actions allowed?

The military, Solo explained, was concerned about possible "second- and third-order effects." For example, those targeted by such psyops might become so confused "that they'd no longer know what should count as true, and they come to mistrust everything and everyone and believe nothing."

Such a legitimization crisis could produce a climate in which "social consensus and even simple communication become impossible because people disagree about the legitimacy of basic scientific and historical truths."

Stories Are Weapons suggests that the threat of such a legitimization crisis is very much with us, given the psyops activities of actors both foreign and domestic.

BOOK REVIEW

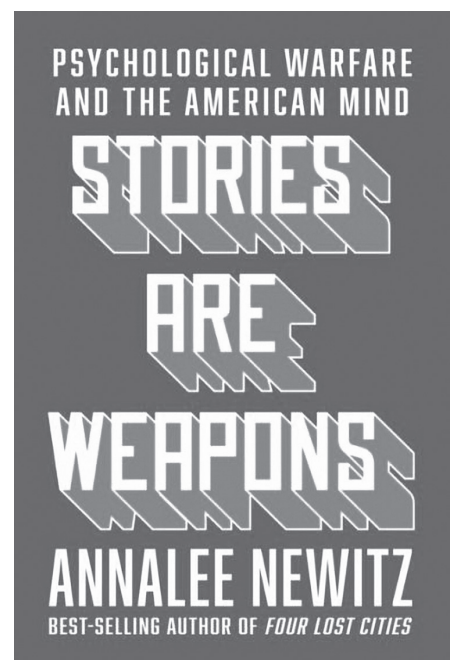
The research that Newitz assembles in the book is impressive. Far less impressive, however, are the proposals she makes in later chapters for combatting such psychological operations. At one point, she celebrates the role that public libraries play in fostering a deep sense of community and the opportunity for personal growth, for example, but one could argue that even first-rate libraries can do little to stem the onslaught of manipulation that she's depicted.

More immediately useful is something she writes early on. All of us should reconsider the role that stories take in our lives, and all of us need to be mindful of how we respond to the stories that we encounter.

Stories often aren't neutral. Far from being mere entertainment, opportunities for diversion, or occasionally, for reflection, they sometimes harbor a dark side.

"If a story can make you feel better or smarter, it can also make you feel worse and more confused," she notes. "And if that story can change your behavior, whether in the voting booth or on the street—it becomes a weapon."

Steven Roesch is a retired German and English teacher who taught in the Fresno Unified School District for 30 years. Contact him at stevenroesch12@comcast.net.





Central Valley Leadership Round Table

To All Local, State, and Federal Elected Officials in California and Beyond
Re: Integral and Inclusive Comprehensive Immigration “Amnesty” Reform

The Central Valley Leadership Round Table (CVLRT) believes that we must move beyond the broken and failed immigration reforms of the past. Instead, the CVLRT recommends correcting the weaknesses in the “American Dream and Promise Act”. Integral and Inclusive Comprehensive Immigration “Amnesty” Reform (IICIAR) must address crucial components:

- Fixing the broken immigration system is long overdue. Failed proposals, so called “band-aid” reforms, have included guest workers and H2A Programs which have not resolved the “uncertain” status of law-abiding immigrant residents (such as DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals], TPS [Temporary Protected Status], and other visa holders) paying taxes via an ITIN.
- For effective immigration reform such as IICIAR, the American Dream and Promise Act” proposed by the two core political parties must include the terms “Integral” and “Inclusive.”
- Families and workers are desperately searching to become an integral part of American society and come out of the shadows. They pay taxes via an ITIN.
- Without Congressional action to fix our broken immigration system, families will continue to suffer and live in fear of being separated from their children.
- Immigrant families (TPS, DACA) living in the U.S (3 to 40 years) work in the United States, pay taxes with federal issued ITIN number, buy homes, own businesses, and hire employees (creating jobs) further stimulating the US economy.
- Hard-working families, agricultural workers, and law-abiding immigrants deserve a “shot” at the American dream.

The CVLRT believes that elected officials on all sides of the aisle must recognize that sitting idle, staying silent, and lacking the political will to fix the “broken-immigration-system” has reached a boiling point.

Sincerely, Eliseo Gamiño, President, Central Valley Leadership Round Table
For more information, please email: eliseogamino43@gmail.com



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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

WHY WON'T JIM COSTA MEET WITH CONSTITUENTS?

When Rep. Jim Costa spoke on Aug. 6 at the Hiroshima remembrance program at Fresno State's Peace Garden, several of us turned our backs to him, holding a sign stating "From Hiroshima to Palestine Stop the Bombs." Lori Garcia made a sign based on signs in Japan marking 79 years since the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Costa made remarks about remembering the atrocities we caused in Hiroshima and spoke of coming together, but he has not shown that sentiment with regard to the Palestinians suffering 10 months of bombardment by Israel using mostly U.S. bombs. He has refused to personally speak to any Palestinians or the Fresno peace groups regarding a ceasefire, an end to military aid to Israel and a weapons embargo on Israel. Costa sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He ignores his constituents, so we showed him our disdain.

—Peace ~ Teresa Castillo



Turned our backs to Costa

Gloria Hernandez, Lori Garcia, Gerry Bill, Nancy Waidtlow and Ken Hudson protest Rep. Jim Costa's refusal to meet with constituents to discuss Israel's war on Palestine. Photos by Teresa Castillo



Jean Hays from WILPF and Ken Hudson from Peace Fresno met with Senator Laphonza Butler's field representative and intern to discuss the abolition of nuclear weapons and disappointment over the approval of NDAA 2024. Photo by Carol Goiburn, who was also present at the meeting

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE IN ACTION

In the August 2024 WILPF page, a question was brought up in the article entitled "We need to talk about nuclear war—and this time it's worse" about what prompted both California senators to approve the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024 while the majority of U.S. representatives voted no. As a result, the Legislative Committee of WILPF, along with VFP180, the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and Peace Fresno, composed a letter expressing our disapproval of that "Yes" vote as well as urging both senators to consider the ramifications of their actions. Pictured are activists meeting with field representatives of both senators on July 17.

Jean Hays from WILPF and Ken Hudson from Peace Fresno, with Margaret Arechiga, Senator Alex Padilla's field representative. Photo by Carol Goiburn, who was also present at the meeting



STATEMENT SUPPORTING NUCLEAR ABOLITION

We teeter on a precipice no human has ever experienced before. It is a precipice of great evil. We say evil because with one detonation of one thermonuclear warhead, millions of lives will be gone. We say evil because with one warhead will come more warheads and billions of lives will be gone. We say evil because a general exchange of nuclear weapons would end most life on Earth.

We align ourselves with the thinking of those who are concerned that the world is on a downward spiral toward climate catastrophe and our nation increasingly wastes its scarce resources on weapons that are ultimately useless except to line the pockets of the Military-Industrial-Congressional-Intelligence-Media-Academic-Think-Tank (MICIMATT) complex. International security would best be served by committing a world war level of effort to address the climate crisis rather than preparing for every conceivable military threat.

With an accelerated global reduction and rapid elimination of nuclear weapons, the risk of nuclear confrontation will be greatly reduced, will bring us back from the precipice and will ensure future generations will be born. Currently, 14,000 nuclear bombs exist; 13,000 of them are controlled by the United States and Russia. With a U.S. proposed budget of nearly \$2 trillion in the next 30 years for two new bomb factories, new missiles, planes, submarines and redesigned warheads, it is clear that the United States is not acting in "good faith" for a "cessation of the arms race at an early date" as required by the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which it is a signatory.

The "Veterans for Peace Nuclear Posture Review" contains various proposals to bring the United States back to a place of acting in good faith and they include the following:

- ✓ The United States immediately cease its "modernization" program and redirect funds to implement non-carbon, non-nuclear energy systems, reduce the impact of climate change and provide for societal needs;
- ✓ The United States immediately separate all the warheads from their delivery systems and make the world safer from unintended nuclear catastrophe;
- ✓ U.S. nuclear weapons be removed from other countries;
- ✓ Re-implement the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and eliminate all missile "defense" systems;
- ✓ Ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty;
- ✓ Re-implement the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty; and
- ✓ Negotiate with Russia to reduce our nuclear arsenals to 1,000 nuclear weapons each and call all the other parties to the table to negotiate for a treaty to abolish nuclear weapons.

Many more proposals exist that the United States could implement, but that would require the will to do so. The world is a much more dangerous place with nuclear weapons, particularly given the current confrontations among nuclear-armed nations.

Activist efforts to restrain U.S. militarism and intervention around the globe, to cut the military budget and to encourage mutual respect and diplomacy among nations must therefore go hand-in-hand with efforts to reduce and eliminate all nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which went into effect on January 22, 2021, is a historic and extremely important event. It expresses the clear desire of the peoples of the world to be free from nuclear weapons and the threat of a nuclear war that could end human civilization.

We thank Veterans for Peace for their work on the "Nuclear Posture Review," from which many ideas expressed here were taken. Together, we can step away from the precipice threatening our very existence. Together, we can ignite that which is needed now more than ever and that is a notable and profound transformation in the way the United States thinks about its posture toward the rest of the world. We say, "let's give peace a chance." We say, "abolish nuclear weapons."

—Women's International League for Peace & Freedom
 —Veterans for Peace—Chapter 180
 —Fresno Center for Nonviolence

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 or information updates, e-mail Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF MEETING

Sept. 12 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., on Zoom and usually also at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. This meeting is open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For info

on the in-person option, contact Teresa at taca_03@gmail.com.

STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

Sept. 25 (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 or text 559-270-1023.

WOMEN IN BLACK

On heat hiatus.



SIERRA CLUB

TEHIPITE CHAPTER

A Brief History and Geography of the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club was founded in 1892, with John Muir elected as its first President. Headquartered in Oakland, the Club has 64 chapters nationwide. There is one chapter per state, except for California, which has fourteen chapters ranging from 1,200 to roughly 25,000 members. Our Tehipite (tuh-HIP-pit-tee) Chapter covers four inland Central California counties: Fresno, Madera, Merced and Mariposa, partly in the San Joaquin Valley and partly in the Sierra Nevada mountains and foothills, with approximately 1,700 members. The Chapter was created in 1953 when members fought against the logging of old-growth forest in Kings Canyon, where a 3,600-foot rock formation, Tehipite Dome, lies in the remote backcountry. One member, George Whitmore, who joined in 1954 and was a member of our Executive Committee until his passing in 2021, was a member of the 1957 first ascent party of El Capitan in Yosemite Valley.

The Club, founded by longtime Yosemite Valley resident John Muir, gained popularity as people became educated about the destruction wrought by the timber industry. Historically, the Club's focus was Yosemite National Park, and by the 1920s, caravans of more than 100 autos took weekend trips to the Valley from San Francisco. The Club's strategy has been to get people into the outdoors to appreciate the awe-inspiring wonders of Nature — such as the iconic giant sequoia trees and Yosemite Valley's walls of rock — in the hope that they would return home to join the Club and lobby elected officials to protect these jewels.

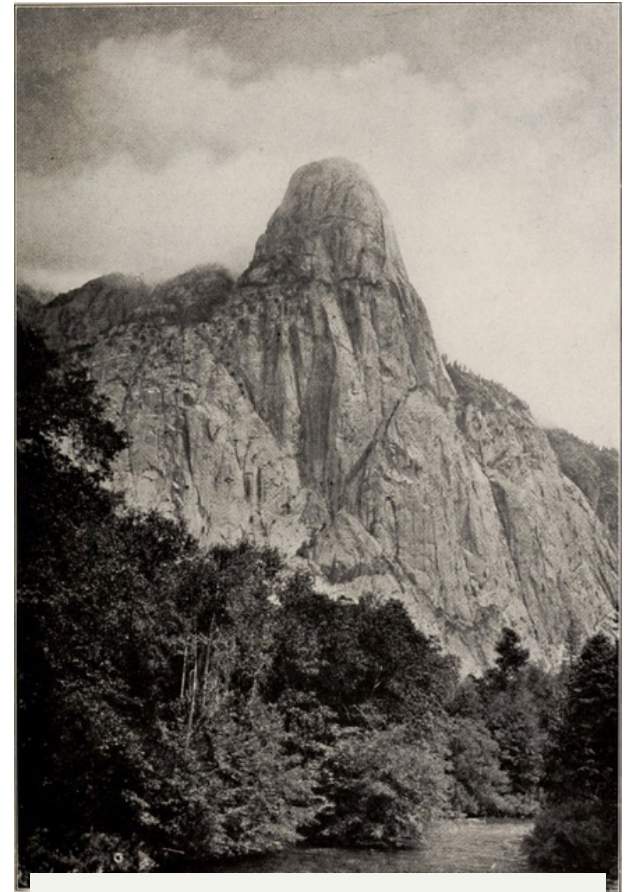
Starting in the 1870s, our present scientific understanding of ecology did not yet exist. Industries dedicated to the extraction of natural resources — timber, steel, oil, and minerals — held tremendous power. Fueled by an economic boom following the Civil War, railroads opened up tracts of formerly inaccessible land. They enabled logging, settlement of the West, and

the slaughter of the Great Plains buffalo for their hides. Driven by a Republican majority in Congress and a Supreme Court which saw its role as to protect unfettered Capitalism and the exploitation of Nature for profit.

Ancient forests were leveled, first in the upper Midwest in the 1870s and, beginning in the 1890s, in the Pacific Northwest. Meanwhile, Natives who inhabited these landscapes were judged as impediments to progress and, citing Manifest Destiny ("God's will") white settlers killed or dispossessed the Natives of their lands. At the urging of John Muir, Yosemite Valley was added to the National Park in 1905. Within five years, the U.S. Army had driven out its Native inhabitants, demolished two villages, and burned a third to the ground. Native peoples — who understand how to live in harmony with the natural world — were erased — their presence incompatible with the Western concepts of "progress" and Wilderness.

Organized opposition to this wanton destruction of old-growth forests began during the Progressive era, 1900-1914, when President Theodore Roosevelt viewed the elimination of the forests as a violation of the Creation. The largest iconic giant sequoias were named (the General Grant tree, for example) and preserved for future generations. The Antiquities Act of 1906 enabled the President to protect lands from exploitation without Congressional legislation. At the same time, National Forests were conceptualized as forest reserves — logging would now be spread out over decades rather than all at once — which gained the support of Wall Street.

Today, with an understanding of ecosystems, we have moved beyond thinking of forests as "tree farms" to recognize that all living things are part of the web of life. When a single giant sequoia tree dies, it decomposes on the forest floor, providing a home to millions of insects. Dead tree snags provide 'apartments' for various animal species. The black-backed woodpecker needs fire-killed trees to nest in, cavities which are subsequently adopted by numerous other animal species. Mycorrhizal



Tehipite Dome (1920)
Kings Canyon National Park

fungi form a web in forest soil, serving as a communications network between trees.

Unfortunately, the timber industry and its Congressional allies still threaten our forests with logging, forests whose biomass is essential for absorbing CO2 and mitigating climate change. The Sierra Club is dedicated to utilizing the best available science, as well as lawsuits, legislation, and grassroots organizing, to counter these destructive activities and protect our wild and natural areas of America. Also, the Club now recognize the important contributions of our Native tribes and their rich cultures, which still exist on the landscape, actively working to live in harmony with Nature. We're all in this together.

To learn more about, or volunteer with, our Sierra Club campaigns to protect clean air and water, wetlands, and endangered species, in the San Joaquin Valley as well as the Sierra mountains, contact Gary at 559-790-3495 or garylaskylaw@gmail.com.

Welcome back from our summer hiatus with an IN-PERSON meeting:

Thursday, September 19 at 7:00 PM
Woodward Park Library
944 E. Perrin Ave, Fresno

Our guest speaker will be Deanna Lynn Wulff, Executive Director and founder of Unite the Parks. Deanna will present on the *Range of Light National Monument: The Future of Recreation, Restoration & Rejuvenation in the Southern Sierra Nevada*.

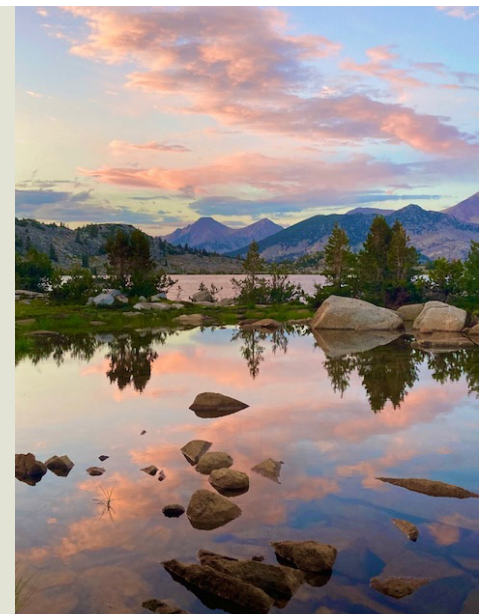
Learn about this decade-long campaign to protect 1.4 million acres of federal land lying between Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. Much work and much love went into this proposal, and a lot of struggle.

Unite the Parks works to protect the Southern Sierra Nevada and serve people and wildlife in the region. Deanna has been hiking in the Sierra Nevada since she was six years old, has been a ranger and river guide, and has a life-long love and appreciation for the beauty of the Range of Light, which continues to inspire her to this day. She is the author of the *Girl's Guide to Getting Lost: Hard Hikes for Wild Women*, and the Range of Light National Monument Act.

If you'd like more specific information about Unite the Parks visit their website, at www.unithetheparks.org/the-range-of-light-national-monument

Email Karen Hammer at ecuagirl45@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

Hope to see you there!



Having Health Insurance Can Save Your Life

BY PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

Maria is a meticulous woman. She's organized, brushes her teeth after every meal, counts her calories, works out daily with her son—she tries to control what she can. But as in all things with life, even our own health can't be completely controlled. A few years ago, she began to feel an intense abdominal pain but avoided going to the doctor because it was too expensive for her.

Eventually, the pain was too much for her to handle and she conceded. Maria was told it was a hernia. Hernias left untreated are incredibly dangerous; they can become strangulated, resulting in necrotizing enterocolitis (severe inflammation of the intestine) and sepsis. She needed surgery, the sooner the better.

Meticulous Maria put forth a savings plan because, like half of the undocumented immigrants in the United States, she was uninsured. As an undocumented woman raising a young boy completely alone, she didn't have any options but to work and hope she could save enough money before it was too late. She had been saving for a full year when she received a letter from Medi-Cal that would change everything.

It is estimated that there are 1.8 million undocumented immigrants in California (as of 2022). Immigrants who go to work, pay taxes and contribute to society everyday, people trying to live better lives beside you. Immigrants contribute to our economy without being able to partake in the fruit of their labor. Yet, in 2022, undocumented immigrants in California contributed \$8.5 billion in state and local taxes.

Many immigrants are working to the bone, avoiding doctors for their aches and pains, because they can only afford vapor rub and prayers. In recent years, California has taken steps to change that.

Access to Medi-Cal for undocumented individuals in this state has gradually expanded. In 2015, children aged one to 18 became eligible. By 2019, young adults ages 19–25 were included. In 2022, adults ages 50 and older gained eligibility, and this year, the program further extended to cover adults ages 26–49. This momentous change has made California the first state to offer medical insurance

to all its low-income residents, including undocumented immigrants.

At age 33, Maria (or Mari as her friends call her) wasn't in any qualifying age groups and hadn't even considered applying. "I didn't even apply. It was offered to me. I had even spent a year already saving up for the surgery."

She had received a letter in the mail in November 2023 after her nurse had told her to look into a new law extending the qualifying ages in 2024. In December, she was approved and by early January she received her Medi-Cal card. The same card that would be used later that month to cover her surgery.

She went on to explain how life-changing that was. She had not been close to saving the amount she needed, but this money would now cover bills for the three weeks she wasn't able to work to recover from surgery.

Another immigrant, who asked to be called Veronica Ruiz, had a slightly different experience with Medi-Cal. Ruiz is a 56-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico. She's lived in the Central Valley for more than two decades, raising her now adult son and daughter on her own.

She has battled with diabetes for more than half her life and almost lost that battle about 10 years ago. At that time, she didn't qualify for Medi-Cal and had heard that signing up for these types of benefits could endanger her with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) or even ruin her chance at ever obtaining a green card in the future. This is part of the confusion that surrounds "public charge."

What exactly is a public charge?

The public charge rule is used to determine whether a noncitizen applying for a visa, admission or adjustment of status in the United States will likely become dependent on government support and resources.

If the government believes you are likely to depend on public assistance, the application can be denied.

What falls under *public charge* has varied and changed because the term is so broad. Receiving cash assistance for income maintenance, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and long-term institutionalization at government expense would be considered a public charge.

Other factors such as age, health and income are considered. Some groups are exempt such as green card holders, humanitarian immigrants, crime victims and individuals with specific visas or statuses, such as U or T visas, and asylum seekers.

Notably, benefits such as health, food and housing assistance, as well as Covid-related services, are not considered under this rule anymore.



California is the first state to offer medical insurance to all its low-income residents, including undocumented immigrants. Coverage includes medicine. Photo by Paulina Deeds Ortiz

Back in 1999, the Department of Justice sought clarity for the definition of *public charges* and suggested that immigration officers should not hold non-cash public benefits (other than institutionalization) with much importance when reviewing an undocumented immigrant's admissibility or eligibility.

However, in 2019, the Trump administration broadened the public charge rule, adding health, nutrition and housing programs previously excluded from consideration. The new regulations redefined a *public charge* as an "alien who receives one or more public benefits for more than 12 months in total within any 36-month period," with multiple benefits in a single month counting as separate months.

This was a significant change that terrified and confused undocumented immigrants. The rule would also establish a set of negative factors, such as having previously

Continues on page 17

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What Will Break the Spell?

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

A spell has been cast over the white evangelical world. What will it take to break the spell?

Consistently, white evangelicals are a reliable voting bloc for the Republican Party. No matter how weird the Republicans behave or how extreme they have become, more than 80% of white evangelicals vote reliably for the GOP. It's been this way since Reagan.

What accounts for the wholesale identification of white evangelicals with what has become an extremist, even fascist, political party? What accounts for their betrayal and abandonment of their professed morals?

By their rhetoric, white evangelicals assume they are upholding traditional values.

By their reverence for a past "golden age" when America used to be "great," they suppose they are being "conservative."

By their anti-abortion activism, they think they are "pro-life."

By denying climate science and pandemic science, they presume that "believers" will not be affected by these crises.

By decrying "an invasion" from the southern border, they imagine they've found a scapegoat for our nation's problems.

By complaining about "urban decay" and "urban violence," they project their racism while convincing themselves they are not racists.

By their no-holds-barred support of Israel and Armageddon-like warfare against Muslims and the Palestinians, they believe they are "hastening the day" of the Second Coming of Christ. They are positively giddy about living to see the fulfillment of the disasters in the Book of Revelation.

At a deeper level, they fear that diversity and inclusion are a devilish plot to loosen our moorings from our Judeo-Christian heritage. They believe that by supporting healthcare and equal justice for all, and by accepting equal rights for LGBTQ+ people, the "woke" culture is plunging us headlong into a horrific judgment of God.

Meanwhile, white evangelicals tend to lap up Republican propaganda that those who disagree with them are evil, vermin and enemies who are "out to destroy America."

They say their beliefs are based upon the Bible, and they think that this is the only biblical way to think. But what will it take to convince them otherwise?

Apparently, Trump's steady stream of lies and defamation, his history of sexual assaults and boasting about them, his fraudulent and failing businesses, his felony convictions, his incoherent speeches, his inciting the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, his attacks on voting itself, his palling around with neo-Nazis and his raw, uninhibited racism are not enough. So what will it take?

Will it take a precious child or friend "coming out" as LGBTQ+?

Will it take the death or serious injury of a pregnant girl because draconian Republican laws prevent her from getting healthcare?

Will it take the outlawing of in vitro fertilization?

Will it take the threatened ending of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare and Social Security?

Will it take denial of WIC (Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program) benefits and malnutrition of children who come from poor families?

Will it take gutting of environmental protections for clean air and water?

Will it take privatization of our national parks and public lands so that only the wealthy can visit them, giving the super-rich "owners" another income stream?

Will it take ever-increasing climate disasters?

Will it take trillions more in tax breaks for the super-rich while the middle class and working poor are crushed?

Will it take dozens more mass murders with no effective legislation on background checks or assault rifles?

Will it take voter suppression—the dismantling of voting rights of Democratic-leaning demographic groups on a massive scale—to illegitimately skew elections in favor of Republicans?

Will it take more felony convictions for Trump and his partners in crime?

Will it take more forced and depraved breaking up of asylum-seeking families at the southern border?

Will it take arresting, detaining and shuffling unhoused people into "internment camps" for the homeless?

Will it take classroom censorship, book bans and military-style crackdowns on peaceful protesters, criminalizing free speech and honest dissent?

Unfortunately, by their support of Trump and MAGA, the great majority of white evangelicals are throwing out the best of their own tradition: that Creation itself is a marvelous gift from God, that the Earth is our home; that the Earth and its biological systems must be valued not just for ourselves and future generations, but for their own sakes; that each individual—and each ethnic group—has unique value and worth and deserves our respect; that caring "for the least of these" is a Christian obligation; that oppression by the rich and powerful is horrible; that integrity and good character count; and that truth-telling matters.

Democracy derives from values like these.

Disturbingly, many white evangelicals are not only throwing out the best of their own tradition but also rejecting pluralism and democracy itself. They say democracy is oversold anyway, that what we need is something other than the messiness of checks and balances. What we really need, they say, is a strongman, like Vladimir Putin or Viktor Orbán—a leader who is above the law.

Trump pandered to this bias recently at The Believers' Summit, hosted by Turning Point Action, in West Palm Beach, Fla. He said he was a Christian, that he loved Christians and that if Christians came out and voted for him, he would win and in four years he would fix things so they wouldn't have to vote any more.

Make no excuse for this language. Make no mistake. This was not a "joke." This was Trump stating his desire to do away with our form of government, to become a "unitary" president and to stay in power indefinitely.

White evangelicals who vote for Trump are voting to destroy their own "biblical tradition" as well as our democratic republic. They have lost all moral credibility. White evangelicals desperately need to escape their thrall to the MAGA movement. What will dislodge them?

Maybe it will be the positivity and joy coming out of the Harris-Walz campaign—in contrast to the negativity, divisiveness, grade-school insults and incoherence of Trump's campaign. Maybe it will be a recovery or rediscovery of some old-fashioned values such as humility, patience, self-knowledge, self-criticism, personal responsibility, truth telling, a healthy dose of "love thy neighbor" and "the Golden Rule," and willingness to change one's opinion by considering new information. It's not going against the teachings of Jesus to affirm these attitudes.

So here is a message to white evangelicals: This November, get out there and vote in massive numbers for hope, joy and decency—and against the grievance, cruelty and chaos of Trump and the MAGA agenda. In this way, maybe you can regain some integrity and redeem yourselves in the eyes of your fellow citizens and generations of youth coming up after you.

And to those who are not white evangelicals: This November get out there and vote in massive numbers for hope, joy and decency—and against the grievance, cruelty and chaos of Trump and the MAGA agenda.

Bayard Taylor is a resident of the 93675 zip code, a nature lover, the author of two books, a former English teacher and a master of divinity graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Contact him at bayardtaylor1@aol.com.

Statewide Ballot Measures—The First Five

Continued from page 4

Nutshell: Prop 5 will make it easier to finance critically needed affordable housing and public infrastructure projects, such as parks and roads, by lowering the number of votes necessary to win approval for bond measures for financing, from 66.67% to 55%.

Background: Most local bond measures require an onerous two-thirds rate of voter approval to pass. By lowering the required percentage of votes to just 55% to win approval, this measure aims to ease approval for financing of urgently needed affordable housing and other projects. The current "supermajority" approval requirement rate of 66.67% dates from the passage of 1978's Prop 13, the brainchild of Republican tax curmudgeon Howard Jarvis.

Who supports it: California Labor Federation, California Democratic Party, State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, League of Women Voters of California, California State Association of Counties

Who opposes it: California Republican Party, California Association of Realtors, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

Proposition 6: Remove Involuntary Servitude as Punishment for Crime Amendment (ending forced prison labor)

Nutshell: A "yes" vote will amend the state Constitution to prohibit slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime. Incarcerated individuals who participate voluntarily in work assignments could receive credits from the Department of Corrections.

Background: Most state constitutions, though a steadily increasing number of them have already voted for repeals, contain language that prohibits slavery or involuntary servitude "except to punish crime," which has meant that incarcerated people can legally be forced to perform labor of various kinds.

State constitutions reflect the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery "except as punishment for a crime." This short but consequential

clause served the interests of the slaveholding South because it effectively perpetuated enslavement of Blacks, whose behavior was criminalized by code—selling cotton after sunset or swearing, for example, could result in arrest and incarceration, and thus in legally enforceable forced labor—resulting in effective re-enslavement.

If Prop 6 passes, any labor performed by incarcerated individuals would be voluntary only. A new state law says that the state will not be required to pay prisoners minimum wage, but that wages for such work will be determined by the Department of Corrections.

Who supports it: California Labor Federation, ACLU of California, Abolish Slavery National Network

Who opposes it: No official opponents are known, though some Republican lawmakers have complained that any wages paid by the state might add up to a high annual cost.

Watch for next month's issue for summaries of Propositions 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36.

Rachel Youdelman is a former *FresnoLand.org* correspondent who documented Clovis City Council and Fresno County Board of Supervisors meetings. Contact her at rachel27@berkeley.edu.

SOCCKER

Central Valley Fuego Lose in Jägermeister Cup

BY PETER MAIDEN

The Central Valley Fuego was officially out of the running in the Jägermeister Cup after a 0-1 loss to Union Omaha on Aug. 9.

The winning goal was kicked in in the 95th minute of the game, with four minutes to go, by Omaha forward Steevan Dos Santos.

Although it was not a league game—the Jägermeister being a mid-season mini-tourney—the competition was fierce, and there were three yellow cards in the last quarter of the match.

For information on upcoming matches, visit fuegofc.com.

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



L to R: Fuego's Chris Heckenberg, Omaha's Charlie Ostrem, Fuego's Shavon John-Brown and Fuego's Mohamed Dabo. Photo by Peter Maiden

FRESNO ARTS & CULTURE

Arts & Culture Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2024

01

Evil Dead: The Musical

Selma Arts Center. 2 p.m. 1935 High St., Selma. This campy musical makes for a comedic, not to mention gratuitously violent and over-the-top, fun, bloody experience. 559-891-2238.

05

ArtHop Fresno Arts Council

5 p.m.–8 p.m. Greater Fresno Metro Area Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. FACarthop on Facebook.

Celebrating 50 Years: Gallery 25

Gallery 25. 5 p.m.–8 p.m. 729 E. Divisadero St. 50th anniversary exhibition. 559-264-4092.

Evil Dead: The Musical

Selma Arts Center. 7:30 p.m. 1935 High St., Selma. This campy musical makes for a comedic, not to mention gratuitously violent and over-the-top, fun, bloody experience. 559-891-2238.

06

Evil Dead: The Musical

Selma Arts Center. 7:30 p.m. 1935 High St., Selma. This campy musical makes for a comedic, not to mention gratuitously violent and over-the-top, fun, bloody experience. 559-891-2238.

07

Let's Make an Art!

Root Access Hackerspace. 6 p.m.–9 p.m. 1476 N. Van Ness Ave. Community art meet-up. Bring your favorite materials or use ours. rootaccess.org.

Free Art Demo Day

Allard's Art. 12:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 5350 N. Blackstone Ave. Immerse yourself for an afternoon of artistic adventure. 559-225-1500.

CMAC Youth Voices Film Screening

Maya Cinemas. 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. 3090 E. Campus Pointe Dr. Films by local students focusing on community issues. 559-266-2622.

Twist on Taylor Tower Theatre

8 p.m. 815 E. Olive Ave. Live Taylor Swift tribute show. 559-485-9050.

Evil Dead: The Musical

Selma Arts Center. 7:30 p.m. 1935 High St., Selma. This campy musical makes for a comedic, not to mention gratuitously violent and over-the-top, fun, bloody experience. 559-891-2238.

13

Ashley M. Jones: An Evening of Poetry

Downtown Artist Gallery. 5 p.m.–9 p.m. 701 L St. An inspiring evening with Alabama's poet laureate. 559-304-3424.

19

ArtHop Fresno Arts Council

5 p.m.–8 p.m. Greater Fresno Metro Area Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. FACarthop on Facebook.

ArtHop: Senior Painting Party

River Park's Art Groove Gallery. 4 p.m.–6 p.m. 7786 N. Blackstone Ave. 559-840-8886.

River Park Art Groove Open Invitation

River Park's Art Groove Gallery
 5 p.m.–8 p.m. 7786 N. Blackstone Ave. Participate in one of our Art Groove/ArtHop programs: "Get Your Art Groove On!" 559-840-8886.

21

Mixed Media Play Day

Scarab Creative Arts. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. 729 E. Divisadero St. Join us for a fun-filled day of creativity and exploration. 559-285-2878.

28

Celebrating 50 Years: Gallery 25

Gallery 25. 5 p.m.–8 p.m. 729 E. Divisadero St. 50th anniversary exhibition. 559-264-4092.

The Captivating and Brimming Art of Chris Solis

BY NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

Christopher Solis is a Fresno-based artist. Solis does not strike one as the type of artist trying to sell you something, least of all himself. Indeed, instead of a written bio, Solis sent a self-portrait.

Solis appears to see bios like product thumbnails—ersatz snapshots purposefully pruned of "fat," excess, the surrounding world and, crucially, the perspective of the subject standing in front of the camera's (or publisher's) lens.

Many of Solis's pieces feel almost voyeuristic but not because his pieces depict figures seemingly entranced in intimate moments while we watch. Instead, the feeling of voyeurism comes from the sense that the viewer is inside the world of the person experiencing these moments. It is as though the viewer exists in the dream of another individual, captivated by a world that cannot be fully comprehended.

The images are blurry, flickering, always on the verge of dripping out of existence. Solis's loose expressive sketch pieces depict scenes filled with figures radiating a warm, sensual intensity at one moment and cold, distant distrust the next as if they know the viewer is an interloper.

The dynamism that pulses on the page suddenly pauses; figures turn their gaze toward you—or perhaps they were always looking at you—with dark, discerning eyes as if to say "Yes, I see you, wandering phantasm. How did you find your way here? How will you find your way back?"

Solis's non-sketch pieces are just as captivating and brimming with vitality. Solis expertly utilizes absence in many of his pieces to strengthen the illusion of movement and intersubjectivity.

Subjects appear to be phasing into corporeal form, emerging out of a void by sheer willpower alone. In the void sometimes appears inane, white-chalked scribbling, which impresses the idea that these figures originate from untamed

chaos, incomplete thoughts that compose the unconscious mind. Within the horse and shirtless figure pieces, the writing seems to depict an exercise journal, tracking physical progress over time.

This, combined with the muscularity and vigor of the figures, the careful use of negative space and the "messiness" of the strokes, instills a feeling of immediacy and becomingness. There's a deeply libidinal presence in these pieces that insists upon itself—it makes us confront the power of our unconscious and its role in the perpetual creation of "self."

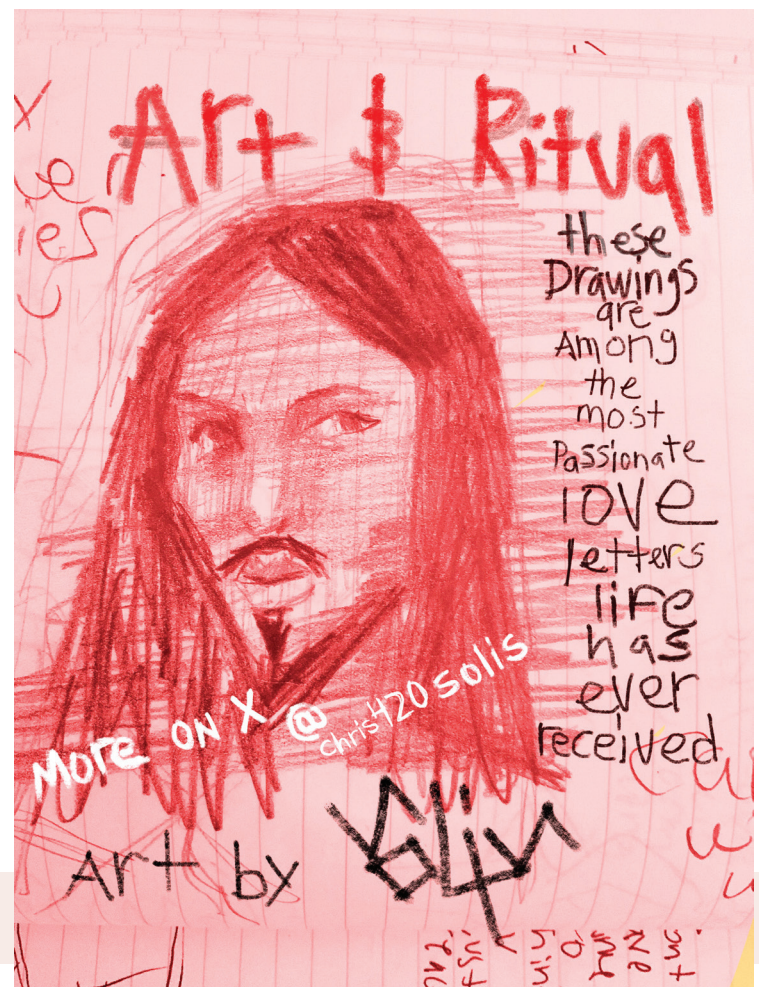
The pink piece is the "bio" that Solis sent instead of anything that could be perceived as self-promotion. On it, he scribbled "These drawings are among the most passionate love letters life has ever received" next to a loosely sketched self-portrait.

Although Solis's art can feel disorienting and unsettling at times, it is undeniably brimming with life and authenticity. It is intimate, self-explanatory and visceral almost like a diary that is being written in real time.

Solis was a resident at the now-defunct Sorensen's Studio, which represented a similar vitality and devotion to art for art's sake. Many of the studio's artists, including Solis, are continuing to create phenomenal art but no longer have a reliable place to showcase it.

If "outsider" art is important to you, follow those artists because they are continuing to work and self-organize. Follow Solis's work on X at @chris420solis, where he consistently posts his current art.

Noah Deeds Ortiz is a student at Fresno State majoring in psychology. He coordinates the Community Alliance newspaper's Arts & Culture section along with his wife, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. He hosted the "Queer Goggles" podcast.



The art of Chris Solis

Federation of Cuban Women Celebrates 64 Years

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

The Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, or FMC) was founded on Aug. 23, 1960, only eight months after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The leader of the movement for women's rights in Cuba and founding president of the organization was Vilma Espín.

This born revolutionary graduated in 1954 from the University of Santiago with a degree in chemical engineering. She joined the revolutionary movement in Cuba shortly afterward and was one of the organizers and leaders of the armed uprising in Santiago on Nov. 30, 1956, intended to coincide with and cover for the landing of the boat Granma, bringing Fidel Castro and 81 others to begin the overthrow of the dictator Fulgencio Batista, who had canceled the elections and seized power in 1953.

She remained a leader in the clandestine movement until she was identified by Batista's forces, then joined the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra, in the region of the Second Eastern Front named for Frank País.

After the triumph of the Revolution, she dedicated her life to the struggle of Cuban women for equality. She clearly had great influence on the thinking of other Revolutionary leaders.

At the very hour of the triumph of the Revolution, Jan. 1, 1959, Castro said, speaking of women, "This is a sector of our country that needs to be emancipated, because they are the victims of discrimination in work and other aspects of life..."

"When our revolution is judged in the future, one of the questions on which they will judge us will be the way in which, in our society and our country, we have resolved the problems of women, although this is one of the problems for the revolution that requires great tenacity, firmness, constancy and effort."

In 1960, Espín founded the FMC to defend the same rights for all and to end discrimination; she remained dedicated to the organization until her death. Her life work was to ensure that all women should occupy, finally, the social space that belongs to them and contribute fully to the building of a new country for all.

The FMC began to change the role of women in Cuba, beginning with first aid courses, the incorporation of women into the Milicias Nacionales Revolucionarias (the Revolutionary Militias), and the participation of women and girls in the Literacy Campaign.

There were classes of sewing to give skills to women who had no occupational skills or possibilities, and these gave rise to the national plans to bring adult women "housewives" up to 6th-, then 9th-, grade educational levels, and then to make available higher education and skills education. She organized and headed the Ana Betancourt School for Farmworker Women and the Night Schools for the Advancement of Women Servants.

The FMC has a membership of about 85% of all Cuban women aged 14 and older. The only requirements for membership are to be at least 14 and to want to join. Over the years, the FMC has been successful in creating a social and political atmosphere of support for women's rights. Some examples follow:

Cuba legalized abortion in 1965. That was eight years before *Roe v. Wade* in the United States in 1973. It was 23 years before Canada's equivalent Supreme Court decision. Cuba was the first country in the Western Hemisphere to allow women control over their own bodies.

Within the Cuban free universally accessible community-based healthcare system, termination of pregnancy is a medical procedure available to women without restriction. It is the woman who decides.

Women who choose to have children are supported by this system with excellent prenatal care and community support that have reduced Cuba's infant mortality rates below those of the United States. The difference is even more marked for Black infants.

Parental leave rights are also guaranteed; Cuba meets the UNICEF standards for parental leave.

In 1979, the UN General Assembly approved the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Cuba immediately signed and ratified this. Even prior to this, all discrimination against women had been outlawed by the Cuban Constitution. These protections have only been strengthened and increased in subsequent Cuban constitutions, most recently in 2019.

Cuba has created and passed by referendum in 2022 a legal code that includes the protection of the right of all people to form a family without discrimination, that updates the legal definition of *family institutions* with inclusive rather than strictly heteronormative models, that establishes the right to a family life free from violence, that treats children as



Image of Vilma Espín and the emblem of the Federation of Cuban Women. Photo courtesy of the FMC

the responsibility of their parents rather than as possessions and that centers values of love, affection, solidarity and responsibility.

Espín died in 2007. Her remains are in the Mausoleo de los combatientes del II Frente Frank País in Mayarí Arriba, in a simple rock tomb, which the author had the opportunity to visit on July 26. The FMC lives on and is celebrating its 64th year.

Current Secretary General Teresa Amarelle Boué recently said, "We are not satisfied with what has been achieved, and we need to continue to move forward, to close the gender gaps that still survive." The history of the FMC indicates that it will indeed continue to move forward.

(Author's note: I am grateful to Nora Cuello, one of the initial founding members of the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas in 1960, for her contributions to this article.)

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

CRV Bottle & Can Facts Changes to CRV Law effective January 1, 2024

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Kherson's Hell from Above

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

On Aug. 2, around 11 a.m., Angela was at work when her husband of 32 years, Serhiy, drove their car home from the auto repair shop and parked it under a leafy tree to hide it from a drone. Just a week earlier, a Russian drone had damaged the couple's car for the second time. In spring 2023, a previous drone attack had also injured Serhiy, 54, who, like most Kherson residents, lost his business during the full-scale invasion but maintained his sense of humor and high spirits.

Serhiy walked across the empty yard and stopped in front of the building entrance to chat with a neighbor, an elderly lady on a bench. It was then that they both heard the loud buzzing of an approaching drone. The neighbor rushed inside. Serhiy darted to his car, but the drone dropped a grenade on him. A piece of shrapnel hit him under the left shoulder blade, pierced his heart, and killed him on the spot.

"Serhiy loved life, good food, joy," said Angela. "We did not move as our parents live in Kherson, and where would we move, without jobs and money? His grenade found him."

The fatalistic sentiment, "Your shell will find you even in Kyiv," has become a mantra in Kherson, justifying staying rather than leaving. After the funeral, Angela remained in her now-empty apartment, listening to the killer drones buzzing day and night over the oncology hospital across the street.

Iryna Sokur, the director of the regional Oncological Health Center, keeps a glass cabinet in her office filled with hundreds of shrapnel pieces found on the hospital premises.

"Our center is located on an elevation on the right bank of the Dnipro River, about one kilometer from Russian positions on the left bank, so drones reach us quickly and easily," Sokur explained.

"Since the liberation, constant artillery shelling in our area has damaged a transformer substation and a sewage pumping station. In the last two weeks, the situation has deteriorated.

"Every day, we suffer up to four skids—drones dropping explosives on the hospital premises, the surrounding area, personnel vehicles and oncology patients. In the last two days, several doctors' vehicles, ambulances and passenger cars were deliberately attacked. Drones fly low, and the operators can see their targets as they drop explosives."

Civilians around the hospital are under constant attack. Three weeks ago, a drone descended within five meters of the ground, chasing a security guard. Recently, a young man brought his mother, a cancer patient, into the hospital. As he parked the car, a drone killed him.

"We don't have any military here; we are civilian doctors who treat cancer patients," said Sokur.

In the past month, Russian drones have also conducted daily attacks on the

diesel generators critical to treatment and diagnostic processes. In Kherson, Russian artillery and MLRS regularly damage the central power supply by striking high-voltage cables or substations, leading to outages. Maintenance teams cannot immediately repair the damage due to the "double hit" tactic—where Russian forces target first responders—resulting in extended periods without electricity.

If the hospital is disconnected from the central power supply and the generator fails, it cannot provide medical care to more than 100 cancer inpatients and numerous outpatients. This includes severely ill patients on round-the-clock chemotherapy, patients on oxygen support, those receiving radiation therapy and those undergoing surgeries. Essential services such as laundry, food preparation, laboratories and sterilization also require electricity.

Russian drone operations have shown increasing innovation, shifting from dropping one grenade to deploying three large grenades or inserting nails into discharges. The nails not only injure people but also scatter across roads, cutting tires and hindering the response of ambulances and medical staff vehicles.

Drones Conduct Remote Mining and Incinerating

Nails and sharp objects embedded in improvised explosive devices are just a small part of the arsenal used to kill and maim. The Russian military employs drones for remote mining operations, recently deploying banned PFM-1 anti-personnel landmines, commonly known as *pelustki* or *lepestki*, in the center of Kherson.

Stepping on a *lepestok* can result in severe injury or limb loss. These mines are particularly insidious due to their small size and ability to blend seamlessly with natural surroundings, such as grass and leaves. Smoking or using an open flame near these mines could trigger a detonation.

Fire has become another widely weaponized tool of the Russian military. Serhiy Ivashchenko, head of the Antonivka district in the Kherson region, explained that drones use a standard multi-step maneuver: first, they destroy diesel generators that pump water from wells, cutting off the neighborhood's water supply, and then they set houses and dry grass on fire by dropping incendiary mixtures on roofs and lawns.

Firefighters are often unable to respond as Russian drones and artillery employ a "double tap" tactic, targeting them when they arrive. Every day, several houses in Antonivka burn down.

Tetiana and Ilya Shuvalov, a couple in their 30s, had to abandon their house in Antonivka after a third drone attack on their car and home, followed by a massive fire on their street. Along with their rescue pets—two dogs and three cats—they relocated to Kherson, where they now live across the street from another house burned by a Russian drone. "It's a bit safer here, still," said Ilya.

"Torching blocks is a systematic approach. We often receive calls to demine two buildings next to each other within two days, both set on fire by drones dropping

incendiary mixtures," said Volodymyr Perepelitsya, head of the explosive services department of the National Police in the Kherson region. "It's a mass phenomenon."

Intensifying Russian Drone Assaults Force Evacuations in Kherson

In June and July 2024, the Russian military deployed up to 100 drones per day to kill civilians and burn entire neighborhoods in the Ukrainian-controlled areas of the Kherson region. In July alone, civilian casualties from Russian drone strikes doubled. On Aug. 10, due to the intensifying drone attacks, the Kherson military administration expanded the mandatory evacuation list to include a total of 50 settlements in the de-occupied territory of the Kherson region.

"The frequency of drone attacks has escalated," said Andriy Kovany, press officer of the Kherson Oblast National Police Headquarters. "Previously, these attacks were more prevalent in settlements along the Dnipro River, but now they are increasingly affecting the city of Kherson. This is a hunt for civilians."

On Nov. 11, 2022, when the Ukrainian Armed Forces liberated part of the Kherson region on the eastern bank of the Dnipro River, the Russian military retreated to the western bank. From this proximity—sometimes as little as one mile—they have launched relentless attacks on the city of Kherson, its suburbs and surrounding villages.

Initially, these assaults relied on MLRS and artillery, later incorporating Shahid drones and guided aerial bombs (KABs). In May 2023, the Russian military began using small drones, known as First Person View (FPV) or kamikaze drones, to target civilians and infrastructure in the Ukrainian-controlled Kherson region.

According to Kovany, in addition to dropping explosive devices, drones are used for reconnaissance to guide subsequent shelling. Perepelitsya explained that drone attacks could be categorized into two main types: explosive discharges and incendiary discharges. In simpler terms,



Serhiy and Angela's car hit by a Russian drone on Aug. 2, 2024; a piece of shrapnel killed Serhiy. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

some drones are designed to kill and injure civilians, while others are used to torch residential areas.

International humanitarian law prohibits attacks intentionally directed against civilians or civilian objects to protect non-combatants during armed conflicts. The deliberate targeting of civilians violates the Geneva Conventions. Additional Protocol I (1977) to the Geneva Conventions explicitly prohibits attacks against civilian populations and civilian objects. These deliberate, escalating assaults constitute clear war crimes and demand immediate international attention.

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

NO ON 36

JOIN CRIME VICTIMS, LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE EXPERTS IN VOTING NO ON PROP 36

Don't be fooled. Proposition 36 will lead to **more** crime, not less. It reignites the failed war on drugs, makes simple drug possession a felony, and wastes tens of millions of dollars on jails and prisons, while slashing crucial funding for victims, crime prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

Prop. 36 puts prisons first and guts treatment.

PROP 36 IS A WASTEFUL, ONE-SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH THAT WILL LEAVE CALIFORNIA LESS SAFE

PROP 36 is masquerading as reform. In reality, Prop. 36 is an extreme measure that will waste billions of taxpayer dollars, divert funding from mental health and rehabilitation programs, and do nothing to make us safer.

PROPOSITION 36 WILL ONLY REIGNITE FAILED DRUG WARS OF THE 80s AND 90s

While we must continue to make changes to our criminal justice system, and address fentanyl and retail crime, PROP 36 IS THE WRONG ANSWER. It will slash desperately needed mental health services, and spend billions more on prisons.

PROPOSITION 36 IS A MAGA-REPUBLICAN BAIT AND SWITCH

Don't be fooled. Prop. 36 is a MAGA-Republican-led bait and switch, plain and simple. Crime victims and law enforcement leaders oppose Prop 36 because it slashes money meant for crime victims, and for mental health and rehabilitation programs that help ensure people getting out of jail or prison are less likely to reoffend. Prop. 36 is a Republican-led effort to bring back to 1980's style drug war tactics that destroy families and communities and pack our state prisons without any benefit to public safety.

PROP 36 IS TOO EXTREME

Prop 36 means that stealing a candy bar could be counted as a prior offense that could lead to felony charges. It is a gross overreaction that will create damage to families and communities.

PROP 36 STRIPS MONEY FROM EDUCATION, CRIME VICTIMS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Prop. 36 would change how taxpayer dollars are spent, stripping millions of dollars away from victims of violent crime and from mental health programs, and use that money to build and expand state prisons.

PROP 36 HAS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The measure is also so poorly drafted that it will simply create confusion in the courts, and not lead to higher penalties in many retail theft cases.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY FALSE SOLUTIONS. VOTE NO ON PROP 36.

Ad paid for by Committee to Protect Public Safety. Sponsored by Action for Safety and Justice, No on Prop. 36. Ad Committee's Top Funders: ACLU of Northern California



Angela and Serhiy with friends at a protest against the Russian invasion during the first week of the occupation. Freedom Square in Kherson, March 2022. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky



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MEDICARE INSURANCE PLANS

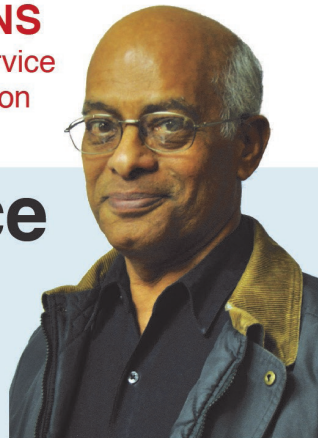
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KFCF's **Annual Banquet** takes place on **Saturday, September 28th** from 5-9 p.m. at the **Unitarian Universalist Church**, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave. in Fresno.

Tickets are \$80 (before 9/21/24) or **\$100 at the door**.

Also available: tables of 8 and sponsorships, and we're looking for donations of items for our silent auction. **Purchase tickets on-line at**

<https://ticketstripe.com/FFCFBanquet>

(Buffet-style dinner by Hummus Republic)

Tune in at **88.1 fm** or visit www.kfcf.org

This year's guest speaker is **Greg Palast**,



author of "The Best Democracy Money Can Buy" and "Billionaires & Ballot Bandits." His latest film, "Vigilantes Inc: America's New Vote Suppression Hitmen," will be released on September 6th, narrated by Rosario Dawson and produced by Martin Sheen. Greg will speak about



the upcoming election, the threat to our democracy, and what we can do about it.

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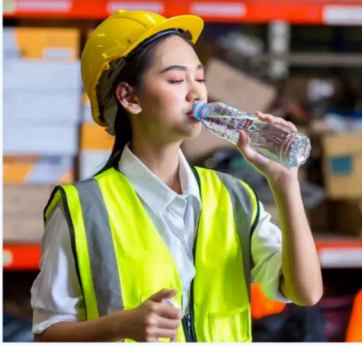
- Providing support services for a coalition of several progressive peace & justice groups in Fresno
- Catch our monthly Peace and Justice radio show on Stir It Up, KFCF, 88.1 FM every 2nd Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.
 1584 N. Van Ness Ave
 Fresno, CA 93728
 (559) 237-3223
centerfornonviolence.org
- Join us in solemn remembrance on the 79th Anniversary of the ATOMIC BOMBINGS of HIROSHIMA & NAGASAKI
 - Tue, August 6 (8:00 am) at the Fresno State Peace Garden
 - Fri, August 9 (10:30 am) at the Shinzen Friendship Garden (Woodward Park)



ARE YOU HEAT READY?

TAKE ACTION:

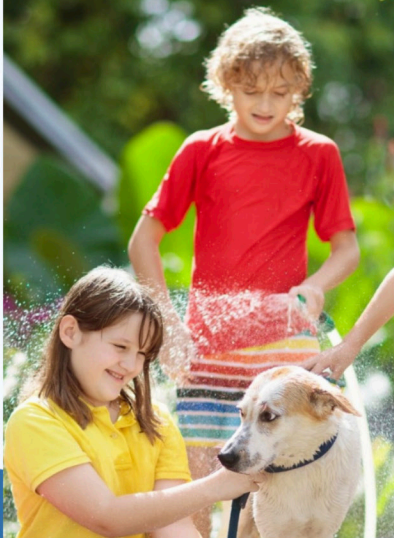
- KNOW THE SIGNS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION. SUCH AS, HEAVY SWEATING, WEAKNESS, DIZZINESS, NAUSEA AND CONFUSION.



- DRINK PLENTY OF WATER, EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL THIRSTY. CARRY A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE WITH YOU, AND REFILL IT AS NEEDED.



- AVOID WALKING PETS DURING THE HOTTEST PARTS OF THE DAY, HOT PAVEMENT CAN LEAD TO BURNS ON THEIR PAW PADS.



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- TED C. WILLS COMMUNITY CENTER: 770 N. SAN PABLO AVE, FRESNO CA, 93728
- MOSQUEDA COMMUNITY CENTER: 4670 E. BUTLER AVE, FRESNO CA, 93702



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BE HEAT READY, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE : www.wfresnofrc.org

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Valley Journalist Lloyd Carter Spoke Truth about Water and Power

BY VIC BEDOIAN

I just hope we start thinking seven generations into the future about what we're going to leave behind because I don't believe that agriculture can last in this valley for the next few centuries. For one thing, we'll fill it up with people. It'll be like the San Fernando Valley.

—Lloyd Carter

Veteran Central Valley journalist Lloyd Carter has passed away. Born and raised in Fresno, he covered the Valley for United Press International (UPI) and the *Fresno Bee*. Carter's life was dedicated to finding equity and fairness in how the state's water is allocated.

He followed up a stellar career in the newspaper business with a law degree, working many years for the state Attorney General. Using his legal skill, Carter stayed active in the complex world of water as an advocate, delivering a clarion call about the future of this blessed and cursed landscape.

San Joaquin Valley born and bred, Carter came out of southeast Fresno, attended neighborhood schools and Roosevelt High, where he credits journalism teacher Margaret Kempfer for inspiring his interest in writing. He started newspaper work at Fresno City College, then at Fresno State and while a student joined UPI.

Carter was best known for his dogged investigation of the environmental disaster at the Kesterson Wildlife Refuge. For years, farm water runoff collected there, saturating the ecosystem with chemicals. Carter dug into the catastrophe early on, doing substantial research. And he kept after the issue, not deterred by official cover-ups, doing the hard footwork of newspaper reporting.

Author Mark Arax recalls that when writing his book, *The Dreamt Land*, he went through Carter's massive collection of work and says that Carter was a master at his craft, "What's so poignant about Lloyd's death is that it comes at a time when we're seeing the passing of real journalism, the kind of journalism he practiced in the Valley."

It was a life-defining story, Arax relates. "He told the story of the poisoning of Kesterson and how it was creating this environmental nightmare where birds were attracted to this drainage water that came from big agriculture business in the Westlands Water District. Birds were attracted to that water, thinking it was pristine and blue, and from the sky, it certainly looked that way, but it wasn't; it was a toxic brew that created these grotesque mutations."

Carter told Fresno State professor Thomas Holyoke that the poisoning at Kesterson and the surrounding land is what got him to look more deeply for answers. Carter found some 240 farmers in the Westlands Water District who needed to drain toxic tailwater away to keep their own lands unpolluted.

"They built all these levies, and they started pumping the dirty water into these. One way to get rid of dirty water is to evaporate it. But of course, remembering that all the pollutants,



Journalist Lloyd Carter at the KFCF studio in an undated photo. Photo courtesy of Rych Withers

and toxins, and metals, and salts get left behind."

Carter met a scientist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) studying the birds. "Felix Smith was the whistleblower on all this for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He opened an egg, and there were these little crippled, deformed birds. No wings. They opened a bunch of the eggs. No wings, no feet. The brain protruding out of the skull case, grotesque deformities."

Deborah Blum broke the story in the *Fresno Bee* after Smith informed her, and then Carter took the story and did not let it go. He vividly depicts arriving on the scene: "I drove out to Kesterson. And the first thing when I got out of my car was the overwhelming smell of sulfur, or rotten eggs. Because Selenium exudes a sulfurous smell. And the other thing I noticed was there were dead birds everywhere on the ponds. I mean hundreds."

Smith and his colleagues prepared a study on the disaster pointing to the trace element Selenium. Carter dug even deeper, as did other reporters, and the story became a national media sensation covered by major outlets like *60 Minutes*.

Smith remembers a phone call from his supervisor in Portland. "He was shouting over the telephone about the white paper, and it is not to be exposed to anyone, 'destroy it.' Well, here I was showing a *National Geographic* reporter and a representative of the Department of Interior what was going on. How in the hell can I destroy it?"

When the news hit Washington, D.C., the Bureau of Reclamation continued the cover-up with a faulty study of its own. But the follow-up reporting kept exposing more, Smith observes. "Lloyd just had a field day of tracking down the missteps and the miscues and the poor management of the Bureau.

"Well, here you had the biggest agricultural empire in the United States, Westlands Water District, raising hell to the [Fish and Wildlife] Service, raising hell to the Bureau. They wanted

Continues on page 20

Having Health Insurance Can Save Your Life

Continues from page 10

received any public benefits for more than 12 months within the previous 36 months and an income below 125% of the federal poverty level. These factors increased the likelihood of an individual being deemed a public charge.

These changes rightfully terrified immigrants across the United States. "A 2021 KFF survey of Hispanic adults found that 1 in 4 potentially undocumented Hispanic adults and over 1 in 10 lawful permanent resident Hispanic adults reported that they or a family member did not participate in a government assistance program in the past three years due to immigration-related fears."

Now, the rules have changed again, and Trump's changes were revoked in 2021. The Biden administration worked to codify the 1999 version, so that these types of benefits could not prevent someone from getting their green card in the future. Receiving Medi-Cal will not endanger you either, as California does not give your Medi-Cal info to ICE.

For more than a decade of Ruiz's life here, she did not go to the dentist (resulting in various cavities and a chipped tooth) and only went to her local family healthcare center (which offered reduced pricing for low-income individuals without insurance) whenever symptoms became too overwhelming.

One night, she began feeling an incredible stomach pain that did not dissipate for three days. An acquaintance drove Ruiz to the emergency room. Ruiz had developed acute pancreatitis and would remain hospitalized for several days.

Her family was advised that an organ failure had begun and there was a real possibility she would not survive. "When I was finally being discharged, I told my nurse, 'I survived the pancreatitis, but I don't think I'll survive the bill.'"

She was now meant to pay more than \$13,000 in medical bills and would need further expensive treatment she could not afford. Yet again, a nurse came to the rescue, suggesting Ruiz apply for emergency Medi-Cal that would be granted to undocumented immigrants in severe cases at the time.

She was granted Emergency Medi-Cal, which helped cover most of her medical bills and allowed her to see a doctor for her diabetes. That doctor pushed for her to apply for Medi-Cal again in 2022 when she was finally within a qualifying age group. Thanks to the care Medi-Cal has afforded her, Ruiz has had another life-saving surgery, has lost weight and is currently healthier than she has been in decades.

"I'm really lucky to have had nurses and doctors that care enough about my well-being to push me to apply despite my fears," says Ruiz. "I've known so many people, farmworkers, that won't go because they're scared.

"Even with Covid—people that knew they had Covid from the symptoms but never went to get tested or for treatment because they thought they couldn't afford it. Health is everything—it affects every aspect of your life."

It is completely safe for undocumented immigrants to apply for Medi-Cal. Everyone deserves the dignity of having their basic health requirements met. To begin an application for Medi-Cal, visit benefitscal.com.

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



National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) is a multi-partisan, multi-racial, grassroots organization dedicated to increasing women's participation in the political process and creating a true women's political power base to achieve equality for all women. Dinner Meetings the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm at Toledo's Restaurant at Shaw and Blackstone. \$18.00 at the door

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Peace & Social Justice Calendar September 2024

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

WEEKLY

Raza Against War Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. 2500 Tulare St. For more info, contact comworkeradvocate@gmail.com.

Stand for Gaza Saturdays, 6 p.m.–8 p.m. N. Blackstone and E. Nees avenues. Stand for humanity and human rights. Hosted by the Palestine Liberation Group. Limited signs available. Bring a friend. For more info, contact camille.russell@peacefresno.org.

Stand Up, Speak Up, Spread the Truth Sundays, 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Mooney and Walnut avenues, Visalia. Free Palestine. Let Gaza Live! Cease Fire Now. For more info, contact fida.taha@gmail.com.

**TUE
03**

En El Frente: A Celebration of Chicano Independent Publications (through Sept. 21). Noon–4 p.m. M Street Arts Complex, 1419 M St. Sponsors: M Street Graduate Art Studios and Fresno State Department of Art, Design and Art History. For more info, contact 559-278-2121 or mgoans@csufresno.edu.

National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) 5:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. Speaker: Karen Franz, development director for the Central California Women's Conference. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pyoga.com.

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

**WED
04**

Exploring the Coexistence of Water Users in California 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m. Lynda and Stewart Resnick Student Union, Fresno State. Ag summit focused on how water users coexist in California with stakeholders from across the state discussing pressing issues and fostering collaborative solutions. In-person and virtual event. Hosted by the Maddy Institute in partnership with the California Water Institute. For more info, contact 559-278-1133.

KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up! 3 p.m. Community Alliance radio show. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

Rural Communities Rising 6 p.m. Corazon del Valle, 36307 Fresno St., Huron. Community meeting. Elevating rural community residents institutions, interests, goals and leadership. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or eliseogamino43@gmail.com.

**THU
05**

En El Frente: A Celebration of Chicano Independent Publications 5 p.m.–8 p.m. M Street Art Complex, 1419 M St. Opening reception. For more info, contact 559-278-2121 or mgoans@csufresno.edu.

An Evening with Ken Khachigian 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Satellite Student Union, Fresno State. American political consultant, speechwriter and attorney Ken Khachigian will discuss his new book, *Behind Closed Doors: In The Room with Reagan and Nixon*. Khachigian was a longtime aide to President Richard Nixon and chief speechwriter to President Ronald Reagan. Organized by the Armenian Studies Program.

**FRI
06**

En El Frente: A Celebration of Chicano Independent Publications 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Room 2206, Fresno State Library (South Wing). Panel discussion. For more info, contact 559-278-2121 or mgoans@csufresno.edu.

CineCulture: Avenue of the Giants 5:15 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Finn Taylor (director). The true story of Czechoslovakian-born Herbert Heller, who kept his miraculous escape from the Auschwitz Birkenau death march a secret for 60 years, even from his family. A young teenager whose own brush with pain and death inspires Heller to open up, leading the two of them to exchange their stories as a meaningful and healing friendship is born. Sponsors: Jewish Studies Program and Jewish Studies Association. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**SAT
07**

Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley 9 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or claval@comcast.net.

Annual Labor Day Festival & Tailgate 1 p.m. O'Neill Park, 2611 E. Barstow Ave. A day of food, football and fun for the whole family as the Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council celebrates the labor movement. For more info, contact 559-540-4139 or empower@myunionworks.com.

Youth Voices Film Screening 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Maya Cinemas, 3090 E. Campus Pointe Dr. Celebrate youth in filmmaking with a free screening of 12 captivating short documentaries. One five-minute short, *Fresno Pride*, by Angeline Ruiz, a local high school student, highlights the history of the Fresno Rainbow Pride Parade and Festival, which was established in 1991. For more info, visit facebook.com/events/423389670054042.

**MON
09**

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

Rural Communities Rising 6 p.m. Venue TBD, Coalinga. Community meeting. Elevating rural community residents institutions, interests, goals and leadership. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or eliseogamino43@gmail.com.

**TUE
10**

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. Candidate endorsements. 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
11**

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.

Rural Communities Rising 6 p.m. Venue TBD, Kerman. Community meeting. Elevating rural community residents institutions, interests, goals and leadership. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or eliseogamino43@gmail.com.

Trans-E-Motion Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Fresno EOC LGBTQ+ Resource Center, 1252 Fulton St. For more info, contact transemotion@gmail.com or visit transemotion.com.

**THU
12**

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

**FRI
13**

CineCulture: Inshallah a Boy 5:15 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: Amjad Al-Rasheed (director) and Rula Nasseer (producer). Nawal struggles to cope with the sudden death of her husband and deal with her greedy brother-in-law who wants to use Jordanian patriarchal inheritance laws to win her rightful inheritance. She embarks on a journey that challenges her fears, beliefs and morality as she fights to secure her rightful inheritance and protect her daughter's future. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**SAT
14**

Central Valley Progressive PAC 3:30 p.m. Signature Spaces, 3097 Tulare St. Candidate endorsements. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or simone.rhodes@seiu521.org.

**MON
16**

California Latina Democrats-Fresno 6:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. For more info, contact chaircalatinadems@gmail.com.

**TUE
17**

Central Valley Partnership 5:30 p.m. Carpenters Local Union Hall, 8130 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia. For more info, contact 559-967-1940 or agrariandemocracy@gmail.com or visit centralvalleypartnership.org.

National Voter Registration Day & Politics 101 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Nunley Hall, Westside Church of God, 1422 W. California Ave. Nonpartisan education for all. Politics 101 facilitated by Daren Miller. Sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Tau Sigma Zeta Chapter, BAPAC Fresno and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Iota Nu Lambda Chapter.

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

**WED
18**

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.

San Joaquin Valley Town Hall "Twilight Talks" 7 p.m. Clovis Veterans Memorial District, 808 4th St., Clovis. Speaker: H.R. McMaster, retired U.S. Army lieutenant general and former national security advisor. Topic: Securing Our Future. McMaster, known as a "warrior intellectual," shares his perspective on global affairs. For more info, contact 559-444-2180 or valleytownhall@gmail.com.

**THU
19**

Reel Pride 35 Tower Theatre, 815 E. Olive Ave. Celebrating 35 years. Established in 1990 at Fresno State. For more info, contact info@reelpride.com or visit reelpride.com/.

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

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Speaker: Deanna Wulff, executive director of Unite the Parks. Topic: Range of Light National Monument. Learn about the decade-long campaign to protect 1.4 million acres of federal land between Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon national parks. For more info, contact ecuagir45@yahoo.com or visit sierraclub.org/tehipite.

**FRI
20**

Reel Pride 35 Tower Theatre, 815 E. Olive Ave. Celebrating 35 years. Established in 1990 at Fresno State. For more info, contact info@reelpride.com or visit reelpride.com/.

KFCF 88.1 FM: It's a Queer Thang 5 p.m.–6 p.m. Covers local and national LGBTQ+ issues and events. Hosted by Chris Jarvis and Kaylia Metcalfe Armstrong. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

CineCulture: The ABCs of Book Banning 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: Professor Douglas Fraleigh (First Amendment scholar) and Sarah McDaniel, Samantha Hidde Tripp and Arantes Armendariz (librarians). In recent years, more than 2,500 books have been removed from

school districts around the United States. By weaving together a lyrical montage of young readers and authors, the film reveals the voices of the impacted parties and inspires hope for the future through the profound insights of inquisitive youthful minds. Sponsor: Fresno State Library. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**SAT
21**

Reel Pride 35 Tower Theatre, 815 E. Olive Ave. Celebrating 35 years. Established in 1990 at Fresno State. For more info, contact info@reelpride.com or visit reelpride.com/.

2nd Annual HBCU Picnic at Rest Fest 1 p.m.–4 p.m. 1550 E. Reverend Chester Riggins Ave. Learn about HBCUs and meet some representatives. Food, fun and fellowship. Step competition for kids ages 6–12. For more info, contact gloriaponcerodriguez@gmail.com.

**MON
23**

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
24**

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
25**

2024 Bizwerx Clean Mobility Summit 8 a.m.–1 p.m. Valdez Hall, 702 M. St. This inaugural event will bring together businesses, nonprofits and funding agencies to explore the intersection of clean mobility and clean energy industries across the Central Valley and California. Speakers: Keshia Thomas, executive director of the Fresno Career Development Institute; Dr. Cassandra Little, CEO of the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce; and Eric Spikes, director of Biz-Werx Innovation and Mobility Hub. Hosted by the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce. For more info, contact 661-755-4497 or eric@fmbcc.com.

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

City of Fresno Wage Protection Workshop 5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m. Hoover High School Cafeteria, 5550 N. First St. Workshop for employees and community organizations on the City's Wage Protection Program. This comprehensive program combines education for workers and businesses, along with enforcement measures that allow for civil and criminal action against employers committing wage theft, to address and rectify instances of wage theft in the city. For more info, contact 559-621-7500.

**THU
26**

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.

**FRI
27**

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

Plane Crash at Los Gatos Coalinga College Auditorium, 300 W. Cherry Lane, Coalinga. 5 p.m., food vendors and mariachi in the quad; 6 p.m., community presentation with Tim Z. Hernandez and special guests; 7 p.m., mingle and book signing. In his new book, *They Call You Back*, Hernandez continues his search for the plane crash victims while also turning the lens on himself and his ancestral past—a lifelong journey haunted by memory, addiction, generational trauma and the spirit world. For more info, contact 559-935-1914.

CineCulture: Double Indemnity 5:15 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Dr. Ed EmanuEl. Has dialogue ever been more perfectly hard-boiled? Has a femme fatale ever been as deliciously wicked as Barbara Stanwyck? And has 1940s Los Angeles ever looked so seductively sordid? *Double Indemnity* is one of the most entertainingly perverse stories ever told and the standard by which all noir must be measured. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

**SAT
28**

Fields of Fresno Ag Tour 8:15 a.m.–1:15 p.m. Starts at Kearney Mansion Museum, 7160 W. Kearney Blvd. Two stops: Welker's Custom Cut Lumber, where you will learn about the connection between agriculture and forestry, and Kings Canyon National Park, to take a walking tour to the iconic General Sherman Tree. The walking tour is two hours roundtrip, so be sure to wear comfortable shoes for the paved pathway. Breakfast snacks, coffee, water and lunch included. \$85 members, \$95 non-members. For more info, visit valleyhistory.org/ag-tour.

Plane Crash at Los Gatos Los Gatos Canyon, 11 a.m.: Crash memorial dedication. Visalia Barnes & Noble, 915 S. Mooney Blvd., 6 p.m.–8 p.m.: Book launch of *They Call You Back* by Tim Z. Hernandez. For more info, contact 559-935-1914.

Annual KFCF Banquet 5:30 p.m.–9 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave. Guest speaker: Greg Palast. Topic: Election Suppression and What's at Stake for Our Democracy. Palast is the author of *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* and *Billionaires and Ballot Bandits*. \$80/person before Sept. 21, \$100/person at the door. For advance tickets, visit ticketstripe.com/FFCFBanquet.

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

South-South Cooperation

BY DEBAY TADESSE

A comprehensive cooperation framework in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical realms facilitates South-South. Developing nations pool their knowledge, skills, expertise and resources through South-South cooperation to achieve their development objectives via coordinated efforts. It can happen regionally, bilaterally, intraregional or interregional, involving two or more developing countries.

Another modality of South-South cooperation is triangular cooperation, a collaboration in which traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations facilitate South-South initiatives by providing funding, training, management, technological systems and other forms of support. South-South trade has expanded more quickly in the past two decades than North-South trade.

The most common kind of collaboration, known as North-South cooperation, occurs when a developed country provides financial support—or other resources—to a less fortunate nation in the event of a natural disaster or humanitarian calamity.

Although the increased resource inflows, particularly to the benefit of emerging nations, are the main benefits of the current South-South cooperation, many African governments still face formidable obstacles. This results from the growing reliance on raw materials and the more substantial pressure of competition from Asian countries.

In addition, it has been argued that the relations between China and Africa could not represent South-South relations. The irony is that China, which has the second-biggest economy in the world behind the United States and plans to surpass the United States by 2025, is still categorized as a developing nation despite having already surpassed Japan, Germany and India.

The situation in many developing countries, particularly Africa, is very different. According to the UN Development Programme, around 80% of the low human development countries with high population growth rates, low literacy, low income and short life expectancy are in Africa. The question to be asked is why the second-largest economy in the world, with a seat on the UN Security Council, is still considered a “South”?

BRICS

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa comprise the informal alliance called BRICS. Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed the first-ever BRIC ministerial meeting on Sept. 20, 2006, outside of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York. The meeting was attended by the defense minister of India and the foreign ministers of Brazil, China and Russia.

On July 9, 2008, Putin met with former Chinese President Hu Jintao, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh outside the G8 Summit in Toyako, Hokkaido, Japan. This was another significant step.

The inaugural BRIC summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on June 16, 2009, initiated by Russia. Following the summit, the BRIC leaders released a united statement. According to the charter, one declared goal is to “promote dialogue and cooperation among countries in an incremental, proactive, pragmatic, open and transparent way.”

BRIC leaders agreed to open several new spheres of cooperation—youth, migration, industry, energy, peacekeeping, environment and the fight against infectious diseases. The Russian side also revealed a plan for commercial, economic and investment cooperation among the BRICS countries, which presently has more than 60 proposals for collaboration from Russian firms.

BRICS as a Challenge for Western Hegemony

The BRICS countries’ expanding economic power, role as one of the primary engines of global economic development, sizable population and wealth of natural resources threaten Western hegemony in the world economy.

According to the BRICS portal: In 2013, BRICS accounted for about 27% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) in purchasing power parity (PPP) of their national currencies. The BRICS countries overtook the G7 nations (Canada, Japan, Italy, Germany, France, United States and United Kingdom) share of the world’s total GDP in PPP terms in 2018. By 2024, the difference had increased even further, with the BRICS now holding 35% of the world’s GDP compared to 30% held by the G7 countries. The total BRICS population is 2.88 billion (42% of the global population).

On July 16, 2014, Brasilia hosted the second meeting in this format, which involved South American heads of state and government. This practice makes it possible to find important contact points between BRICS and new leading power centers emerging worldwide.

Over the years, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have been attempting to reach a consensus on common viewpoints on essential international agenda items. Among these is a call for more representative financial governance, which aims at the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) voting and quota systems.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, to deal with the consequences of the health crisis, they used their bank, the New Development Bank (NDB), to offer emergency credit lines. The BRICS group’s scope and vigor are best exemplified by the NDB, which mirrors their discontent with global financial governance without challenging it. From 2016 to 2022, the NDB sanctioned 123 projects totaling more than \$30 billion to supplement current lines of credit.



Members and invited guests at the Sixth BRICS summit in 2014. Photo courtesy of The Commons

In addition, they came to a consensus on several financial and economic issues, such as the World Bank and IMF reforms, the formation of the BRICS Exchanges Alliance and the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism, which allows for the extension of credit facilities in local currency.

There is disagreement among academics over whether a new BRICS currency might undermine the U.S. dollar’s hegemony. However, if a new BRICS currency was to stabilize against the dollar, it could weaken the power of U.S. sanctions, leading to a further decline in the dollar’s value.

BRICS Expansion

The United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Iran and Egypt became members of BRICS on Jan. 1, 2024. While they have not formally joined, Saudi Arabia and Argentina participate in the organization’s activities as invited countries. It was also anticipated that the inclusion of Argentina, Egypt and Ethiopia in BRICS would bolster the standing of Latin America and Africa in the organization. Ultimately, this announcement improves the representation of the Middle East, Africa and Latin America inside the group.

Argentina was among the first nations to formally submit their candidacy to the BRICS in 2022. Argentina is also interested in joining the NDB. However, when Argentina’s new president, Javier Milei, took office in 2023, he immediately withdrew the nation from its intended admission into the BRICS group of governments.

As middle-power countries try to maneuver under growing geopolitical uncertainties, especially the tensions between the United States and China, two Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia and Thailand, have recently announced their plans to join the BRICS grouping of emerging nations. The admission of these new members heightens the debate about BRICS as a counterbalance to the liberal international order and the G7.

Members of the BRICS bloc countered that the group does not intend to oppose the United States, the G7 or the G20. Instead, it seeks to ensure that international organizations reflect the current power structure and acknowledge the significance of BRICS in global politics and the economy.

Conclusion

The West has controlled the global economy for nearly 200 years, first in Europe and then in the United States. Potential and present BRICS members pose a danger to Western hegemony in the world economy by being able to compete with the seven major industrialized nations.

Will the impact of the BRICS countries, which contain a significant amount of the world’s natural resources, lead to this change? The answer to this question is still tenuous when one examines the rise of Europe in the 19th century and, subsequently, the United States in the 20th century when they relied on global natural resources, particularly Africa, for their economic success.

The BRICS countries’ increasing economic power, role as significant catalysts for global economic growth, sizable populations and wealth of natural resources serve as the cornerstones of their impact on the world stage.

Will it be able to transform its political influence into real-world results? Could that be interpreted as opposition to the G7? Academics and the market will further delve into these and related issues.

Debay Tadesse has a Ph.D. in African studies focusing on 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 an assistant professor and currently lectures at Fresno State and Fresno City College.

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Valley Journalist Lloyd Carter Spoke Truth about Water and Power

Continues from page 17

people fired. They wanted 'em canned, they wanted 'em moved outta the state. They were hell bent to get us outta here."

Carter and colleague Gregg Gordon wrote, "Poison in the Valley," a five-part report on Kesterson for UPI carried by major papers nationally. No major California paper carried the report, including the *Fresno Bee*. Such was the power of agribusiness.

Carter's words had power, too. Another USFWS scientist who worked with Carter on those issues was Joe Skorupa. "Lloyd had such a wonderful nose for truth and a gift for putting truth into words on a printed page that all could easily understand. He was a big-picture guy who paid attention to details. He was so good at shining light exactly where those in power wanted darkness."

Patricia Schifferle, like Carter, has gained deep expertise in both the science and politics of water in California. Working closely with him over the years gave her an appreciation of his thoughtful approach. Schifferle pointed out a couple of things that struck her working with Carter

over the years: "His courage. He always was willing to take on the rich power brokers with searing honesty. His sense of justice. He saw clearly how the drainage pollution was impacting so many people."

That is a quality observed by Arax as well. "There's this notion that the people of the Valley aren't that important because they don't have a unified voice on this. So, in the absence of that unified voice the voice of industry takes over. And this is what Lloyd was trying to document."

Carter's investigation, according to Schifferle, resulted in change. "Lloyd's reporting helped to shine the public spotlight on the wildlife devastation from the irrigation drainage. As a result, the Legislature passed the Toxic Pits Cleanup Act that enacted many of the policy recommendations and legislative protections."

For scientist Smith, Carter's journalism was driven by a strong sense of fairness and justice. "I think Lloyd really was not concerned about the rich fat guy, but [rather] the little guy."

"He was concerned about the farm hands who fished; he sloughs down there for fish that were obviously taking up Selenium, but they were using the fish for food. He was concerned about the little guy in the field with all this stuff."

"And he was worried about the farm hand getting a fair shake in the Valley, as opposed to the big guys in the Westlands irrigation district."

Eventually, the *Fresno Bee* did not really want the kind of incisive reporting Carter was doing about agribusiness and water. So, he resigned and went to work for UPI again. When the wire service was on the skids, Carter decided to get a law degree and enhance his toolkit for investigation.

Then he worked for the state Attorney General in Fresno.

His watchdog role continued with Save Our Streams, working alongside activist farmer Walt Shubin to advocate on behalf of the public and as host of *Down in the Valley*, a radio program on KFCF 88.1 FM for nearly two decades.

Environmental problems that Carter covered continue to plague the Valley. Even now in the Westlands Water District, Schifferle reports that "ponds in the name of 'groundwater recharge' are receiving multimillion-dollar grants from the Department of Water Resources financed through taxpayer bonds. Hopefully, safeguards will be required so these 'recharge ponds' do not create devastation, death and deformities."

This industrialized valley was the source of Carter's journalism. Arax ponders whether it was ironically the source of his demise. "He died of Parkinson's disease, which is one of the great diseases of this valley, which is a consequence of the sacrifice zone. The killing zone."

"Studies at UCLA have shown that we have what's called Parkinson's Alley in the San Joaquin Valley, a high number of deaths from people exposed to pesticides, herbicides and all the other stuff that's dumped on this middle part of California in the name of industrial operations."

Arax pictures Carter now as an indelible part of the Valley's landscape. "You look for his legacy, and it's pretty easy to find. It's right there in the land. Lloyd put a mark, a dent, his dent in the land." Carter lived and died a Valley citizen. He was 76 years old.

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

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Join progressives and help decide which candidates get endorsed by the CVPPAC in this election cycle. The endorsement meeting will take place on Saturday, September 14 at 3:30 p.m. at 3097 Tulare Street in Fresno.

Each candidate under consideration has been sent a questionnaire, and their responses will be available online at www.cvppac.org. At the meeting, only CVPPAC members can vote and it takes a 2/3 majority to receive an endorsement. You can become a member by visiting www.cvppac.org/join-us/.

The purpose of the CVPPAC is to help progressive candidates get elected in the Central Valley. Endorsed candidates are supported with enthusiastic volunteers, promotion of their campaign on social media, in the *Community Alliance* newspaper and are often given a campaign contribution by the group.

Candidate Endorsement Meeting
Saturday, September 14 at 3:30 p.m.
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- Permanent ceasefire in Gaza
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- Healthcare for all
- Police accountability
- Environmental justice
- LGBTQ+ rights



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Cambios en Torno al

Arthop de Fresno

Continúa en página 22

escena artística de Fresno: Sorensen's Studios. Tanto el Arthop como Sorensen's representan el poder cultural de la diversa y creciente comunidad artística de Fresno; ambos están profundamente arraigados en la cultura de Fresno y han existido como centros para creativos durante décadas.

Sorensen's Studios cerró el pasado mes de julio y aún está por verse si volverá a abrir sus puertas alguna vez. Los artistas que alguna vez lo llamaron hogar se han fragmentado en colectivos más pequeños o han regresado a los márgenes de la comunidad artística de Fresno, forasteros que perdieron el único lugar que los aceptaba completamente. Para la comunidad y los artistas que llamaban hogar a Sorensen's Studios, su desaparición pareció tan repentina como el propio Hombre de Acero. Pero no fue nada repentino.

La mala gestión se había vuelto endémica en el estudio incluso antes de la muerte de su fundador, Chris Sorensen. La falta de comunicación

La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas Cumple 64 Años

Continúa en página 23

a los niños y las niñas como la responsabilidad de sus padres en vez de considerarles de su propiedad, y que centra los valores de amor, afecto,

solidaridad y responsabilidad.

Wilma Espín falleció en 2007. Sus restos se encuentran en el Mausoleo de los Combatientes del II Frente Frank País en Mayarí Arriba, en un

por parte de la administración, la mala gestión de fondos y las dudas

sobre quién era responsable de Sorensen's Studios plagaron el enclave de artistas mucho antes de que perdiera su base y cerrara sus puertas para siempre el pasado junio (Your Central Valley).

Puede que sea demasiado pronto para albergar un alto nivel de pesimismo sobre el Arthop, pero nunca es demasiado pronto para abogar por la protección de los eventos, estudios e instituciones culturales y artísticas fundamentales de Fresno.

A partir de ahora, el Arthop comenzará nuevamente el jueves 5 y 19 de septiembre, organizado obviamente por el Consejo de las Artes de Fresno. Para obtener más información sobre los lugares o para participar en el Arthop, puedes contactar al Consejo de las Artes de Fresno al (559) 237-9734. Para obtener más información sobre el nuevo evento de los miércoles, las personas pueden comunicarse con el Downtown Fresno Partnership al (559) 490-9966.

Noah Deeds Ortiz es un estudiante de la Universidad Estatal de Fresno que se especializa en psicología. Coordina la sección de Artes y Cultura de Community Alliance junto con su esposa, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. Fue el presentador del podcast "Queer Goggles".

La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas sigue en vida y ahora celebra su aniversario 64.

La Secretaría General actual de la FMC, Teresa Amarelle Boue, dijo hace poco, "No nos quedamos satisfechas todavía con lo que se ha logrado, debemos seguir adelante, para cerrar las brechas de género que todavía existen." La historia de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas nos indica que sin duda seguirán adelante.

Agradezco la colaboración e inspiración de Nora Cuello, federada fundadora de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas en 1960, por sus

aportes al artículo.

Leni Villagomez Reeves es una médica local y activista. Chequee sus comentarios y noticias sobre Cuba en Facebook (facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/).

Central Valley Fuego Fuera de la Copa Jägermeister

BY PETER MAIDEN

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<https://fresnoalliance.com/>



Steevan Dos Santos, de Omaha, a la izquierda, celebra con sus compañeros de equipo el gol de último minuto que marcó y que aseguró la victoria para su equipo. Foto de Peter Maiden

Central Valley Fuego quedó oficialmente fuera de la carrera por la Copa Jägermeister después de una derrota por 0-1 ante Union Omaha el 9 de agosto. El gol de la victoria lo marcó el delantero de Omaha, Steevan Dos Santos, en el minuto 95 del partido, cuando faltaban cuatro minutos para el final. Aunque no se trataba de un partido de liga (el Jägermeister es un mini torneo de mitad de temporada), la competencia fue feroz y hubo tres tarjetas amarillas en el último cuarto de partido.

Para obtener información sobre los próximos partidos, consulte fuegofc.com.

Peter Maiden es el Editor de Fotografía de Community Alliance.

El periódico Community Alliance (Alianza Comunitaria) se publica mensualmente por San Joaquin 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.

Desde 1996, Alianza Comunitaria ha sido una voz progresista independiente para el Valle Central de San Joaquin. Alianza Comunitaria aboga por:

- la justicia racial, social, ambiental y económica;
- igualdad de derechos para todos, incluidos los inmigrantes, las personas sin hogar y la comunidad LGBTQ+;
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Nuestro objetivo es exponer los problemas raciales, sociales, medio-ambientales y económicos e injusticias políticas. Ayudaremos a construir un poderoso movimiento progresista que hará que todas nuestras comunidades sean más seguras, más sanas, más equitativas y más habitables.

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Tener Seguro de Salud Puede Salvar tu Vida

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Este cambio trascendental ha hecho de California el primer estado en ofrecer seguro médico a todos sus residentes de bajos ingresos, incluidos los inmigrantes indocumentados.

A los 33 años, María (o Mari, como la llaman sus amigos) no estaba en ninguno de los grupos de edad elegibles y

la misma tarjeta que usaría más tarde ese mes para cubrir su cirugía. Ella continuó explicando lo que eso significó para su vida. No había estado cerca de ahorrar la cantidad que necesitaba, pero este dinero ahora cubriría las facturas de las 3 semanas que no pudo trabajar para recuperarse de la cirugía.

Otra inmigrante, que pidió ser llamada Verónica Ruiz, tuvo una experiencia ligeramente diferente con Medi-Cal. Verónica es una inmigrante indocumentada de México de 56 años. Ha vivido en el Valle Central durante más de dos décadas, criando sola a su hijo y a su hija, que ahora son adultos.

Ha luchado con la diabetes por más de la mitad de su vida y casi perdió esa batalla hace unos 10 años. En ese momento no calificaba para Medi-Cal y había escuchado que inscribirse en este tipo de beneficios podría ponerla en peligro con ICE o incluso arruinar su posibilidad de obtener una tarjeta verde en el futuro. Esto es parte de la confusión que rodea al “cargo público”.

La regla del cargo público se usa para determinar si un inmigrante indocumentado podría obtener una visa, admisión o ajuste de estatus en los Estados Unidos—o sea si podría recibir la residencia. Si el gobierno cree que es probable que dependas de la asistencia pública demasiado, la solicitud puede ser denegada.

Lo que cae bajo el cargo público ha variado y cambiado porque el término es muy amplio. Recibir asistencia en la solicitud puede ser denegada.

¿Qué es exactamente un cargo público?

En 1999, el departamento de justicia buscó claridad en la definición de cargos públicos y sugirió que los oficiales de inmigración no deberían dar mucha importancia a los beneficios públicos (parte de la institucionalización) al examinar la elegibilidad de un inmigrante indocumentado. Sin embargo, Trump cambió esto en 2019 ampliando la definición de cargo público, añadiendo programas de salud, nutrición y vivienda que anteriormente estaban excluidos de consideración.

En 1999, el departamento de justicia buscó claridad en la definición de cargos públicos y sugirió que los oficiales de inmigración no deberían dar mucha importancia

a los beneficios públicos (parte de la institucionalización) al examinar la elegibilidad de un inmigrante indocumentado.

Las nuevas reglas redefinieron un cargo público como un “extranjero que recibe uno o más beneficios públicos por más de 12 meses en total dentro de cualquier período de 36 meses”, con múltiples beneficios en un solo mes contado como meses separados. Este fue un cambio significativo que aterrizó y confundió a los inmigrantes indocumentados.

La regla también establecía un conjunto de factores negativos, como haber recibido anteriormente cualquier beneficio público por más de 12 meses dentro de los 36 meses anteriores y un ingreso por debajo del 125% del nivel federal de pobreza. Estos factores aumentaban la probabilidad de que una persona fuera considerada un cargo público.

Estos cambios aterrizaban con razón a los inmigrantes en todo Estados Unidos. “Una encuesta de KFF de 2021 sobre adultos hispanos encontró que 1 de cada 4 adultos hispanos potencialmente indocumentados y más de 1 de cada 10 adultos hispanos residentes permanentes legales reportaron que ellos o un miembro de su familia no participaron en un programa de asistencia gubernamental en los últimos tres años debido a temores relacionados con la inmigración” (KFF.org).

Afortunadamente, las reglas han cambiado nuevamente, y los cambios de Trump fueron revocados en 2021. La administración de Biden trabajó para codificar la versión de 1999, de modo que este tipo de beneficios no pudiera impedir que alguien obtuviera su tarjeta verde en el futuro.

Recibir Medi-Cal no te pondrá en peligro tampoco, ya que California no le da tu información de Medi-Cal a ICE (Inmigración y Control de Aduanas).

Cambios en Torno al ArtHop de Fresno

POR NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

afirmó, enfatizando la necesidad de una mejor organización y medidas de seguridad para los eventos al aire libre—que escapan a la responsabilidad de los organizadores del ArtHop.

Después de recibir comentarios públicos, la Ciudad de Fresno decidió ir adelante con un evento al aire libre administrado por el

Downtown Fresno Partnership, mientras que el tradicional ArtHop (organizado por el fundador del ArtHop, el Consejo de las Artes de Fresno) seguiría de acuerdo al formato original de concentrarse en galerías de arte y otros eventos bajo techo.

Esta propuesta de la Ciudad de Fresno ha sido recibida con escepticismo, con críticos argumentando que hace difícil al espíritu comunitario que hace único al ArtHop (Fresno) (*The Business Journal*) (Fresno)and). Los miembros de la comunidad que se oponen al cierre de actividades al aire libre en agosto y que apoyan la identidad comunitaria del ArtHop argumentan que dividir el ArtHop en dos eventos es una mala idea y podría ser un intento de la Ciudad para co-optar el evento en beneficio propio, en lugar de en beneficio de sus constituyentes.

La confirmación de la Ciudad de que el “ArtHop al Aire Libre” será el miércoles en lugar del jueves ha desatado aún más reacciones negativas. Según el alcalde Jerry Dyer, la razón del cambio al miércoles se debe al acuerdo de la Ciudad con el Departamento de Policía de Fresno, el cual permite un exceso de policías los miércoles en lugar de los jueves.

Dyer dice que cambiar este calendario dentro del departamento requeriría negociaciones y un nuevo acuerdo (Fresno)and). Aparentemente existe confusión entre algunos miembros de la comunidad quienes se preguntan quién “dirige” el ArtHop de

Fresno; esta incertidumbre es la razón por la cual la reciente intervención de la Ciudad en el evento pareció repentina y fuera de lugar para muchos de los interesados y partidarios del ArtHop.

Surgen preguntas sobre la autoridad de la Ciudad de Fresno y si tiene o no el mandato para hacer cambios tan radicales, en lugar

de los organizadores originales o actuales.

Lilia Chavez, Directora Ejecutiva del Consejo de las Artes de Fresno, habló con el periódico Community Alliance sobre la reciente confusión en torno al ArtHop de Fresno. Ella dijo: “El Consejo de las Artes ha coordinado el ArtHop durante 28 años y continuará haciéndolo... Las actividades al aire libre sancionadas por negocios privados o sedes oficiales del ArtHop siempre han sido y seguirán ocurriendo durante el ArtHop.”

Cuando se le preguntó sobre la amnesia cultural en torno a la historia del ArtHop, Chavez añadió: “Hemos observado que algunas personas no conocen la historia del ArtHop e incluso algunos de los que la conocen, se sienten de alguna manera justificados en co-optar el evento y en menospreciar los años de trabajo y esfuerzo que los artistas locales y el Consejo de las Artes han puesto en hacer del ArtHop un evento emblemático para Fresno.”

También intentó despejar cualquier duda sobre el nuevo evento al aire libre de los miércoles que se ha separado del ArtHop de los jueves. En sus palabras, “La Ciudad está proponiendo un nuevo evento para que ocurra los miércoles—ese evento será gestionado por el Downtown Fresno Partnership. No será el ArtHop. El Consejo de las Artes está feliz de ver una expansión de actividades en el centro de la ciudad. Esperamos que este nuevo evento creand oportunidades económicas

adicionales para la comunidad.”

Por último, Chavez intentó aclarar la razón de la Ciudad para cerrar temporalmente el ArtHop. Explicó que vendedores no aprobados se estaban instalando en la calle Fulton durante el ArtHop sin permisos de reventa y “participando en otras actividades ilegales.” Añadió que el aumento en el número de asistentes, fueron factores que la Ciudad consideró necesarios abordar “antes de que ocurriera una tragedia.”

A pesar de los cambios, Chavez se muestra optimista sobre el ArtHop, afirmando: “Esperamos que el ArtHop continúe atrayendo a personas interesadas en experimentar talento local.” Además, dijo que “anima a los artistas individuales que no tengan un lugar a buscar asociación con cualquier sede del ArtHop listada en el folleto del ArtHop” y que “los artistas y creadores que deseen exhibir obras originales están invitados a seguir participando contactando al Consejo de las Artes.”

Queda por ver cómo afectará la nueva programación a la asistencia a los ArtHops de septiembre. El ArtHop se ha vuelto sinónimo del primer y tercer jueves del mes, atrayendo multitudes de todo el Valle Central; el cambio al miércoles de los eventos al aire libre y la escasa información proporcionada por la Ciudad podrían disminuir la magnitud cultural del evento en

el futuro. El año pasado, organizaciones, líderes y vendedores involucrados con el ArtHop reconocieron que era beneficioso la proximidad de los dos eventos en ArtHop. Los más jóvenes que asisten al festival del ArtHop tuvieron la oportunidad de ser expuestos a la cultura y a los artistas en el ArtHop (*Fresno Bee*). Este ya no será el caso. La historia del ArtHop parece reflejar otra historia reciente enrazada en la iconica

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El Arte Cautivador y Rebosante de Chris Solís

POR NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

Christopher Solís es un artista con sede en Fresno. Eso parece una frase absurda, pero fue todo lo que el artista esquivo me dio cuando le pedí más información sobre sí mismo. Solís no me parece el tipo de artista que intenta venderte algo, y menos a él mismo. En mi opinión, Solís ve las biografías de manera similar a las miniaturas de productos; instantáneas falsas cuidadosamente recordadas de "grasa," exceso, el mundo circundante y, crucialmente, la perspectiva del sujeto que está frente al lente de la cámara (o del editor).

En lugar de una biografía escrita oficial, Christopher me envió un autorretrato. Muchas de las piezas de Christopher se sienten casi voyeuristas, pero no porque sus obras representen figuras aparentemente absortas en momentos íntimos mientras las observamos.

En cambio, la sensación de voyeurismo proviene del hecho de que el espectador está dentro del mundo de la persona que experimenta esos momentos. Es como si el espectador existiera en el sueño de otro individuo, cautivado por un mundo que no puede comprender completamente.

Las imágenes son borrosas, parpadeantes, siempre al borde de desvanecerse. Las piezas de bocetos sueltos y expresivos de Solís muestran escenas llenas de figuras que irradian una calida intensidad sensual en un momento y un frío, distante desconianza al siguiente, como si supieran que el espectador es un intruso.

El dinamismo que pulsa en la página de repente se detiene; las figuras giran su mirada hacia ti, o tal vez siempre te estuvieron mirando, con ojos oscuros y discernientes, como si dijieran "Si, te veo, fantasma errante; ¿cómo encontraste el camino hasta aquí? ¿Cómo encontrarás el camino de regreso?"

Las piezas que no son bocetos de Christopher son igualmente cautivadoras y están llenas de vitalidad. Solís utiliza con maestría la ausencia de sus obras para fortalecer la ilusión de movimiento e intersubjetividad.

Los sujetos parecen estar surgiendo en forma corpórea, emergiendo de un vacío por pura fuerza de voluntad. A veces en el vacío aparece un bosquejo de tiza blanca que impresiona la idea de que estas figuras se originan en un caos indomable, pensamientos incompletos que componen la mente inconsciente.



El arte de Chris Solís.

Dentro de las piezas del caballo y la figura sin camisa, la escritura parece representar un diario de ejercicios, rastreado el progreso físico a lo largo del tiempo. Esto, combinado con la musculatura y el vigor de las figuras, el uso cuidadoso del espacio negativo y el "desorden" de las pinceladas, genera una sensación de inmediatez y de estar en constante creación.

Hay una presencia profundamente líbida en estas piezas que insiste en sí misma; nos obliga a confrontar el poder de nuestro inconsciente y su papel en la perpetua creación del "yo."

La pieza rosa es la "biografía" que Christopher me envió en lugar de cualquier cosa que pudiera percibirse como autopromoción. En ella, escribe "Estos dibujos están entre las cartas de amor más apasionadas que la vida haya recibido" junto a un autorretrato esbozado libremente.

Aunque el arte de Christopher puede sentirse "desorientador" e inquietante en ocasiones, está innegablemente lleno de vida y autenticidad. Es íntimo, personal y profundamente humano.

Noah Deeds Ortiz es un estudiante de la Universidad Estatal de Fresno que se especializa en psicología. Coordina la sección de Artes y Cultura de Community Alliance junto con su esposa, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. Fue el presentador del podcast "Queer Goggles".

La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas Cumple 64 Años

POR LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC) se fundó el 23 de agosto de 1960, apenas ocho meses después del triunfo de la Revolución Cubana. Quien encabezó el movimiento por los derechos de las mujeres y la presidenta fundadora de la organización fue Wilma Espín. Esta mujer, que nació para ser revolucionaria, se graduó en 1954 de la Universidad de Santiago con el título en ingeniería química.

Poco tiempo después empezó a participar con el movimiento revolucionario en Cuba y se estableció entre los líderes y organizadores del alzamiento armado en Santiago, el 30 de noviembre del 1956, con el propósito de apoyar el desembarco del yate Granma, con Fidel Castro y otros 81 hombres, iniciando la lucha para derrocar al dictador Fulgencio Batista, que había suspendido las elecciones y tomado el poder en un golpe de estado en 1953.

Ella siguió en la lucha urbana clandestina hasta que fue "descubierta" por las fuerzas de la dictadura, y entonces se sumó al Ejército Rebelde en la Sierra Maestra, incorporada en el Segundo Frente Oriental Frank País.

Después del triunfo de la Revolución, se dedicó toda su vida a la lucha de las mujeres cubanas por la igualdad. Es evidente que tuvo mucha influencia en el pensamiento de otros líderes revolucionarios. En la mera hora del triunfo de la Revolución, Fidel dijo, "la mujer es un sector de nuestro país que necesita también ser redimido, porque es víctima de la discriminación en el trabajo y en otros muchos aspectos de la vida... Cuando se juzgue a nuestra revolución en los años futuros, una de las cuestiones por las cuales nos juzgarán será la forma en que hayamos resuelto, en nuestra sociedad y en nuestra patria, los problemas de la mujer, aunque se trate de uno de los problemas de la revolución que requiera más tenacidad, más firmeza, más constancia y esfuerzo."

En 1960 Wilma Espín fundó la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC) para defender los mismos derechos para



Cartel de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas en homenaje a Wilma Espín. Foto cortesía The Commons

todos y poner fin a las discriminaciones, y siguió dedicada a transformar el papel de la mujer en Cuba.

Organizó los cursos de primeros auxilios, los cuales permitían la capacitación de las mujeres. Las mujeres se incorporaron a las Milicias Nacionales Revolucionarias. Mujeres y niñas participaron en la Campaña Nacional de Alfabetización, y luego se organizaron clases de costura. Posteriormente se estableció un plan para elevar el nivel educativo de las "amas de casa" a otro grado y más tarde a 9no grado. Luego siguió la educación superior y oficios. Ana Betancourt en 1961, y crea las Escuelas Nocturnas de Superación para Domésticas.

La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas incluye un 85% de las mujeres cubanas de 14 años en adelante. Los únicos requisitos para ser federada son tener 14 años y desear incorporarse a la organización. A lo largo de los años, la FMC ha tenido éxito en crear un ambiente social y político de apoyo para los derechos de las mujeres. Siguen algunos ejemplos:

Cuba legalizó el aborto en 1965, ocho años antes de Roe vs. Wade en los EEUU, y 23 años antes de la decisión equivalente de la Suprema Corte de Canadá. Es decir que Cuba fue el primer país en el hemisferio occidental que permite que las mujeres controlen sus propios cuerpos.

Dentro del sistema de salud gratuito, universalmente accesible, integral y a base de la comunidad, la interrupción del embarazo es un procedimiento médico a disposición de la mujer. Es ella quien decide.

Las mujeres que eligen el embarazo son apoyadas por este mismo sistema con atención prenatal excelente y respaldo comunitario que han reducido la tasa de mortalidad infantil a una cifra menor de la de los EEUU. La diferencia es aún mayor para madres negras y sus recién nacidos.

La licencia maternal y paternal también se garantiza. En este sentido, Cuba se alinea con las normas de la UNICEF. En 1979, la Asamblea General de la ONU aprobó la Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (CEDAW) y Cuba fue el primer país en firmarla y el segundo de ratificarla. Aún antes de esta convención, toda discriminación contra la mujer

se había prohibido por la ley y la constitución cubana. Estas protecciones se han fortalecido y aumentado en las constituciones subsiguientes, la más reciente siendo la constitución de 2019.

Cuba ha creado y aprobado por referendo popular en 2022 un código legal que incluye el derecho de todas las personas a formar familia, que actualiza las definiciones jurídicas de instituciones de familia con normas inclusivas en vez de heteronormativas, que establece el derecho de todas y todos a una vida familiar libre de violencia, que trata

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LLAMAZA COMUNITARIA LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

Adiós Primo, Adiós Amigo Pablo

POR MIGUEL ANGEL BÁEZ

Hasta el último día de su vida, Pablo "El Primo" Espinoza fue un hombre conocido y reconocido en el Valle Central de California.

Hay quienes lo conocieron en sus días de organizador

comunitario, trabajando al lado de César Chávez, uno de

los líderes más conocidos del Movimiento Campesino

de mediados de los '60s, que terminó por darle paso a

lo que hoy se conoce como el Sindicato de Trabajadores

Campesinos (UFW por sus siglas en inglés).

Otros lo ubican en su etapa como comunicador. Trabajó

de locutor en programas radiales como Despierta Ya

Campesino y La Voz del Pueblo en Radio Campesina, como

también en Radio Bilingüe y Radio Grito, en esta última ya

como Director de Proyecto Campesino de AFSC (American

Service Committee). El acuñó la famosa frase, "¡súbale

primo, que se oiga hasta el gallinero!"

Fue también colaborador del ya desaparecido semanario,

Noticiero Semanal de Porterville, donde escribía una

columna con temas laborales e historias de su etapa como

organizador. En dicho espacio, recuperaba también

anécdotas poco conocidas y reivindicaba el trabajo de

muchos héroes anónimos que contribuyeron de forma

importante en el movimiento pero que se vieron opacados

por la popularidad de figuras como el propio Chávez y

Dolores Huerta.

Siempre involucrado en temas sociales, políticos y

laborales en defensa de los derechos de los trabajadores

campesinos, El Primo era seguido y respetado tanto por

los propios trabajadores como por los mismos políticos,

empresarios y líderes comunitarios.

Tras su jubilación, se mantuvo activo en diversas Mesas

Directivas y Comités, en donde seguía aportando su

liderazgo y experiencia acumulada. Luego decidió alejarse

de los reflectores y dedicarse a su vida familiar.

Tener Seguro de Salud Puede Salvar tu Vida

POR PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

Maria es una mujer meticulosa. Es muy organizada, se cepilla los dientes después de cada

comida, cuenta sus calorías, hace ejercicio todos los días con su hijo—trata de controlar lo

que puede. Pero, como en todas las cosas de la vida, ni siquiera nuestra propia salud puede

ser completamente controlada.

Hace algunos años, comenzó a sentir un dolor abdominal intenso, pero evitó ir al médico

porque era demasiado caro para ella. Eventualmente, el dolor fue demasiado para soportar,

por lo que se sometió a una cirugía. Las hernias no tratadas son increíblemente

severa del intestino) y sepsis.

Necesitaba cirugía, y cuanto antes, mejor. María la meticulosa puso en marcha un plan de

ahorro, porque como la mitad de los inmigrantes indocumentados en los Estados Unidos,

no tenía seguro médico.

Como una mujer indocumentada que criaba a un niño pequeño completamente sola,

no tenía opciones más que trabajar y esperar poder ahorrar suficiente dinero antes de que

fuera demasiado tarde. Había estado ahorrando durante un año completo cuando recibió

una carta de Medi-Cal que cambiaría todo.

Se estima que hay 1.8 millones de inmigrantes indocumentados viviendo solo en

California (a partir de 2022). Inmigrantes que van a trabajar, pagan impuestos y contribuyen

a la sociedad todos los días, personas que intentan vivir mejores vidas a tu lado.

Los inmigrantes contribuyen a nuestra economía sin poder participar de los frutos de

su trabajo. En 2022, los inmigrantes indocumentados en California contribuyeron con

\$8.5 mil millones en impuestos estatales y locales (ITFP). Inmigrantes que trabajan hasta

permitirse Vicks Vaporub y oraciones.

En los últimos años, California ha tomado medidas para cambiar eso. El acceso a la

atención de Medi-Cal para personas indocumentadas en este estado se ha expandido

pudo asistir a la escuela y de forma irregular los primeros

grados de educación primaria.

"La educación era importante pero los deseos de

controlar la pobreza y el hambre eran más fuertes", dice

Espinoza en sus memorias.

"Las calificaciones en la escuela estaban por debajo

de lo normal. Yo estaba en primer grado a la edad de 7

años; la hermana mayor de la familia, estaba en cuarto

grado. Ninguno, ni mis hermanos ni yo, teníamos el grado

escolar de nuestra edad. Mis padres no tenían

una biblioteca, no nos podían ayudar con el trabajo de la

escuela. Mi madre era analfabeta al igual que mi padre.

Ambos firmaban con una 'x', ya que no sabían escribir ni su

nombre".

El trabajo arduo que experimentó Espinoza a muy

temprana edad fue al parecer un factor determinante que

fue sembrando su inquietud para no aceptar las injusticias

laborales,

"En los años '50s había recolectores de algodón con

problemas de la cintura. El trabajo del algodón nunca debió

haberse hecho para seres humanos porque nos destruía las

piernas y la cintura. Uno pizcaba algodón agachado por

media hora y cuando quería enderezarse tenía que usar

tus dos manos y apoyartas en la cintura para poder calmar

el dolor de los discos. Miles de campesinos pizcadores

quedamos sin cintura. Para pizcar algodón teníamos que

estar hincados", narra.

Ya en su vida adulta, el destino llevó al famoso Primo a

California, donde participó al lado de Chávez en las huelgas

de la UFW y en la lucha para mejorar las condiciones

laborales de los trabajadores agrícolas. Fue también

una voz crítica del movimiento, lo cual le causó algunos

problemas que lo fueron alejando incluso, como el mismo lo

aseguraba, de algunos trabajos.

Tras fuertes batallas contra diversas enfermedades en los

últimos años, Pablo "El Primo" Espinoza, se despidió de

esta vida el pasado 25 de agosto, en Porterville, a los 87

años. Sin embargo, su legado, el recuerdo de sus allegados

quedarán intactos, al igual que esa voz inconfundible que

seguirá escuchándose "hasta el gallinero".

Miguel Angel Baez es un periodista del Valle Central nacido

en México. El se graduó de CSU Bakersfield y fue editor del

periódico Noticiero Semanal de Porterville.

Según la misma, Espinoza empezó a laborar desde muy

inconclusa, la cual compartió en vida con este reportero.

nuestra madre", escribió Espinoza en una autobiografía

estadounidense de nombre Juanita Champion Espinoza,

hijos de padre mexicano, Pablo J. Espinoza, quien era

indocumentado y casado con una mujer ciudadana

Grandes, también conocido como el Río Bravo.

"Allí nacimos tres hermanos, cinco hermanas y yo,

10 millas de Reynosa, Tamaulipas, México y cerca del Río

Nació el 29 de abril de 1937, en San Juan, Texas, a unas

padres a mejorar su situación económica, por lo que sólo

pequeño en la recolección de algodón para ayudar a sus

padres a mejorar su situación económica, por lo que sólo

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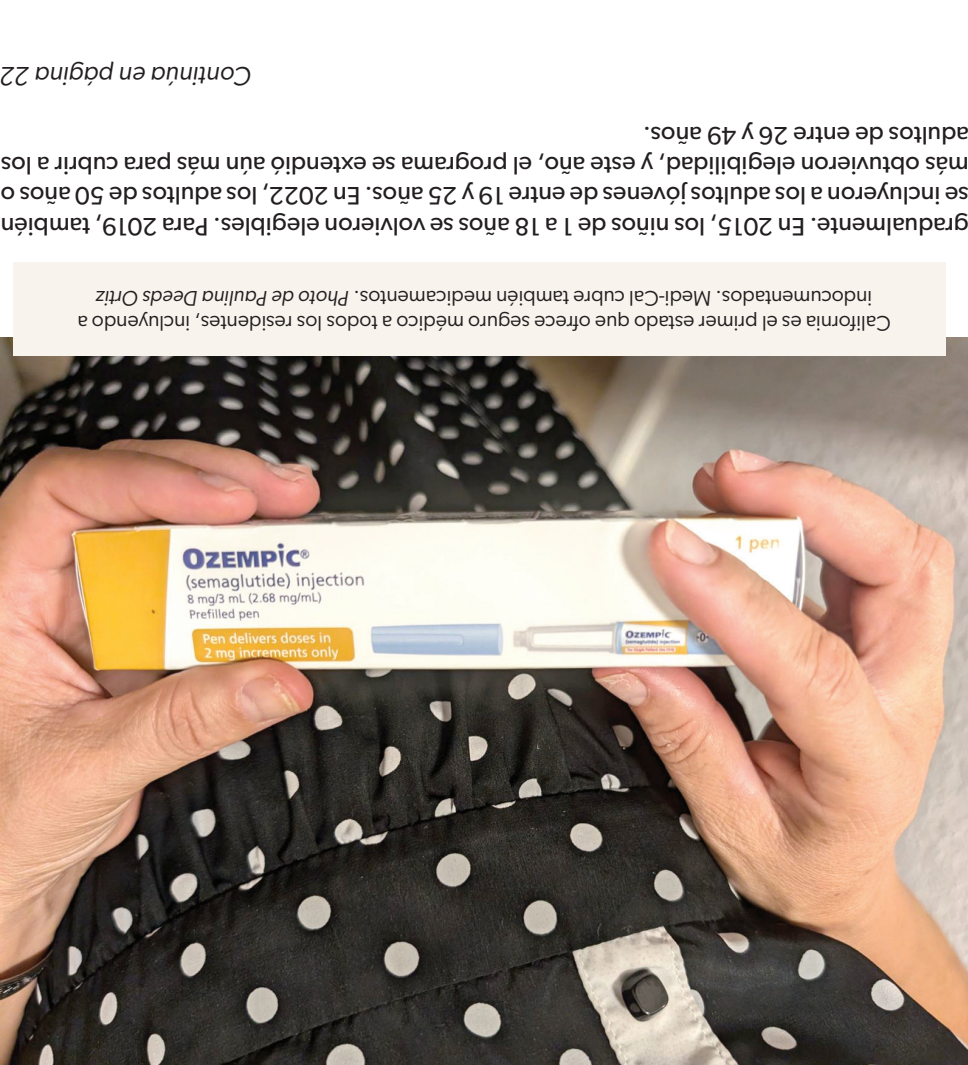
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padres a mejorar su situación económica, por lo que sólo



California es el primer estado que ofrece seguro médico a todos los residentes, incluyendo a indocumentados. Medi-Cal cubre también medicamentos. Photo de Paulina Deeds Ortiz

padres a mejorar su situación económica, por lo que sólo

Según la misma, Espinoza empezó a laborar desde muy

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Grandes, también conocido como el Río Bravo.

"Allí nacimos tres hermanos, cinco hermanas y yo,

10 millas de Reynosa, Tamaulipas, México y cerca del Río

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Imagen sin fecha de Pablo "El Primo" Espinoza. Foto cortesía de la familia Espinoza

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