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EN ESPAÑOL
PÁGINAS 21-24

Fresno Speaks Out

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

"I'm here because it's Dr. King's birthday, and I feel that his birthday is everyday," said Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris Jr., pastor of

the Free AME Ministries in Fresno, during a demonstration at Blackstone and Nees avenues on Jan. 20.

"I also feel that we got the Border Patrol out now hunting people down like they're some type of animal or something, and all of us are human beings. I don't feel or believe that anybody has a right to call anybody an immigrant or an illegal alien. America has always, from the time of George Washington and his crew, used labeling.

"What's also important about today is that 45 [Donald Trump] is getting installed. We have to understand that Dr. King always said that love and unity is the priority. It's the only way to fight back against systemic institutionalized racism, corporate control and capitalism.

"We're all one human family, and we have to form a power base. If you have a problem, I have a problem. If I have a problem, you have a problem. We have got to get back to that mentality because we have lost that here in America.

"This country is our country; it doesn't belong to the 1%. We must change the narrative, change this environment right now. We have got to stop calling people names and call the people our brothers and sisters."

A Voice of Hypocrisy

"At the [2025] Dr. King commemoration breakfast, they had a chance to reflect on how our City is striving to live out Dr.

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Hundreds gather at Save Mart Center on Jan. 18 for the People's March. Photo by Bob McCloskey

Democrats Bend the Knee on Immigrant Rights

BY EDWARD KISSAM

(Editor's note: We reprint this article with the permission of Ethnic Media Services. We must point out that San Joaquin Valley Reps. Jim Costa (D-Fresno), Adam Gray (D-Merced) and Josh Harder (D-Tracy) voted in support of the Laken Riley Act, which passed the House on Jan. 7. Other California Democrats supporting the act were Reps. Mike Levin (D-San Juan Capistrano), Dave Min (D-Irvine), Derek Tran (D-Orange) and George Whitesides (D-Agua Dulce). Every California Republican supported the act.

Other California Democrats acted with more dignity and opposed the act: Reps. Pete Aguilar, Ami Bera, Nanette Barragán, Julia Brownley, Salud Carbajal, Judy Chu, Gil Cisneros, Lou Correa, Mark DeSaulnier, Laura Friedman, John Garamendi, Robert Garcia, Jimmy Gomez, Jared Huffman, Sara Jacobs, Sydney Kamlager-Dove, Ro Khanna, Sam Liccardo, Ted Lieu, Zoe Lofgren, Doris Matsui, Kevin Mullin, Jimmy Panetta, Nancy Pelosi, Scott Peters, Luz Rivas, Linda Sánchez, Brad Sherman, Lateefah Simon, Eric Swalwell, Mark Takano, Mike Thompson, Norma Torres, Juan Vargas and Maxine Waters.)

The House's lightspeed passage of the Laken Riley Act (H.R. 29) is a worrisome indicator of the ongoing decay in Congressional decision-making that results in dysfunctional laws.

Impact of the Laken Riley Act

The Laken Riley Act fails to improve public safety while denying immigrants their rights. To start, the act is redundant as the Department of Homeland Security already has statutory authority to detain any undocumented person.

What the Laken Riley Act will do is deny detained immigrants, including people charged (but not convicted) of minor crimes like shoplifting an opportunity for a bond hearing, which goes against the constitutional concept of due process and innocence until guilt is proven. This forced detention might even prevent immigrants from attending their criminal court hearings, impeding prosecutors from proceeding with charges. Furthermore, Black and Brown people, who are arrested at disproportionately high rates, will suffer the most.

The proposed legislation would also disrupt the governmental balance of powers and lead to dysfunction in the executive branch. Under the Laken Riley Act, both conservative and liberal state attorneys general will have the right to sue the U.S. government over a wide range of immigration policies. Any administration, whether Democrat or Republican, will likely face endless court challenges when trying to make new immigration policies.

It is disgraceful that Democrats, while ignoring the rights of U.S. citizens to even sue the government to release their family members, would agree to a bill that would allow states to sue the government to keep people in prison. Why are Democrats not asking for changes that would help immigrants and U.S. citizens?

The murder of Laken Riley is a grave tragedy that has been exploited to pass an anti-immigrant and unconstitutional bill that does nothing for public safety.

Its support among Democrats suggests that in this new political climate, few are willing to stand in defense of immigrant rights.

The bill, named for the 22-year-old University of Georgia student killed in 2024 by a Venezuelan migrant, sanctions the unconstitutional detention and possible deportation of thousands of non-citizens who have never committed a crime.

"It is completely outside the norms of the American legal system to subject people to incarceration without even the possibility of bond after merely the arrest/charging state," said Nithya Nathan-Pineau of the Immigrant Legal Resource Center in response to questions over the bill's provisions.

The bill passed the House this week by a vote of 264-159—with 48 House Democrats joining the Republican majority—as its first new piece of legislation this year. It now heads to the Senate where it appears to be gaining support even among Democratic lawmakers.

Yet, while the Laken Riley Act is now being hailed as a welcome bipartisan effort in "Making America Great Again," in truth it is a first step toward assembling the administrative machinery to implement mass deportation plans already outlined by President-elect Trump, his advisor Stephen Miller and scores of anti-immigrant legislators.

Worse yet, it moves us even further along a MAGA-inspired pathway toward authoritarian governance.

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Fresno Speaks Out

Continued from page 1

King's vision—one similar to Mayor Jerry Dyer's One Fresno vision," noted Fresno City Manager Georgeanne White on Facebook. On Jan. 16, 2024, Dyer said that "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a man of God, a man of vision and a man of love, and his dream continues to be a guiding light."

Sadly, under Dyer's leadership, Dr. King's vision of equality and justice for all is not the guiding principle. The recent "no camping" ordinance that criminalizes the most poor and vulnerable and the refusal of the City to open its warming centers even as temperatures drop to 36 degrees are but two examples. Hypocrisy reigns at City Hall.

Voices from the People's March

Hundreds of protesters gathered at the Save Mart Center and marched several miles down Shaw Avenue and back on Jan. 18. The lively crowd carried many signs with various themes: "Elect a Criminal, Expect Crimes," "Felon of the United States," "Your Hypocrisy Is Showing," "F##k the Oligarchy," "We Won't Go Back," "Defund Israel, Defend Gaza," "Deport Elon" and "No Human Is Illegal, Stop the Hate." The demonstrators were multigenerational with many young people in attendance.



On Jan. 18, demonstrators gathered at the corner of Shaw and Chestnut avenues, outside the Save Mart Center, to protest the incoming administration in Washington, D.C. Photo by Peter Maiden

Adalaide Hackett, 19, said, "We're protesting what our government is currently doing. Our government is not representing us; they're only looking out for the top few, the very wealthy that don't support anyone except for themselves."

"I think it's a beautiful thing to be a part of the people that are waking up and realizing that our government isn't working in our best interest. If we make enough stink, if we make enough noise, it could really drive some actual change."

Stan Santos of Raza Against War said, "Our No. 1 concern [today] is Palestine, Gaza and the region. I think that people may be misled by this negotiated truce. On the day of the announcement, within about 24 hours they killed approximately 80 Palestinians; that's an indication of their sincerity."

"We already know them, and we know it's coming. They're gonna carry out some horrendous bombings and kill as many people as they can on the eve of this negotiated peace settlement. And, in the end, the goal is to rid the region of Palestinians and erase their claim to their homeland of centuries."

"The solution is to halt the weapons because that's the only thing that's sustaining the Israeli Defense Forces. [We also] need to move into the boycott and sanctions movement, BDS. We could boycott Valero, the sole provider of JP-8 jet fuel, which is produced in Texas. It's a proprietary formulation of jet fuel that is the only jet fuel that can be used in F-16 and F-35 jets, widely used in Gaza."

Justin, 28, said, "I'm basically out here for the people. I'm marching for not just the generations that are all here but the next generation behind us. They are going to inherit this crap, and I wanted it to be a better place for my nieces, my nephews and the people that are coming after me."

"Keep focusing on stopping the wars, and keep the focus on protecting everybody. We can take action, whether it is striking with the union, boycotts and other ways of shutting down different sectors of the economy."

A young woman named Hannah said that she was at the march to bring attention to the genocide in Gaza and of the aid that's not getting into Gaza. "Their voices need to be heard and their stories told. I really hope that we

can continue to create community and do things like this where we get together and we can continue pressuring the government."

"They are trying to take away our voice, and we now need to kind of push directly into our communities and interact with each other more, person to person. To continue the fight and to make sure that people's voices are being heard that their rights are not being taken away."

Jose, 26, a Fresno State graduate, said he has concerns about corporate control and the influence of billionaires. He said that "billionaires right now have a lot of influence. They have influence in politics on what laws get passed with lobbyists and they have all this money, right?"

"I am also very concerned for immigrants. There's been some sweeps and some arrests out there. The [current] ICE raids are just targeting people based on the color of their skin. [ICE] is pulling people over on the highway, workers, van drivers. I've seen videos and accounts on social media."

"They arrested some van drivers and some workers on their way to work with bandannas and dirty shoes on. They would pull you over just based on that, and yet stories in the media are putting out that [they are] criminals and child molesters. That's nonsense."

"Maybe a few are criminals, but overall I saw them pulling over just anyone. They're making arbitrary arrests out there based on color, the color brown; even other races like Indigenous and Asian people."

has won the election. I was a middle school teacher and students in my class were asking me what are they gonna do now."

"One of them said, 'What's going to happen if my parents get taken?' I said, 'Well, I'm sure they'll make a plan for you.' It's all scary. What I believe is that there are no throwaway children, and there are no throwaway people."

Mario Manganiello is a longtime human rights activist from Fresno. He said that "unfortunately today is the day that Trump is going to become President, and a lot of people are angry because the first thing he's promised to do is literally deport [large numbers] of people."

"We're standing here in solidarity with them and letting them know that we're not going to let it go out without a fight, and we're very angry about it. It's not right and, yeah, that's all I got to say."

Rafael Avitia is a high school teacher and a leader of the Fresno Brown Berets. He said, "Today, here in America, we have all-out fascism. We've always known it's on its way, and now it's in our faces. We're going to have to deal with it so we're trying to make sure that people know that not everybody agrees with this new President in this new administration."

"MAGA is a mental illness, it's a delusional mental illness. This generation wants inclusion, and they want to be part of something. I see this. I'm a high school teacher and have been teaching for 25 years; I see a lot of youth, and there's this movement."

"Unfortunately, with social media and the dark web and areas like this, there's a movement for masculinity and there's a movement for wanting to belong and MAGA has given a lot of young men an excuse to join this movement. It's sad, I know. We have to keep educating and organizing."

Iztac Cualt was at the Jan. 20 event. He said, "Trump has made it plainly obvious he's intent on hurting folks with Project 2025; that's the game plan. It's been around for years. It's nothing new, and he's intent on implementing a lot of it."

"It's gonna hurt a lot of people. It will be traumatizing. There was a traumatization of indigenous people. There was a genocide, and it's been psychologically damaging. [Trauma has] been ingrained into a lot of indigenous people, and when you're indigenous survival is so difficult. So, I know, I'm Yaqui and I'm Huichol."

Stephanny Vazquez, 34, of Fresno was at the demonstration with her two children and husband. She said, "We are out here to support all immigrants. We don't want ICE and the Border Patrol out here deporting workers and their families. If there's no workers, who's going to work in the fields?"

"ICE is now arresting random workers on the highways, everywhere from El Cajon to Bakersfield. They have been stopping and arresting random people. They are asking for documents."

Her husband, Louis, said that ICE is racially profiling people. "If you're brown, they immediately pull you over. They ask if you are a citizen and, if not, you are immediately arrested. We are hearing this from family and social media. We even know some people that have been arrested."

"Yesterday, they pulled over and arrested 78 people. We're out here today to support the people and to stand up for their rights. Stop the arrests. If a convicted felon cannot vote, how can they be President?"

Although there have been many reports of random arrests in the Bakersfield area and elsewhere, ICE is claiming it is targeting criminals. It appears that the Biden administration authorized these actions before the Jan. 20 transition of power.

Fresno residents have made their voices of resistance heard. Make your voice heard.

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

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Griselda, a young woman carrying a sign that said "Free Luigi," said, "Honestly, I'm just tired of our politicians not listening to us and watching this country become an oligarchy. I'm tired of watching them bomb Gaza. I'm tired of having to struggle to put gas in my car, to pay my rent. I'm tired of the racism."

"It is getting out of hand, and we have to build a network of activists to try to build community and we can start by loving our neighbors, communicating with our neighbors, finding people with like-minded ideas and coming together and organizing. We can grow community gardens, [for example]. I mean, we gotta be in this for a long fight, ready to activate and ready to advocate."

Xochil Maraclh, a young woman of Indigenous descent, said, "I often believe in the power of the people, and I'm here to represent all the First people. I'm originally from the Mohawk Reservation in Ontario, Canada, where my father grew up. He gave me this advice, 'stay strong and take one day at a time.'"

"I think we need to build more communities to try to support each other. We need to keep demonstrating. I think strikes and consumer boycotts could be used to pressure the government. We also need to protect our freedom of speech. [Trump] wants to take it away. We can do better and we must always know our history."

"I'm always learning more about my history. I know that when the white man came here and stole our land they wanted to wipe us out but they didn't; they didn't take all of us out. So, I still remain, the Maraclh family has been around since the 1700s. We're going to keep fighting and stay strong."

Other Community Voices

Maria attended the immigrant rights demonstration on Jan. 20. She said she was there because "I support farmworkers, I was a farmworker, I was a grape picker. I'm from Fresno."

"I'm here because the Trump administration is doing indiscriminate ICE raids. Initially, they told America that they were only going to deport 'the criminals,' but they are racial profiling, I believe."

"I'm also here because the children of this city and the children across America deserve better now that Trump



We Need to Vote Some Reps Out



The new era of madness started in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 20. It was not a surprise because Trump promised lots of extreme right policies as a candidate. And now he is implementing those promises, no matter how bizarre, they are, such as pardoning those who attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, even killing police officers.

Or taking the United States out of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the World Health Organization. We should be worried for our children's well-being and health.

And how about annoying our traditional allies by proposing to take their territories? How this circus is going to end I don't know, but I am sure this is a dangerous power game.

The new administration has a white supremacist agenda and is not shy about implementing it. All the achievements of the 1960s and 1970s in civil rights are being dumped at the speed of light with thousands of Trump's supporters cheering.

One of the most bizarre pieces of legislation crafted by conservatives in Congress, the Laken Riley Act, has just been signed by the new President (see our front page story). It's a real insult to human dignity.

And not surprisingly, several Democrats supported it, including three San Joaquin Valley representatives: Jim Costa (D-Fresno), Adam Gray (D-Merced) and Josh Harder (D-Tracy). Surprised? No. Disgusted? Yes.

Costa represents one of the poorest districts in the country. What has he done to improve the living conditions of its residents all these years?

We must ask ourselves, how is possible we still have this ineffectual representative in Congress? He is in a safe Democratic district, and the Democratic Party won't touch him. Yet, we need to do something.

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

January Issue Value Added

A couple of observations regarding your January issue.

First, in Ruth Gadebusch's column ("One Woman's View"), she states that "If Hunter Biden were not the President's son, this offense would have been quietly settled as are so many others of like kind." This isn't entirely true. It should have read "If Hunter Biden were not a Democratic President's son..."

Re "Fresno: A Cruel and Unusual City"

The rules are put into place to adhere to the state's mandate that liberal Governor Gavin Newsom put into place. Any city which allows homeless campsites will lose state funds. If you want to blame someone, blame Newsom. Not the City of Fresno. You are not telling the whole story.

Tom Morton
Online

Re "Racism and War Class in Fresno"

By the way, the old Bitwise buildings' part of government-subsidized buildings to work spaces might be negotiated into living lofts and turned into rehab and work training for those that actually want to work. Maybe you'd have another attitude if the homeless destroyed your business,

Re "White Christians and the Election"

Thank you Bayard Taylor for this excellent article describing how deeply ingrained white supremacy is in American culture, American Christianity and the American Constitution.

Jim Mendez
Fresno

Second, in the article on the Fresno employees' strike, Bob McCloskey notes that the Fresno City Council members gave themselves a 39% raise over a two-year period. Who pays that? We, the taxpayers. As these Council members are beholden to local developers, the developers should be required to pick up the tab on this salary increase. Otherwise, it is City Council theft of taxpayer monies.

Saul Ross
Selma

(Author's note: The governor's directive to sweep all encampments in California was a recommendation, not an order. We have found no evidence that the state has withheld funds for failing to break up encampments. Indeed, the City of Fresno, despite its compliance with the directive, did not receive additional funding for the homeless as was the case with 18 other municipalities that complied.)

trashed your neighborhood and stole and forgot everyday. Even their own families don't want them around. I prefer helping the working poor so they don't end up like these zombies on our streets.

Bob McCormick
Online

Positive Changes to Website

As a blind speech reader user, I am now able to read the *Community Alliance*. Thank you for making the website changes that enabled me to read [the site].

Toni Eames
Online

MLK Day

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

Jan. 20 was the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, and the City of Fresno held its annual march and rally in commemoration of the civil rights leader. Fresno is unusual in holding a City-sponsored event in honor of Dr. King.



The banner at the front of Fresno's City-sponsored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. march on Jan. 20 as it proceeds down Tulare Street, with the participation of elected officials and community leaders. Photo by Peter Maiden



Terri Kimber Edwards, daughter of Les Kimber, the first Black City Council member in Fresno, speaks in front of City Hall to hundreds assembled to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday on Jan. 20. Photo by Peter Maiden

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Democrats Bend

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Much as Republicans did during the 2024 campaign, proponents of the Laken Riley Act are exploiting a real-life tragedy as the rationale for vindictive and poorly designed immigration enforcement measures.

The bill's broad provisions—requiring detention by ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) of any unauthorized migrant in the country accused of a theft-related crime—will detract from more focused and effective identification, apprehension and detention of violent criminals. It will, at the same time, siphon resources from ongoing efforts to block future entry of criminals and terrorists.

Laken Riley's murderer was, indeed, an unauthorized immigrant, a "monster" as President Trump characterized him, and a shoplifter. But legislation targeting non-citizens merely accused of shoplifting or other nonviolent crimes does little to protect Americans from actual violent crime—which data show is committed at far higher rates by U.S.-born citizens—and similarly fails to address the challenges of border security.

It is in reality political smoke and mirrors, acknowledged Speaker Mike Johnson, a ploy to challenge Democrats' political identity. And it seems to be working.

"I look forward to continuing to discuss this bill with my colleagues, and I welcome a serious bipartisan conversation

about what we need to do to fix our broken immigration system," said Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.), in a statement last month. Warnock voted to begin Senate debate of the bill though he did not say whether he would support final passage.

Support for the bill from elected officials such as Rep. Josh Harder (D-Tracy) and Senators Ruben Gallego and Mark Kelley of Arizona, meanwhile, who represent communities with hundreds of thousands of immigrants, many of them non-citizens, raises vexing questions as to why progressive elected officials might so rapidly go along with this MAGA-inspired street theater.

Yet as Democrats rush to paint themselves as serious on immigration and border security following the 2024 shellacking they took on these issues, they run the risk of overlooking the very real threats bills like the Laken Riley Act pose.

According to immigration law expert David Isaacson, who reviewed an earlier version of the bill when it was first presented to Congress last year, the Laken Riley Act would mandate detention without bail of any DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipient, asylum applicant or other immigrant who was arrested and deemed to have "entered without inspection." Those provisions remain in the bill's current version.

Isaacson goes on to explain that, while current immigration law considers juvenile court outcomes not to

be criminal "convictions," the Laken Riley Act would make these children and youth similarly vulnerable.

Tragically, it seems "playing the game" has become more important in 2025 than bona fide problem-solving as lawmakers on both sides of the aisle seek a "magic amulet" to reassure voters they can go about safely in their neighborhoods.

But will the Laken Riley Act actually protect our communities from crime? No. Instead, it simply feeds into President-elect Trump's absurd assertion that immigrants are mostly criminals, as opposed to law-abiding members of our communities whose contributions are vital to the continued health of our economy.

And like other fake news and political sleight-of-hand, it stands in the way of serious efforts to find more effective solutions, including a streamlining of the overall immigration system to rapidly and fairly adjudicate asylum cases while deploying available funding to apprehend and deport the most dangerous criminals, not teenage shoplifters, or law-abiding DACA recipients and asylum-seekers who have been profiled and detained but who are innocent.

Edward Kissam is a leading researcher and advocate for strategies to deal with health issues impacting immigrant communities. He has led research on farmworker and immigrant issues sponsored by the Department of Labor, the Commission on Agricultural Workers and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture. He is also a trustee of the WKF (Werner-Kohnstamm Family) Charitable Giving Fund.

MAGA 2.0: What's ahead?

BY MICHAEL D. EVANS

There has been much speculation about what the incoming Trump administration and his MAGA base have in store for the country. Despite vehement denials by Trump and his running mate (what was his name?), Project 2025 has already laid out much of the agenda. But in North Carolina, we have already seen how MAGA works.

Of the 10 Council of State offices in North Carolina (all elected statewide), in the November 2024 election Democrats won five, including governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. Despite also winning five of the offices, Republicans were not satisfied with the people's preferences.

In the lame-duck session, the legislature passed SB 382, which radically alters the governing authority of offices with Democratic electeds. Euphemistically called a hurricane disaster relief bill, it provides almost no money for the state's western counties hardest hit by the recent hurricane.

At the time, the Republicans held a supermajority in both houses. This was made possible when Tricia Cotham, who ran as a Democrat in 2022 and had previously served 10 years in the State House as a Democrat, changed her party affiliation to Republican in April 2023. Cotham supported SB 382 and the override of the governor's veto.

"It's really ugly," says N.C. House Rep. John Autry, who opted not to seek reelection but was still a member of the State House when this bill was voted on. "It's a way for Republicans to say to the voters of the state of North Carolina, 'we couldn't gerrymander the statewide election, so this is what we can do to change the outcome of the election.'"

And North Carolina is significantly gerrymandered. Even though the state is clearly purple (given the outcome of the statewide races), the Republicans have ensured a 10-4 advantage in Congressional seats and near supermajorities in both state houses.

What will SB 382 do? Below are some of the most egregious elements:

- Prohibits the attorney general (a Democrat) from taking positions in lawsuits that contradict the legislature's position (Republican-controlled in both houses)
- Shifts the power to appoint State Board of Elections members from the governor (a Democrat) to the state auditor (a Republican)
- Creates two special Superior Court Judge positions to be appointed by the legislative leadership, and removes two elected Superior Court seats
- Curtails the role of the lieutenant governor (an incoming Democrat) in casting tiebreaking votes in the State Senate
- Requires all provisional ballots to be researched and counted by 5 p.m. on the third day after Election Day
- Slashes the number of days from nine to three that voters have to "cure" or fix their provisional ballots
- Allows political parties to use their party headquarters building funds to fund a legal action or to make donations to a candidate's legal expense funds (in the state, building funds are the only way for political parties to accept unlimited corporate contributions)
- Requires all mail-in ballots to be counted in an ongoing meeting starting at 5 p.m. on Election Day
- Abolishes the Courts Commission, which studies and makes recommendations to improve issues in the Judicial Branch, like eliminating racially disparate treatment

In a statement vetoing the legislation, Governor Roy Cooper, a Democrat, said that "this legislation is a sham. It does not send money to Western North Carolina [for hurricane relief] but merely shuffles money from one fund to another in Raleigh.

"This legislation...violates the constitution by taking appointments away from the next governor for the Board of Elections, Utilities Commission and Commander of the N.C. Highway Patrol, letting political parties choose appellate judges and interfering with the attorney general's ability to advocate for lower electric bills for consumers.

"Instead of giving small business grants to disaster counties it strikes a cruel blow by blocking the extension of better unemployment benefits for people who have lost jobs because of natural disasters."

Cooper termed out and was replaced by Josh Stein, previously the state's attorney general, as governor. Stein, also a Democrat, defeated Mark Robinson, the controversial lieutenant governor who turned out to be too radical for even the MAGA crowd or perhaps too much a person of color to be MAGA-acceptable.

As the bill was under consideration, Tim Moore, then speaker of the State House, went on Steve Bannon's podcast and said that SB 382 would make "sure N.C. continues to be able to do what it can to deliver victories for Republicans up and down the ticket."

According to Autry, most of the Republican members of the legislature "believe that they are the only party that should be governing the state, the country...They are finally achieving what was prefaced during Bush 43—that single-party rule is the way to go.

"They're not really interested in governing, they just want to rule."



N.C. Republicans shifted authority from the state's newly elected Democratic governor, Josh Stein (shown here), to the state auditor, a Republican. Photo courtesy of the Governor's website

As if SB 382 were not enough, MAGA has another initiative currently under way in North Carolina. In a State Supreme Court race, the Democrat, Allison Riggs, defeated the Republican, Jefferson Griffin, by around 700 votes. However, Griffin is now challenging the eligibility of 60,000 voters.

After both a machine and hand recount, Riggs was declared the winner. Despite having already lost two court challenges, Griffin is pushing forward with his efforts to disenfranchise voters.

"If they are successful in this scheme, there will be copy lawsuits across this country for races where they don't like the result," Cooper said. "If Republicans are successful in validating fair, legal votes past the election date like this, this will have broad implications across the country."

"An independent judiciary has no place in the Republican agenda," adds Autry.

"Cynics have been saying for years that North Carolina is no longer, technically, a democracy," notes Billy Ball, a senior editor at Cardinal & Pine, an online news site that covers N.C. politics.

"As Jefferson Griffin and his allies in the Republican Party move closer to tossing out an inconvenient defeat, it's looking more and more like those cynics have a point.

"This is a test: of elections, checks and balances, judicial independence and, most importantly, of American democracy. If we fail, it will stain this state for generations." Not to mention the country.

Michael D. Evans is a political activist, an editor and a writer. Contact him at evansm@usa.net.

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—Former U.N. Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter.



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Bishop Calls Out Trump to His Face

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

On his second day as President, Donald Trump attended a church service at the Washington National Cathedral, where Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde used her sermon to deliver a pointed message to the new president.

"Let me make one final plea, Mr. President. Millions have put their trust in you, and as you told the nation yesterday, you have felt the providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now. There are gay, lesbian and transgender children in Democratic, Republican and independent families—some who fear for their lives.

"The people who pick our crops and clean our office buildings, who labor in poultry farms and meatpacking plants, who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants and work the night shifts in hospitals—they may not be citizens or have the proper documentation, but the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals. They pay taxes and are good

neighbors. They are faithful members of our churches and mosques, synagogues, gurdwara and temples.

"I ask you to have mercy, Mr. President, on those in our communities whose children fear their parents will be taken away, and that you help those who are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands to find compassion and welcome here.

"Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger, for we were all once strangers in this land. May God grant us the strength and courage to honor the dignity of every human being, to speak the truth to one another in love, and walk humbly with each other and our God, for the good of all people—the good of all people in this nation and the world. Amen."

Rev. Budde (born Dec. 10, 1959) is an Episcopal prelate who has served as bishop of Washington, D.C., since 2011.

Before being elected Washington, D.C.'s first female diocesan bishop, she served 18 years as the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis.

Meanwhile, Pope Francis offered a message to Trump on Jan 20. Pope Francis offered him "cordial greetings" and urged him to lead a society with "no room for hatred, discrimination or exclusion" and to promote "peace and reconciliation among peoples."



Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, 2012.
Photo courtesy of The Commons

In a previous statement, Pope Francis said that Trump's plans to deport illegal migrants from the United States would be a "disgrace" if they were carried out.

Speaking to an Italian TV program from his Vatican residence, Pope Francis said that if the plans went ahead, Trump would make "poor wretches that don't have anything foot the bill."

"That's not right," he said. "That's not how you solve problems."

Fresno's New War on Drugs and Unhoused People

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

It has been a long year
And I am still here.

I am cold,
So very cold.

I sit on a dirty blanket

Next to a building made of polished granite.

I watch people laugh and kiss, and feel like I am from another planet.

How did I get here? Believe you me, I did not plan it.

—From *Is This My Home?* (2018) by Tim Akpinar

Stereotyping and Castigation

The Fresno Madera Continuum of Care's annual count and survey of the unhoused community of Fresno estimates that 36% of people living on the streets have a substance-use disorder (national estimates are similar). Perhaps the number is greater because the Fresno Police Department (FPD), the Fresno business community and many Fresno community members believe that most unhoused people have drug problems.

The Fresno No Camping Ordinance, implemented in late September, has led to more than 300 arrests and numerous citations. The training bulletin issued to police officers on the ordinance's enforcement calls for officers to arrest anyone who refuses services. The only service offered is being put on a long waiting list for substance-use disorder treatment.

Obviously, the police are stereotyping and targeting people. It's a new "war on drugs" intended to mandate treatment, a practice that, based on empirical evidence, has been a dismal failure. It punishes people who have a health issue.

Housing First with supportive services is the longer-term solution. Arresting, citing and fining people is both inhumane and costly. It makes life much more difficult for our fellow human beings and destroys their chances of ever getting off the streets.

Addiction Is a Health Issue

Dr. Gabor Maté is a well known Canadian physician and author with a background in family practice and a special interest in childhood development, trauma and potential lifelong impacts on physical and mental health, and addictions. In his book, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*, Maté challenges the dominant narrative that often frames addiction as a criminal or moral issue rather than a complex health condition rooted in emotional and psychological pain.

Maté argues that the so-called war on drugs has often turned into a war on the people who use drugs. This approach, he contends, is fundamentally flawed as it criminalizes individuals for their health issues, contributing to a cycle of stigma, marginalization and social exclusion.

The City of Fresno is using its ordinance to do just that. City Council Member Miguel Arias, a prime mover of the ordinance, often refers to some of his family members who have substance-abuse problems and refuse treatment, seemingly to justify his support for the ordinance. He said that if "drug addicts refuse treatment, they will go through withdrawal in jail."

Facts on Drug Addiction and Hypocrisy

Many Americans and some Fresno residents and business owners, assuming they reflect society's numbers, might have a substance-use disorder. According to the 2023



This encampment at Marks and Nielsen avenues was a depressing and bleak environment for humans. It was dismantled by the Fresno County Sheriff's Office on Jan. 13. Photo by Bob McCloskey

U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 48.5 million (16.7%) Americans (aged 12 and older) battled a substance-use disorder in the past year, whereas 10.2% of Americans 12 and older had an alcohol-use disorder in the past year.

About 27.2 million Americans 12 or older (9.7%) reported battling a drug-use disorder in the past year. That same year, 7.5 million (2.7%) Americans 12 and older struggled with both alcohol- and drug-use disorders simultaneously. Moreover, 20.4 million American adults (7.9%) suffered from both a mental health disorder and a substance-use disorder, or co-occurring disorders, in the past year.

Those experiencing homelessness are a tiny fraction of the city's population, about .003%. Yet, they are being stereotyped as "drug users and addicts" and targeted for arrest. Although many other Fresno residents abuse drugs and alcohol, only the unhoused are being singled out in this new "war on drugs." Drug and alcohol abuse are a societal problem, not only a problem among the unhoused.

How Many FPD Officers Have Substance-Use Disorders?

High-stress careers, especially those involving life-and-death situations such as the police and other first responders face, are strongly correlated with substance use. The constant pressure and trauma can lead to PTSD if left unaddressed, increasing the risk of self-medication and co-occurring disorders.

Sadly, this is a common struggle, with surveys indicating that nearly 30% of first responders could be battling substance-use disorders. Members of the FPD's Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) sometimes act without compassion and understanding toward people who might have a substance-use disorder when they might, in fact, have the same disorder.

According to the most recent Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care "Point in Time" count, approximately 36% of the

adult homeless population in Fresno and Madera counties reported experiencing a substance-abuse problem. Homelessness and substance-use disorder have a complex relationship, with substance use both causing and resulting from homelessness.

People experiencing homelessness might use substances to cope with the stress of living on the streets, including the trauma of being homeless, depression and anxiety. They might also use substances to stay warm, suppress hunger or stay awake to avoid victimization. Some unhoused people have said that they use methamphetamine to stay up all night to walk around during the bitter cold, and single women have used substances to stay awake to avoid being raped.

Substance abuse can lead to homelessness and a never-ending cycle of poverty. Substance abuse can make it difficult to perform well at a job, which can lead to job loss, unemployment and eviction. Substance abuse is a health issue. Arresting and forcing treatment is not a solution to overcoming addiction.

Housing First, which would provide supportive services that include substance-abuse treatment, job training and referral and counseling, is a proven, cost-effective solution. Housing Not Handcuffs estimates that chronic homelessness, in part due to its criminalization, costs the public \$30,000-\$50,000 per person every year.

It's time to implement permanent, less costly solutions. It's time to stop criminalizing the marginalized and vulnerable human beings that live among us. It's also time to end the hypocrisy and recognize the humanity of those who are unfortunate enough to live on the hard streets of Fresno.

Bob McCloskey is an activist and a Community Alliance reporter. Contact him at bobmcloskey06@gmail.com.



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Keeping It Real with the Revolutionary MLK

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES AND RAFAEL AVITIA

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

Dr. King identified the three evils of poverty, racism and militarism, and he said that “these are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born.”

Dr. King also said: “We do not have to look very far to see signs of the revolution that is taking place in our world today. There is a revolution in the social and political structure of our world on the question of the equality of man.

“The great masses of people are determined to end the exploitation of their lives, and share in their own future and destiny. They are moving toward their goal like a tidal wave. They are saying in no uncertain terms that colonialism and racism must go.”

That message is not the one the politicians and police want you to hear, but it is the real revolutionary Dr. King, and the Jan. 19 rally, march and program at Free AME Church in Fresno lifted up and honored that message. “Resistance through Unity, We Protect Each Other” was the theme, and Black and Chicano activists joined voices to prepare to carry on the struggle as a united front.

The event started with a rally outside the church where young speakers from Black and Brown communities shared their reasons for joining the fight for social justice. “Love,” a senior from Clovis East High School, read a poem to a crowd of about 75 people.

Several speakers, including students from Fresno City College and members of the Free AME Church, followed with powerful testimonials before the group marched



A march and rally took place before the main Revolutionary MLK event at the Free AME Church in southwest Fresno. Photo by Leni Villagomez Reeves

through the streets of West Fresno chanting “No justice, No peace!” and “What do we want! Justice! When do we want it? Now!” The marchers were made up of a diverse group, both culturally and of various age groups. It was a beautiful scene.

The participants were informed and moved by Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris Jr., civil rights leader and Free AME pastor; Rafael Avitia, educator and Brown Beret leader; immigration rights activist Leonel Flores; psychologist Dr. Larry Cormier; Lethal, an advocate and outreach worker for people without homes or with substance abuse problems; union organizer Stan Santos, leader of Raza Against War; and lifelong Black community activist and Freedom School president Aline Reed.

The calls to action from the speakers can be summarized as follows:

- We are seeking revolutionary education and ways to stay mentally healthy in the hard times.
- We know we have the right to live free of racist colonizers, and with mutual support and mutual respect for all in our communities, and love and forgiveness of each other in our families and our siblings in the struggle.
- The young people who are taking up the struggle are our future; it is time for direct action.
- All power to the people!

Leni Villagomez Reeves is a local physician and activist. Check out her news and views about Cuba on Facebook (facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/). Rafael Avitia is a high school teacher and a leader of the Fresno Brown Berets.

Rally Against Pesticide 1,3-D in Visalia

BY PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

Farmworkers, community leaders and environmental advocates gathered in Visalia to protest the use of the pesticide 1,3-Dichloropropene (1,3-D or Telone) and demand stronger regulatory protections from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR). The rally, held outside a public hearing on proposed regulations for the chemical, highlighted the disproportionate impact of pesticide exposure on Latino and immigrant communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

Organized by Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) and other environmental justice groups, the event brought together voices from across the region to call for stricter limits on 1,3-D, a soil fumigant linked to cancer, Parkinson’s disease and other serious health issues. The pesticide, commonly used on crops such as strawberries, grapes, almonds and walnuts, has been banned in 34 countries and most of Europe due to its dangers, yet remains widely used in California.

A Call for Justice and Science-Based Regulations

Angel Garcia, co-director of CPR, opened the rally with a powerful statement: “We are here as an act of resistance, an act of opposition to the exposure of cancer. We are here with families, communities, allies and organizations from different parts of the San Joaquin Valley.

“We want the state to hear what the communities are concerned about. We want protection against pesticide 1,3-D in alignment with what the scientific experts in the state say it should be.”

In 2022, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHA) issued a lifetime cancer warning

threshold for 1,3-D of 3.7 micrograms per day. Breathing air contaminated with just 0.04 parts per billion (ppb) of 1,3-D exposes farmworkers and adjacent communities to 3.7 micrograms per day.

Dow Chemical, the manufacturer of 1,3-D, argued with the OEHA that the no-significant-risk level for 1,3-D should be 50 micrograms per day, the equivalent of breathing air concentrated with 0.56 ppb of 1,3-D. Dow Chemical is the same company that mass-produced the cancer-causing fumigant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

One of the speakers said that she lost two family members to Dow chemicals. Her mother lost her life due to pesticides while working in the fields and her brother was a victim of Agent Orange while fighting in Vietnam.

Chemical corporations such as Dow Chemical have been destroying families for generations.

On Jan. 1, 2024, the DPR implemented its new regulation for 1,3-D use regarding residential bystanders, setting the target exposure level at 0.56 ppb—allowing for 14 times more 1,3-D in the air than the state’s official lifetime cancer risk threshold, and aligning perfectly with Dow Chemical’s stated desire.

Nayamin Martinez, executive director of the Central California Environmental Justice Network, echoed these concerns, emphasizing the widespread harm caused by 1,3-D. “This pesticide damages the environment, the land, the water and the health of our communities,” she said.

“It causes skin irritation, nausea, vomiting, migraines, depression, liver damage and more. Prolonged exposure is the most dangerous because it causes cancer. Why are there 34 countries that have already banned this pesticide, but it is still used here?”

Martinez also pointed out the racial disparities in pesticide exposure. “1,3-D is used in Latino and immigrant communities at 10 times the rate of white communities. The 25 counties where this pesticide is most used are majority Latino. This is environmental racism.”



Farmworkers, community leaders and environmental advocates gathered in Visalia on Jan. 8 to protest the use of the pesticide 1,3-Dichloropropene (1,3-D or Telone) and demand stronger regulatory protections from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Photo courtesy of Alicia Acevedo

The Hearing: A Platform for Community Voices

The rally preceded a public hearing held by the DPR to gather input on proposed regulations for 1,3-D. Inside the hearing, farmworkers, advocates and community members shared personal stories and scientific evidence to urge the DPR to adopt stricter protections.

Sandra Garcia, a farmworker with 35 years of experience, spoke about the devastating impact of pesticide exposure on her family and colleagues. “My mother died from pulmonary cancer. My companions also died; I saw them die. I haven’t seen much change in all these years.

“I want to see how you are educating or helping farmworkers to protect themselves from these pesticides. If not in the field, it’s on the road, or the children are getting sick. We need to protect our workers.”

Bianca Lopez, executive director of the Valley Improvement Project, criticized the DPR for failing to follow scientific recommendations. “The DPR has ignored

the legal limit of four parts per billion set by the OEHA and instead chose 56 parts per billion. How did they get away with that? The science must drive our regulations, not racist politics.”

The Human Cost of Pesticide Exposure

Felipe Perez, the mayor of Firebaugh, shared his harrowing experience with pesticide exposure. “At 13 years old, I was exposed to pesticides. It’s not a good story. You feel like you’re burning up, and there’s nothing you can do.

“In areas where we don’t have good medical attention, people die the most because of pesticides. These pesticides are not destroyed; they are transformed, and we, the rural workers, suffer the most.”

Soraya Ceda, a resident of Fresno, highlighted the impact on children. “I have a son who has asthma, and pesticides have caused him to have asthma. Many farmers are suffering from cancer. We have to stop this for the good of our communities.”

Continues on page 20

Golden Inhalers To Be Awarded

BY KEVIN HALL

Spend a romantic Valentine's Day dinner listening to the 4th Annual Smoggies, Fresno's only awards ceremony for political malfeasance and climate avoidance. Journalists will be honored for capturing 2024's worst quotes and votes by local politicians and community leaders in the year that global average temperatures crossed 1.5°C for the first time in human history.

Award winners will receive the prestigious Golden Inhaler, symbol of all that is unhealthy yet profitable in the nation's dirtiest air basin. Audience members are invited to dine and drink at home, cuddled up next to their favorite OG radio.

Local lowlights of the hottest year on record include the Fresno City Council's full embrace of the MAGA Supreme Court's 6-3 ruling to criminalize homelessness, the County of Fresno's backward General Plan update, the city-county tax-sharing agreement for new sprawl in the city's Southeast Development Area, state approval of a fatally flawed low carbon fuel standard and extension of air pollution cleanup deadlines in the San Joaquin Valley, and much, much more.

The Smoggies will be broadcast live from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 14 on KFCF 88.1 FM and streamed at kfcf.org. Nominations are still open and news links can be submitted to hosts Kevin Hall and Lars Maischak via carrier pigeon or Bluesky @kevinhall.bsky.social.

Current nominations include the following:

- How "boy math" is dividing California environmentalists: Blanca Begert, Politico
"Girl math" is like when you return something and you have a gift card, you "made" money," said Leslie Martinez, an organizer with the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability. "Boy math" is you basically find ways to justify shitty things you're doing...The actual math of the LCFS [low carbon fuel standard] is like boy math in terms of how it only includes what it wants to include. It doesn't include the full picture."
- Fresno County's new General Plan blows past California climate goals by 300%: Gregory Weaver, Fresnoand
"Fresno County supervisors unanimously approved a controversial update to the county's General Plan on Tuesday, setting the stage for a development boom on the Kings and San Joaquin River that could worsen air quality, accelerate farmland loss, and potentially blow past the county's state-mandated climate emissions budget by 300%."
- A sensible protest? Pro-Palestinian students at Fresno State show it's possible: Marek Warszawski, Fresno Bee
"I think there is something to be said for what you might call the luxury of being able to demonstrate," [CSUF Professor John] Beynon said. "It's a feeling of, I know that if I go to jail my parents are going to bail me out or I know I can afford an expensive lawyer. I'm not trying to downplay anyone's activism, but it's a different situation when you know you have to show up to a job or watch your sister's kids."
- This is how Fresno helps its homeless—especially in triple-digit heat: Wealthy Gener, CentralValley.com 24/47
"The Fresno Mission's CEO says the searing heat can have an unintended positive impact on those experiencing homelessness. 'So, we do appreciate that when the weather starts turning bad,' said Matthew Dildine, the CEO of the Fresno Mission. 'The heat causes people to say I don't want this life anymore. I don't want to live when it's 110 on the street, and so we see increased demand for our life transformation services.'"
- Tom Steyer on how to win the war against climate change: Major Garrett, CBS News
"Can the climate crisis be won as temperatures soar, oceans rise and air quality deteriorates? Former presidential candidate Tom Steyer thinks it can. The climate investor joins *America Decides* to discuss his new book, *Cheaper, Faster, Better: How We'll Win the Climate War*.
"We have an ability to actually witness in the marketplace—that's why I call it 'cheaper, faster, better'—products. That's how we'll actually solve this problem by producing products that people want to buy that are clean, and that the United States should be leading the way on this."
- Fresno County moves toward anti-camping ordinance they say doesn't target the homeless: Pablo Orihuela, Fresnoand
"Jacob Zalian is a pastor at Set Free Church in Sanger. Zalian said his church goes out into the community to help homeless residents reach supportive services. 'It's so easy to stay [outdoors] because they're comfortable there,' Zalian said. 'We have to make it uncomfortable so that they'll want to change.'"
- Fresno County leaders urge Governor Newsom to veto warehouse regulation bill: Hannah Gonzales, KSEE 24 News
"Central Valley leaders believe that if AB 98 became law, it would jeopardize the future growth of our area. 'This legislation imposes a one-size-fits-all solution on a state as diverse as California.' Fresno City Council President Annalisa Perea says AB 98 will hit businesses where it hurts the most, 'not to mention the \$50,000 fine for cities that do not comply with AB 98.'"

CLIMATE POLITICS

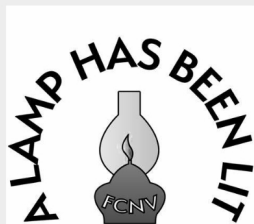


The highly coveted Golden Inhaler, symbol of all that is unhealthy yet profitable in the nation's dirtiest air basin, will be awarded to journalists honored at the 4th annual Smoggies Awards, a live broadcast on KFCF 88.1 FM from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 14.

- Finger-pointing and frustration fuel debate over Fresno County's sunset regional road tax: Pablo Orihuela, Fresnoand
"To give that power away to unelected people with an agenda that we now learned get money, get funded from the Kresge Foundation, the California Endowment, and money from out of town to sue us into submission...I'm open to any community organization that wants to come to the table and negotiate in good faith, but if you're gonna basically practice economic terrorism, I'm gonna completely shut you out."—Fresno City Council Member Michael Karbassi
- Bitwise co-founders break silence, post apology letter: Tiffany Olin, ABC 30
"Olguin Jr. posted a long letter on X on behalf of herself and Soberal. They admit to lying to keep the company running and acknowledge they will owe many people quote millions upon millions of dollars. 'We are sorry to have abused and broken the trust you placed in us, and we are sorry for the money that you entrusted in us that you may never get back.'"
- "Tough love" for homeless: How Fresno leaders will enforce new no-camping law: Tim Sheehan, Fresno Bee
"We're not trying to be...out there arresting people and taking away their freedoms and being unmerciful,' Dyer told reporters Monday in a press conference. 'Just the opposite. We want to help people, but in order to help people, sometimes there has to be some tough love, and that's what we're trying to incorporate here.'"
- Did political connections shape coverage of Fresno police chief's affair?: Omar S. Rashad, Fresnoand
"While GV Wire's coverage does not disclose that its publisher, Assemi, or its affiliate, Granville Homes, donated to Wamhoff's campaign, Assemi said the two are separate. 'We're an award-winning news site that is separate and independent of my political thoughts,' Assemi told Fresnoand. Assemi added that for most of the stories published on GV Wire, 'I don't even see or read until a day or two after they're published.'"
- As Fresno's housing crisis deepens, the city considers another extension for zombie southeast megadevelopment: Gregory Weaver, Fresnoand
"Beyond the market contradictions, the project faces mounting environmental challenges. SEDA would generate 510,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, according to the city's environmental review for the project, nearly canceling out the 559,000-ton reduction the city committed to in its 2021 climate plan."

Kevin Hall, a former member of the Fresno County Planning Commission, has worked as a community, labor and political organizer. He co-hosts the radio program Climate Politics, which airs on the second and fourth Fridays of every month 5 p.m.–6 p.m. on KFCF 88.1 FM. He posts on Bluesky as @kevinhall.bsky.social.

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



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Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

STIR IT UP—WILPF HOSTED BY JEAN HAYS

If WILPF founder Jane Addams were still here today, she would probably be hosting *Stir It Up—WILPF*, which airs each fourth Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on KFCF. This station, owned by the local Fresno Free College Foundation and associated with KPFA Berkeley, is based in Fresno at 88.1 FM and generously offers time each Wednesday to various peace organizations to air their topics and promote upcoming peace events.

As WILPF has several Issues Groups, there's always an appropriate topic looming large. We try to bring in people to interview who are quite knowledgeable. An example of this is Pat Elder, retired military, who is making people aware of the dangers of the forever chemical, PFAS. Pat came to Fresno to do a workshop on PFAS and did *Stir It Up* while here. Find out more at militarypoisons.org.

Stir It Up—WILPF has also interviewed our WILPF-US president, Darien De Lu, and our own Jan Slagter, who is our WILPF-Americas representative to WILPF-International. Jan and Loretta Kensinger, both from the Women's Studies Department at CSUF, also did a *Stir It Up* interview on Women's Herstory Month in March a couple of years ago. Dr. Jean Kennedy, chair of our branch Unpacking Racism Issue Group, has been our *Stir It Up* guest several times, providing important information on that topic.

The Raging Grannies are affiliated with WILPF-Fresno and have serenaded the listening audience on two occasions for the holiday edition of *Stir It Up*. They sang alternative thought-provoking words to familiar holiday carols!



Raging Grannies serenade and inform *Stir It Up—WILPF* listeners. Photo by Evonne Waldo

Whether it's interviewing WILPFers remotely at our International Congress or talking with an Indigenous Mono tribal member about how tribes recognize so-called Thanksgiving, we always try to educate and broaden the minds of our listeners, as well as inform them of what means are available to them to help make the world a better place. Jane Addams would be smiling to know this!

—Jean Hays, *Stir It Up—WILPF* host



Photo by LVR

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For questions and information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF MEETING

Feb. 8 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., via Zoom (and sometimes also at Fresno Center for Nonviolence,

1584 N. Van Ness Ave.). Open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For info on the in-person option, contact Teresa at taca_03@ymail.com.

**STIR IT UP—WILPF
KFCF 88.1 FM**

Feb. 28 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

WOMEN IN BLACK

Check first with Sue Kern for February at skern@netptc.net or 559-349-3777.

BEVERLY FITZPATRICK

Beverly "Bev" Fitzpatrick was an extraordinary woman, I was honored to be her friend.

Beginning at the end: She passed from this life on Saturday, Dec. 28; we celebrated her on Jan. 11.

Late July 2022, Bev was bitten by a mosquito carrying the West Nile virus.

She is one of the less than 1% of WNV cases who developed neuroinvasive symptoms, which caused partial paralysis in her legs and other health complications.

In September 2023, Bev was diagnosed with Valley fever. Obviously, Bev's poor body and lungs were severely compromised.

Despite the major health restraints she suffered and the complete change in her mobility and living circumstances, Bev maintained her bubbly, caring spirit and she remained involved in all the issues and groups she cared most about—all the way until her last days: Extraordinary!

My friendship with Bev began in the summer of 2012 when she was president of Peace Fresno. I joined their event with Medea Benjamin on her book tour for *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*. That summer, Bev's energy drew me in. From her, I realized that there was so much to be involved in locally and she seemed to have a connection to nearly everything.

Bev was a retired kindergarten and first-grade teacher and mentor for the Fresno Unified School District, so she seemed to enjoy being happily busy with her week filled with meetings and events for peace, social justice, human rights and political work.

By the fall of 2012, I joined WILPF-Fresno, only to find that Bev had also recently joined the Branch. At that time, in addition to Peace Fresno and WILPF, Bev had been involved with the local Occupy group, Progressive Democrats of America, the Democratic Central Committee, the Dakota Eco Garden, the *Community Alliance* newspaper, the UU Church of Fresno and Overpass Light Brigade, to name a few.

Bev was so dedicated to help she even delivered toilet paper and a care bag to homeless people every week with a UU Church friend, Karen. Out of the connections she made with homeless individuals, she co-founded an important nonprofit, Wings Advocacy Fresno.

Her circles of friends overlapped widely, and with her ability to see no one as a stranger I saw her get to know something about everyone she met. I saw the compassion she spread. Through Bev, I am forever connected to so many incredible people. She was one of the most genuine people I've ever met. Even though she was so involved, she made time to be with friends and prioritized being with her family. She loved spending time with her grandkids and always shared what they were up to.

I enjoyed being a peace and social justice warrior with Bev. We danced in flash mobs, stood on street corners during the day and freeway overpasses at night to spread awareness about important issues. We protested and lobbied, attended events and generally got in the way to create needed change locally and globally. Bev was always ready to be out there, to help those who needed a voice. Through WILPF, she learned about Israel's oppression of Palestinians; wearing her keffiyeh, she supported a Free Palestine.

She didn't just talk about the problems in our local and global communities, she worked tirelessly to bring change especially for the voiceless and marginalized communities. She even continued this advocacy after she got sick!

All of her nurses and caregivers, wherever she was, commented on how she was always preparing for a meeting or participating in something via Zoom or sending e-mails and she shared what and why so that they all knew the important work she was doing. I think we all were inspired by her tenacity.

As her friend, I saw how she brought her special love and light to the people around her. She held space for everyone. Hearing her stories, I knew that Bev was this dedicated, caring, adventurous soul her entire life. She jumped in, got involved and brought others with her. She opened her heart to spread her special gifts.

Even though my time with Bev was relatively short, I loved her as my chosen sister who accepted me, flaws and all. Bev gave meaning to the phrase: You can't add days to your life, but you can add life to your days.

She will forever be in my heart and will be by my side as I continue on.

—In peace, love and light,
Teresa Castillo



Teresa Castillo and Beverly Fitzpatrick. Photo by Teresa Castillo



Raging Grannies sing honoring the life of Beverly Fitzpatrick. Photo by LVR



Beverly Fitzpatrick and Teresa Castillo. Photo by Teresa Castillo

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

Managing Valley Aquifers

BY VIC BEDOIAN

California recently celebrated 10 years since the enacting of the State Groundwater Management Act, the landmark legislation known by the acronym SGMA. The law mandated that overdrafted groundwater basins must come into balance over the next 20 years. That is when groundwater extraction must not exceed the amount aquifers are replenished. Most of the state's overdrafted basins are in the San Joaquin Valley.

Local agencies are now working to craft groundwater management plans that state regulators will accept. As aquifers continue to decline in the southern San Joaquin Valley, farmers and town residents alike are struggling to come up with groundwater sustainability plans that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) will certify. Otherwise, the state will take over—a fate that nobody wants.

Tulare County is a case in point. The plan that the Kaweah Sub-Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency came up with in 2022 failed to protect domestic wells and disadvantaged communities. Some 40% of domestic wells, more than 1,500 of them, could dry up under the plan. Fifty-three public supply wells would also go dry, and drinking water contamination could worsen.

The Community Water Center (CWC) was a major force in creating the SGMA. Now it has taken a leading role in bringing those issues to the table, to ensure that the groundwater plan will serve all residents.

Senior Policy Advocate Tien Tran has been applying her environmental studies degree from Yale and her experience in state government to help local residents participate in the planning process of Kaweah's groundwater plan. She says it has been a struggle to find equity in decision-making.

"You're at this point where a couple of plans have not been approved by the state, and they've been going through the probationary process. And you also have plans that are getting updated, but on the ground there's still a lot of concerns around water quality, contamination wells going dry and the cost of that."



Silverio Perez speaking to decision-makers about water justice issues in the Central Coast in June 2023. Photo courtesy of the Community Water Center

"So even though 10 years later we have SGMA in place, not all the local agencies have stepped up to the plate and really thought about how drinking water should be protected in this process of groundwater management."

Another concern was how well groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) would engage the public. The state placed a high priority on bringing all impacted residents to the table. The CWC circulated a guidance document trying to make sure that the process was meaningful and inclusive. Tran says in practice the results were uneven.

Continues on page 19

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FRESNO ARTS & CULTURE

FEBRUARY 2025 CALENDAR

- 01** **Chapter Two** (through Feb. 23) 2nd Space Theatre. A widower and divorcée meet, marry and nearly muck it up. \$29.49
- Beautiful: The Carole King Musical** (through March 16) Roger Rocka's. The feel-good, chart-topping celebration of a rock 'n' roll legend.
- Art of the Word: Once Upon a Book** (through June 29) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Featuring the original illustrations from *Once Upon a Book*, which emphasizes the power of books to help one experience other places outside your own reality.
- International Public Art Exhibit: Wings of the City** (through August) Maple Mall, Fresno State. World-renowned Mexican artist Jorge Marín's bronze mythical creatures have taken perch, silently watching the bustle of campus life.
- Jurassic Quest** 9 a.m.–6 p.m. Fresno Convention Center. The largest and most realistic traveling dinosaur exhibit on tour in the United States, it has animatronic dinosaurs, a 60-foot long Spinosaurus, an 80-foot long Apatosaurus and a life-size T.rex. \$27.85+
- Womxn 2 Womxn Arts and Culture Celebration** 2 p.m.–5 p.m. Dulce Upfront. Art, music and performances, workshops, vendors and more. All ages. Free.
- Purple Ones** 9 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Fulton 55. Insatiable tribute to Prince. \$27+
- 02** **Jurassic Quest** 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Fresno Convention Center. See Feb. 1 listing.
- La Bohème** 2:30 p.m.–5 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. The classic opera is sung in Italian with English subtitles. Performed by the Fresno State Opera Theatre and the Fresno State Symphony Orchestra Artistic Team. \$10+
- 03** **Black History Month Art Exhibit** (through February) 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Room 186, Dean's Gallery, Music Building, Fresno State. Vanessa Addison-Williams' vibrant and evocative works explore themes of identity, strength and cultural heritage, weaving narratives that honor the struggles and triumphs of the Black experience.
- 05** **Workshop: Screenwriting** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. CMAC. Every great film starts with writing; this workshop covers the structure and various formats for storytelling.
- The Holdup** 7 p.m. Strummer's. "I owe the IRS 60K Dollars Tour (continued)" with Dylan Reese. The musical project of Michael Garmany, the music has influences from R&B, reggae and hip-hop. \$23+
- 06** **ArtHop** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Downtown Fresno. Free entry to exhibitions, gallery shows, special performances and unique art experiences for art lovers of all ages. facebook.com/FACarthop/
- Dopethrone, Kadabra, Chrch, Beastmaker and Smoking Mirror** 7 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Fulton 55. An evening of heavy metal. \$21+
- 08** **Workshop: Editing with Adobe Premiere** 10 a.m.–1 p.m. CMAC. Learn the basics of video editing using Adobe's leading video editing software, Premiere Pro.
- Old Time Fiddlers and Music Jam** 2 p.m.–4 p.m. Santa Fe Basque. Free
- The Story of Exhibition: History of Music in Iran** 6 p.m. UU Church. Performance in both Persian and English.
- Benise** 6:30 p.m. Tower Theatre. The Emmy-winning "Prince of Spanish Guitar" captures the music and romanticism of Spain. \$130+
- Hearts of Soul** 7 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. Rose Royce, Dazz Band and other legendary artists from the 1960s and 1970s for an evening of love, soul and classic hits. \$75+
- Gabriel Iglesias: Don't Worry Be Fluffy** 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. Iconic stand-up comedian with his cross-cultural and clean-spoken style of comedy. \$75+
- Metalachi** 8 p.m. Fulton 55. Heavy metal mariachi madness. \$32+
- 09** **Session of Irish and Breton Tunes** 2 p.m.–4 p.m. La Boulangerie. An open session on the patio. Free
- 10** **Sun Room** 7 p.m. Strummer's. American surf band from Southern California with a sense of garage rock from decades past. \$23+
- 11** **Annie** 7:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. The beloved musical returns in a new traveling Broadway production. \$49+
- 12** **Annie** 7:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. See Feb. 11 listing.
- The Wild Called Maxx** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. A re-telling of "Where the Wild Things Are" set in modern-day New York with updated themes for the millennial generation. \$15+
- 13** **Sounds of Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.** The Fresno Dixieland Society presents live music in four different venues under one roof. \$20+
- Dogman the Musical** 6:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. Creating comics together ever since they were little, fifth graders George and Harold decide the time is right to bring their colorful creation Dog Man to the stage in his very own musical.
- Cowboy Bebop Live** 9 p.m. Tower Theatre. A complete multimedia experience highlighting the story of the critically acclaimed anime, *Cowboy Bebop*, on the big screen with live music by the Bebop Bounty Big Band. \$37+
- 14** **Sounds of Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.** See Feb. 13 listing.
- Valentine's Night Out** 7 p.m. Selland Arena. Dance and sing the night away with some of you R&B favorites including Jacquees, Lloyd, Nina Sky, Pretty Ricky and recently announced headliner Bow Wow. \$50+
- Dusty Slay: The Night Shift Tour** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. With long hair, tobacco, oversized glasses and a trucker hat, Dusty Slay is a self-effacing Southern stand-up comedian with a knack for laidback, observational, relatable working-class comedy. \$43+
- Walk in Peace Concert** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. The Fresno State and Fresno City College choirs come together annually for a moving and uplifting celebration of music, unity and the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. \$15+
- Brincos Dieras** 8 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. Experience the uproarious comedy of Brincos Dieras, hailed as "the most irreverent clown in all of Latin America." \$107+
- 15** **Sounds of Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.** See Feb. 13 listing.
- Fresno Philharmonic** 7:30 p.m. Paul Shaghoian Concert Hall. The world premiere of a new work, "Meguru: Dreams of Harvest," by California composers Hitomi Oba and Erika Oba inspired by the life and writings of Fresno author and organic peach farmer David "Mas" Masumoto. \$30+
- The Greatest Love of All: A Tribute to Whitney Houston** 7:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. A heartfelt journey through Houston's greatest hits featuring Belinda Davids with state-of-the-art sound, lighting, vision and theatrical FX. \$45+
- Contemporary Dance Ensemble 2025** (through Feb. 22) 7:30 p.m. John Wright Theatre. The Fresno State Department of Theatre and Dance highlights contemporary classics, creative innovation and collaborations between students and faculty. \$10+
- 16** **Sounds of Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.** See Feb. 13 listing.
- Fresno Philharmonic** 3 p.m. Paul Shaghoian Concert Hall. The world premiere of a new work, "Meguru: Dreams of Harvest," by California composers Hitomi Oba and Erika Oba inspired by the life and writings of Fresno author and organic peach farmer David "Mas" Masumoto. \$30+
- The Great Gatsby Ballet** 6 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. The World Ballet Company is touring a world premiere production of F. Scott Fitzgerald's cherished novel. \$65+
- Jazz at the Library** 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m. Woodward Park Library. Live jazz performance.
- 18** **Why Not Wednesdays** 5 p.m.–9 p.m. Fulton St. (Mono to Fresno). Street fair that transforms Fulton Street into a vibrant pop-up market, featuring a diverse mix of vendors, food trucks, artists and live music. 559-490-9966
- 19** **Workshop: Podcasting** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. CMAC. Learn how to make a successful podcast.
- Art Grooves Got Jokes** 7 p.m. open mic (3-minute limit for jokes, singing, poetry), 7:30 p.m. comedian talent contest. River Park Art Groove.
- Reverend Horton Heat** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. With guests Black Joe Lewis and Pinata Protest. Reverend Horton Heat plays psychobilly that "reveals and reinterprets the country-blues-rock roots of American music." \$38+
- 20** **ArtHop** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Fresno Metro Area. Free entry to exhibitions, gallery shows, special performances and unique art experiences for art lovers of all ages. facebook.com/FACarthop/
- Bored Teachers Comedy Tour** 7:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. The Internet sensation educators/comedians bring their unique brand of classroom-based comedy to Fresno. \$135+
- Sam Grow Feels Like Driving Acoustic Tour 2025** 9 p.m. Fulton 55. Live country music for dancing and singing along. \$26.95+
- 21** **John Sierra: A Retrospective Arte Américas.** Born in Kerman, Sierra's work as a muralist, author, illustrator and educator has shaped not only the artistic landscape of the Central Valley but also fostered the creation of Arte Américas.
- Fresno Filmworks: Oscar Shorts 2025** 5:30 p.m. animation, 8 p.m. live action. Fresno City College. \$25.31+
- The Little Mermaid** 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Warnors Theatre. Ballet performed by the State Street Ballet of Santa Barbara. An imaginative take on a classic story. \$60+
- Steve Trevino Good Life Tour 2025!** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. "America's Favorite Husband" entered the cultural consciousness during the Pandemic based on his skits on TikTok and YouTube. \$135+
- Inner Ear Beat Down Slams** 7 p.m. open mic, 7:30 p.m. slam. River Park Art Groove. Hosted by Bryan Medina.
- Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Concerts: Nikolai Lugansky** 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. An artist of extraordinary depth and versatility, Russian pianist Lugansky performs pieces by Mendelssohn, Schumann and Wagner. \$40
- Chelo: El Adiós De Una Grande** 7:30 p.m. Save Mart Center. "La Voz Ranchera de México" is a celebrated Mexican singer known for her dynamic vocal range and emotional depth and her contributions to traditional Mexican music. \$73+
- The Michael Jackson HiStory [Tribute] Show** 8 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. In this full-scale stage production, Garth Field is MJ with a live band, choreographed dancers, authentic costumes, state-of-the-art sound and theatrical lighting, vision and FX. \$55+
- 22** **Fresno Filmworks: Oscar Shorts 2025** 1 p.m. documentaries, 4 p.m. animation, 7:30 p.m. live action. Fresno City College. \$25.31+
- 25** **Workshop: Studio Production** 4 p.m.–7:30 p.m. CMAC. Learn the basics of recording in the CMAC studio.
- 28** **Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play** (through March 8) 7:30 p.m. FCC Theatre. In this post-catastrophic future where the grid has failed, a group of survivors come together to rebuild their world through the life-affirming act of telling stories under the stars during which time they begin to recount an episode of *The Simpsons*, "Cape Feare." \$14
- The Importance of Being Earnest** (through April 19). 2nd Space Theatre. Oscar Wilde's play about fast friends and false identities; farce at its finest. \$29.49+
- The Harmon & Harriet Kelley Collection of African American Art: Works on Paper** (through June 29) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. The 65 works in this exhibition date from the late 1800s to 2002 and represent just a fraction of one of the country's major African American art collections.
- Tony Natsoulas: Artist Heroes** (through June 29) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Natsoulas, a student of famed ceramist and educator Robert Arneson, continues the Funk Clay Movement of the 1960s into the 21st century.
- Pixels: Image as Mythology, Contemporary Paintings by Michael Azgour** (through June 29) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. This exhibit explores the various ways in which images have been used to tell stories over time.
- Banda MS** 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. The MS Band, aka MS Band Sinaloa Sergio Lizarraga, formed in 2003 and has been entertaining audiences with their modern twist on Mexican brass-based traditional music. \$105+
- Tribute of a Down** 8:30 p.m. Fulton 55. Homage to the legendary band, System of a Down. \$29

Submit arts-related events to calendar@fresnoalliance.com by the 15th of the month preceding publication, or you can post anytime online at fresnoalliance.com (select Calendar)..

“Wings of the City”

Fresno State is currently showing five of the nine bronze sculptures of Mexican artist Jorge Marín’s “Wings of the City” collection. The statues were made from 2005 through 2010.

The sculptures were originally exhibited in 2010 in Mexico City as part of a grand exhibition on the Chapultepec Forest side of Paseo de la Reforma. Since then, the exhibit has traveled around the world through cities in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. The exhibit is sponsored by the México Consulado en Fresno, Diplomacia Cultural de México and the Instructionally Related Activities program at Fresno State.

Several of the pieces have larger-than-life male bronze figures with wings. The figures are balancing on orbs. One unwinged figure seems to be defying gravity by balancing

himself on a ball. Others have the winged figures on pedestals. There is a sense of balance and naturalism in all the statues that are on balls, which are countered by the mystical qualities of the masks and wings.

The exhibition enables a vital link between student artists and community members, facilitating an environment in which visitors can engage with art and reflect on its significance.

“The fact that California State University, Fresno, is exhibiting for the first time an exhibition by a Mexican sculptor and that, in addition, it chooses to place the pieces in an iconic place on campus, shows that the university understands and recognizes that the Mexican and Latino community constitute a significant part of the region’s culture,” artist Marín said.

With wings unfurled or caught in mid-motion, the beings invoke curiosity, potential and empathy while inviting individual interpretation and meaning in their existence. The five bronze sculptures are centrally

showcased along the Maple Mall at Fresno State and will remain for the enjoyment and enrichment of students and the community through August 2025.



FRESNO ARTS COUNCIL
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The San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance is funded in part by the City of Fresno Measure P Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Fund administered by the Fresno Arts Council.

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Arte Américas • 1630 Van Ness Ave. • arteamericas.org	Fresno Art Museum • 2233 N. First St. • 559-441-4221 / fresnoartmuseum.org	La Boulangerie • 730 W. Shaw Ave. • 559-222-0555	Save Mart Center • 2650 E. Shaw Ave. • savemartcenter.com	Warnors Theatre • 1400 Fulton St. • 559-264-2848 / warnorscenter.org
CMAC • 1555 Van Ness Ave. • 559-266-2622 / cmac.tv	Fresno Convention Center • 700 M St. • 559-621-8789	Paul Shaghoian Concert Hall • 2770 E. International Ave. • 559-327-5000	Selland Arena • 700 M St. • 559-621-8789	William Saroyan Theatre • 700 M St. • 559-445-8100
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel • 2233 Cesar Chavez Blvd. • fresnodixie.com	Fresno State Concert Hall • 2380 E. Keats Ave. • 559-278-2654	River Park’s Art Groove Event Center • 80 E. Via Del Oro • 559-840-8886	Strummer’s Bar & Grill • 833 E. Fern Ave. • 559-485-5356 / strummersclub.com	Woodward Park Regional Library • 944 E. Perrin Ave. • 559-600-3135 / fresnolibrary.org
Dulce UpFront • 2026 N. Van Ness Blvd. • 559-202-3099	Fulton 55 • 875 Divisadero St. • info@fulton55.com / fulton55.com	Roger Rocka’s Dinner Theatre • 1226 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-266-9494 / rogerrockas.com	Tower Theatre • 815 E. Olive Ave. • 559-485-9050 / fresnotowertheater.com	

Note: All locations are in the city of Fresno unless otherwise noted.

BOOK REVIEW

“Punishing and Insulting the Poor”

BY STEVEN ROESCH

It’s a problem that many employees face now and then: What should they do if they have a truly awful boss?

Several workers in Adelle Waldman’s *Help Wanted* share this problem, and they came up with an unusual solution. They’ll help their boss land the promotion that she desperately wants.

In fact, when high-level executives of Town Square, the company they work for, fly in to interview them individually about Meredith, they’ll all give her over-the-top reviews.

There’s a method in their apparent looniness. Should Meredith get promoted, then they wouldn’t need to interact with her much—certainly not on a daily basis. Besides, someone would have to assume her current position, probably the likeable and self-effacing Little Will.

Which means that one of them could then have a crack at Little Will’s job as group manager.

And that position is an honest-to-goodness job—with a guaranteed 40 hours each week, a substantially higher salary on the order of \$40,000 a year, and tantalizing perks such as health insurance and help with educational expenses.

Early on, some of them daydream about what they’d do if they’re chosen.

Nicole, for example, wouldn’t have to rely on food stamps or food banks anymore to feed her daughter. Val could then plug into Town Square’s tuition assistance program and earn a degree, maybe in engineering. And Diego, another contender, fancies getting his own car and moving his family from a standard apartment and into “a place with a yard or even just a porch of their own.”

Typically, the phrase “worker solidarity” conjures up collective action—strikes, boycotts and the like, tactics that aim to improve pay and working conditions for all.

In Waldman’s novel, the corporation’s higher-ups have effectively discouraged union organizing. Those sorts of actions are out of reach. Hence, for all of its downsides as a zero-sum game, Operation Meredith feeds their individual hopes that they might get to a higher rung on this corporate ladder.

Before writing *Help Wanted*, Waldman spent half a year working in a retail setting, and that experience makes itself felt in her in-depth descriptions of the employees unloading merchandise from trucks and setting up store displays.

Her real-life research brings to mind *Nickel and Dimed*, a book that appeared in 2001. In that classic study, Barbara Ehrenreich wanted to see how well she could survive when working in so-called unskilled jobs. Over the course of

several months, she found employment at a restaurant, a housecleaning firm and a Walmart, along with other sites. The challenges she faced were sometimes surprising and always substantial.

Reflecting on her experiences later, she noted that no job can actually be called “unskilled.” All the ones she got required concentration, and in each one she needed to “master new terms, new tools and new skills.” In addition, each required her to learn about and fit into a unique social world, each with its own particular characteristics. Figuring out how to interact with other workers and her managers was never a simple matter.

Paging through *Help Wanted*, one can’t help feeling the truth of Ehrenreich’s observations. The jobs at Town Square are demanding. Management, for example, urges the logistics team to unload a full truckload of merchandise within an hour, regardless of how large the load is. And outside of working hours they face additional demands: handling family needs, dealing with transportation issues, sometimes juggling two jobs.

To its credit, the novel also explores and humanizes the managers in this outfit, showing how, even when some try to stick up for workers’ rights and needs, they meet with failure and feel anxiety about how far they can pursue such agendas.

Waldman also shows how the economic climate has worsened the plight of workers in recent decades.

Joyce, one of the older Town Square employees who’s nearing retirement, often laments that the company’s been going downhill for quite a while. Fifteen years ago, she tells her younger co-workers, conditions were a whole lot better. For starters, people working in their store had enough to live decent lives. “You wouldn’t be rich, but you could live. If you wanted to make more, you could overtime.”

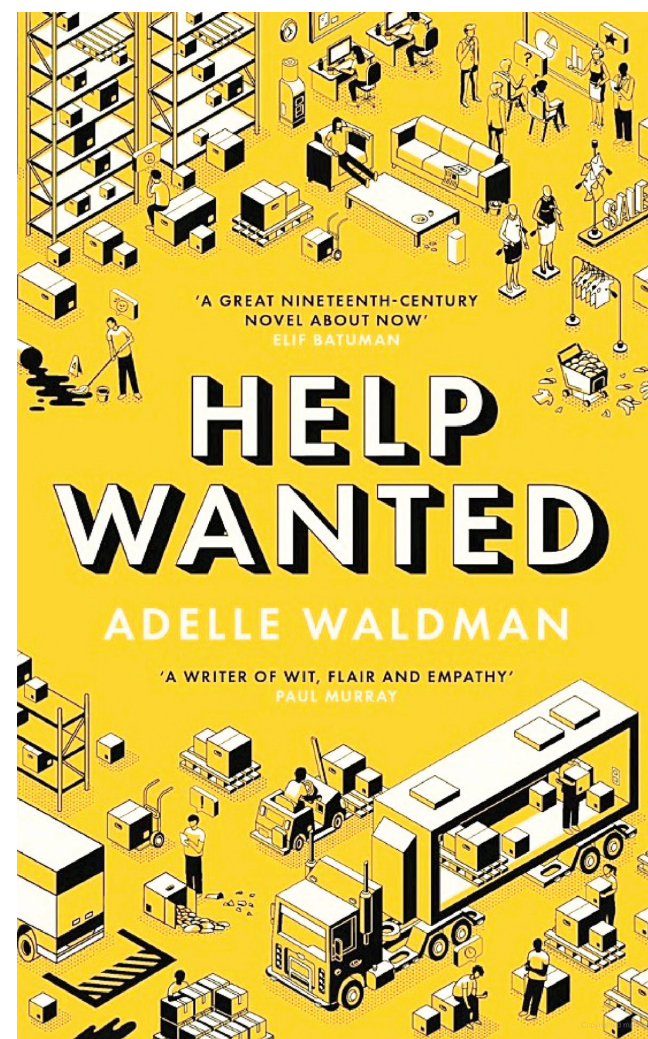
Big Will, the store’s manager, also recognizes the downward trajectory. When he’s preparing to phone a dissatisfied customer, he reflects that market forces have compelled this corporate belt-tightening.

Once Amazon appeared and then began its rapid rise in market share, brick-and-mortar operations such as Town Square became an endangered species in the retail landscape. The firm’s investors, however, still wanted to see profits, and so cuts in worker benefits and customer service became important strategies to stay afloat.

When the workers’ plan to catapult Meredith into a better position does get going, parts of it call to mind a *Mission: Impossible* plot. Raymond, for example, must access the store’s security system and divert some of the in-store cameras so that their actions won’t be detected. The group members also devise a code to use on their walkie-talkies; that way they can covertly let each other know when key phases of the operation need to get under way.

Things don’t quite turn out as anticipated, though. An unexpected plot twist jeopardizes their intentions.

But all isn’t lost, apparently. In the final pages, some scuttlebutt comes their way that gives them reason to feel



optimistic again. In the end, they all head back into the store, alive with newfound hope.

Waldman’s novel offers a grim portrait of an onerous work environment that many now face here and abroad, but she provides no glimmer of a path forward.

In this regard, it’s instructive—and sobering—to page through *Nickel and Dimed* these days, Ehrenreich’s book, as well as the afterword that she wrote in 2008.

Her book’s subtitle is just as troubling as it was back in 2001: “On (Not) Getting by in America.”

As are the final sentences in her afterword: “Ours is an economic culture that reflexively rewards and flatters the prosperous while punishing and insulting the poor, no matter how hard they work. Turning this around is the task of a lifetime, at least.”

Steven Roesch is a retired German and English teacher who taught in the Fresno Unified School District for 30 years. Contact him at stevencroesch12@comcast.net.

Two Nations, One Struggle

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

Russia's aggression has destabilized regions, displaced millions and violated countless human rights, demonstrating that its actions are not only a regional crisis but also a global challenge. In 2025, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova suffer under Russian imperial ambitions. These countries' aspirations to join the European Union and NATO have provoked Russia's aggression: an ongoing war in Ukraine, failed election fraud in Moldova and state capture that has led to months of daily protests in Georgia.

The history of confrontation between Russia and its neighbors spans centuries, marked by cycles of imperial expansion, resistance, Soviet control and post-Soviet conflicts.

The following report is from the ground in Georgia.

"Unfortunately, most people in the U.S. believe Georgia is just a state in their country," said a 19-year-old political science student at a protest in Tbilisi. "It's not. We have a long and rich history."

"Georgia should not be defined by the relatively short period of Soviet rule," said Alexander Kavtaradze, an Oxford-educated historian and lecturer at Ilia State University in Tbilisi. "The strategic and historical significance of Georgia and the Caucasus is unrecognized as Kremlin narratives dominate public information, placing Russia at the center of history."

Georgia's strategic location and rich past shed light on its current struggles. Known in antiquity as Colchis, the land of the Golden Fleece myth, and later as the Christian Kingdom of Iberia, Georgia has long been a crossroads of empires. It endured invasions and occupations by the Byzantine, Persian, Ottoman and Russian empires.

After a brief period of sovereignty (1918-1921), Georgia was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Despite Stalin's Georgian ethnicity, his rule brought harsh repression.

After gaining independence in 1991, Georgia faced ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, fueled by Russian support for separatists and military intervention. These conflicts led to war, ethnic cleansing and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Georgians. Russia occupies Abkhazia and South Ossetia to this day. A 2008 war with Russia further destabilized the country.

Despite these challenges, Georgia has pursued NATO and EU integration, aligning with Ukraine and Moldova in resisting Russian influence. Russian interference brought a pro-Kremlin government led by oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili to power. His Georgian Dream party, reelected in elections widely seen as fraudulent, announced a halt to EU accession talks until 2028. Civil society responded with mass protests demanding fair elections.

The police suppressed peaceful demonstrations, arresting participants. Protesters added a second demand: freedom for political prisoners. The standoff has now lasted two months.

Protests

Protesters have found creative ways to resist peacefully. Nightly, hundreds to thousands gather in Tbilisi and regional centers.

One group protested outside the national public broadcaster in Tbilisi, demanding the resignation of its leadership and airtime to present their views.

"The channel was hijacked by government propaganda," said Elena, one of the demonstrators. "They spread unspeakable lies."

Another group gathers near Parliament, waving Georgian, EU, U.S. and Ukrainian flags, singing anthems and folk songs. Families bring children and dogs. The protests, grassroots and leaderless, draw participants from all walks of life.

"University students are demanding the release of a jailed friend, arrested by forces that no longer serve the Georgian people," said Irakli Takalanadze, co-founder of the volunteer network Daitove. According to him, these protests reclaim the voice stolen during the elections. The protestors risk their lives and future to ensure fair elections happen in Georgia.

A period of brutal violence left many protesters injured, with several reporting being beaten. Facing global scrutiny, the government shifted tactics, refraining from interfering with rallies in the hope the movement would run out of breath and implode.

Nearly two months on, there are no signs of the resistance fading. Some nights are slower than others, but the people come to the streets despite the cold temperatures and harsh wind. Protests also prevail in other regions.



A march on Shota Rustaveli street in front of the Tbilisi State Opera and Ballet Theater.
Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

The movement stands out for its creative approach to resistance, with marches unfolding across the city in often unexpected ways. A Krab Coffee team of 10 might march down a side alley to join hundreds of Soviet repression victims' families. Descendants of those executed or exiled during the Soviet era carry portraits of Stalin's victims, chanting "No Russia!" Two groups then merge with a rally of theater students outside a school building plastered with the portraits of resisters arrested and tortured by the current pro-Russian government and occupied by a group of students.

World-famous Georgian opera singer Paata Burchuladze, who used to perform at Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera, stands next to the students in the streets near the Parliament building. "We will not be pulled back into the Soviet Union," he says.

On Jan. 15, about 400 businesses in Georgia closed for a strike, the first since the 1990s. Real estate agents, ballet dancers, McDonald's and art gallery staff, chocolate and honey makers, and HR managers closed their shops and offices and walked the streets for three



Students march in central Tbilisi, chanting "Down with oligarchy!" Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

hours. Despite the lack of trade unions and weak labor protections, businesses and workers alike joined forces.

"Organizing without trade unions is remarkable," said Marika Mikiashvili of the oppositional Droa party. According to her, businesses were prioritizing long-term survival over short-term interests, and even workers in vulnerable positions were putting civic responsibility first. This strike exceeded expectations and could pave the way for a full general strike in the future.

"We want a European future," said a young woman, an employee of McDonald's, standing in front of the fast-food restaurant, against the picturesque hills in the background. "We don't want a Russian future."

While the protests continue to stay peaceful, some students explore the Ukrainian Maidan movement, a lengthy and violent confrontation in Kyiv that led to the Russian puppet Victor Yanukovich's fall and escape to Russia but at the cost of many lives.

In December, Zviad Tsetskladze, 19, a law student and activist, was arrested on charges of organizing and leading group violence after posting a video with thinking points about Maidan on Facebook. Tsetskladze is now facing a 6-9 year prison sentence.

Ukraine-Georgia

"Maidan is what we need," said another 19-year-old student, who's been coming to the evening protests daily while still attending classes during the day.

Whether Georgia will find its own way remains to be seen. As the two countries mirror each other's struggle, Ukrainian and Georgian civil societies show solidarity in resisting Kremlin aggression. There is strong public support in both countries for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

A brief analysis of the historical ties and shared experiences of Russian aggression shows many similarities in the struggle for independence and national identity and resistance against imperial policies.

Their shared history includes Orthodox Christianity, trade through the Black Sea and centuries under Russian and Soviet rule. Both endured Stalinist repression and now resist Russian imperialism. Georgia and Ukraine face Kremlin aggression and seek closer ties to the West.

During the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, Ukraine condemned Russia's actions and expressed strong support for Georgia's territorial integrity. In 2014, Georgia, in turn, showed solidarity with Ukraine after Russia annexed Crimea and supported Russian proxy forces in Donbas.

In 2018-2023, both Ukraine and Georgia were targeted by Russian hybrid warfare.

While the Georgian government officially condemned Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, it refrained from directly joining Western sanctions against Russia, citing potential risks to Georgia's economy and security, and sparking domestic and international criticism.

Ivanishvili's ruling party, Georgian Dream, is accused of being pro-Russian and overly cautious in its response to the invasion. Ukrainian officials, including President Zelenskyy, criticized the Georgian government for the lack of active support and hesitance to sanction Russia.

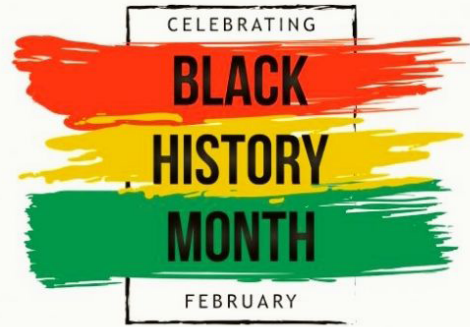
Opposition parties and civil society called for stronger action to support Ukraine. Georgian public opinion is overwhelmingly pro-Ukraine and pro-Western. This support is more tangible than waving Ukrainian flags at solidarity rallies. Georgian civil society provides humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Dozens of Georgian volunteers joined Ukrainian forces and the Georgian National Legion, a unit within the Ukrainian military.

Meanwhile, Russian propaganda targets Georgia, framing support for Ukraine as provocative and weaponizing fear, arguing that any confrontation or disagreement with the Kremlin would lead to a full-scale Russian invasion in Georgia.

The struggles of Georgia, Ukraine and other post-Soviet space states underscore the persistent and growing threat posed by Russian imperial ambitions. The wars in these regions are not isolated but part of a broader strategy to undermine democracy, sovereignty and international law.

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.

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SACRAMENTO NEWS & REVIEW

JANUARY 13, 2025

Falsely blaming the LA wildfires on Delta protection and the imperiled smelt is distorting the picture of water in California



Pacific Palisades after a huge wildfire raged through the Los Angeles community (photo credit: Jeffrey St. Clair)

President-elect Trump is spreading a sham narrative to the country, which is being parroted by allies, about what is happening in the Golden State's rivers and reservoirs

By Dan Bacher (reprinted with permission)

As apocalyptic scenes emerged from the climate change-induced fires raging across the Pacific Palisades, Pasadena and other neighborhoods in Los Angeles, President Donald Trump blasted California Governor Gavin Newsom on Truth Social for not signing a “water declaration” that would provide more water for Californians. As he has done many times before, Trump **blamed it all on the Delta smelt**, though in reality this highly threatened fish has nothing to do with wildfires. An initial estimate of the cost of the LA fires is between \$52 billion and \$57 billion, making it the most expensive fire event in history, according to AccuWeather Inc.

Trump claimed Newsom “refused to sign the water restoration declaration put before him that would have allowed millions of gallons of water, from excess rain and snow melt from the North, to flow daily into many parts of California, including the areas that are currently burning in a virtually apocalyptic way. He wanted to protect an essentially worthless fish called a smelt, but didn’t care about the people of California.”

The problem is that the “water restoration” declaration cited by Trump does not exist. It is one of four complete falsehoods in Trump’s statement. Newsom’s office sent the following statement to ABC10: “There is no such document as the water restoration declaration — that is pure fiction. The Governor is focused on protecting people, not playing politics, and making sure firefighters have all the resources they need.”

The second falsehood in Trump’s statement is that the Delta smelt is “an essentially worthless fish.” **The Delta smelt is a key indicator** species of

the health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, the largest estuary on the West Coast of the Americas. This 2- to 3-inch fish that smells like a cucumber is found only in the Delta. **It was once the most abundant fish in the Delta, but now is functionally extinct** due to massive water exports to agribusiness and other factors, including invasive species, toxics and pollution.

The third falsehood Trump has been spreading is that water from Northern California hasn’t been allowed to “flow daily into many parts of California,” including Southern California. In fact, **major South Coast reservoirs supplied by Delta water are currently anywhere from 77% to 85% of capacity**, according to California Department of Resources data.

The fourth falsehood is Trump’s claim that Newsom is denying Californians water in order to protect the smelt. In fact, **the state and federal governments have failed to protect the state and federal Endangered Species Act salmon** over the past three decades, as both Democratic and Republican governors preferred to ship vast quantities of Delta water to corporate agribusiness and Southern California water agencies.

Delta smelt is functionally extinct in the wild

Zero smelt have been caught over the past six years in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Midwater Trawl Survey, despite the stocking of thousands of hatchery-raised smelt in the Delta by state and federal agencies for the past three years. In the summer of 2024, a weekly survey by the US Fish and Wildlife Service targeting Delta smelt caught **only one smelt**.

Meanwhile, the other species collected in the survey — striped bass, longfin smelt, Sacramento splittail and threadfin shad — continue their dramatic decline since 1967 when the State Water Project went into effect. The collapse of Delta smelt and other pelagic fish populations is part of a larger ecosystem decline that includes Central Valley salmon populations.

Salmon populations have collapsed because of massive water diversions to agribusiness

The Sacramento River fall-run Chinook salmon has been the driver of West Coast ocean salmon fisheries for decades. However, record low returns of salmon to Coleman National Fish Hatchery have resulted in the fishery disaster. Salmon fishing on California ocean and river waters was closed in 2023 and 2024 due to the collapse of Sacramento River and Klamath River salmon populations.

Meanwhile, endangered Chinook salmon populations are moving closer and closer to extinction. Sacramento River winter Chinook in 2023 were estimated to be only 2,447 adults and 54 jacks, according to the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Critics say there is no doubt that the State Water Project and Central Valley Project, which they call the Delta “death pumps,” have exported so much water to Big Ag oligarchs that they’ve been the biggest killers of salmon, steelhead, Sacramento splittail and other fish species in California for decades.

Meanwhile, Restore the Delta is responding to the misinformation spread by Trump and his allies in corporate agribusiness. “For the official record, reservoirs in Los Angeles are full. The challenges in combating these fires arise from extreme winds, arid brush conditions, and regional infrastructure constraints in Southern California — not water scarcity or environmental protections.”

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R. W. Kerrigan had public safety responsibilities in California for 8 years, followed by 45 years as a researcher and educator in the life sciences. Personal experience of recent severe weather events and their consequences led to a deep dive into what history and science tell us about extreme storms and floods in the West. Public safety remains a major focus of his interests. This is his third book.

Megastorms,
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Navigating Extreme
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R. W. Kerrigan

Cuba Briefly Off the “Terrorism” List

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

(Editor’s note: Just a few hours into the new Trump administration, the White House announced that Cuba is back on the list of “terrorist countries.”)

The U.S. State Department maintains a list of countries it designates as countries where the government supports terrorism.

- The Reagan administration put Cuba on the list in 1982.
- Obama removed Cuba in 2015.
- Trump put Cuba back on the list in the last week of his first term in office.
- Biden took Cuba off this list in his last week in office.

This is not the blockade (“embargo”) that can only be lifted by Congress. That is still in place. Bad as the blockade is, the State Sponsors of Terrorism (SSOT) List has made things even worse.

With Cuba on this SSOT List, banks won’t handle Cuban financial transactions, even for food and medicine. The SSOT List signals to anyone that does business with Cuba that the U.S. government might try to retaliate against them.

Being on this list has caused terrible harm to Cuba, especially the healthcare system. Even the shipment of humanitarian aid is impeded. Companies worldwide that wanted to sell medicines or food to Cuba can’t because their own banks refuse to accept Cuba’s payment under threat of enormous fines from the U.S. Treasury for dealing with “terrorists.”

Locking Cuba out of the international banking system is intended to cause shortages of everything and problems in every sector of the economy and of people’s lives. It has been effective in carrying out this goal and causing suffering.

Cuba has endured 64 years of a U.S. economic blockade. This intensified when Trump unjustifiably put Cuba back on the SSOT list.

The most recent State Department report on Cuba as a so-called state sponsor of terrorism cites two, and only two, bits of evidence for this designation. One is Cuba’s refusal to extradite Colombia’s ELN leaders after peace negotiation broke down, but the report admits that “pursuant to an order from Colombian President Petro, the Attorney General announced that arrest warrants would be suspended against 17 ELN commanders, including those whose extradition Colombia had previously requested.” Obviously, this is null and void as a reason.

The only other justification noted is that “Cuba also continues to harbor several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on charges related to political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades.”

In other words, Cuba’s designation as an SSOT is entirely and completely based on Cuba offering asylum to U.S. political prisoners of the COINTELPRO war on Black America.

Cuba did not sell out Assata Shakur, who is the person this is primarily aimed at. Indeed, Cuba did not make any deals with the U.S. government to get off the SSOT List: neither selling out Assata nor abandoning the full support of Palestinian liberation. This is entirely consistent with Cuban support for the liberation of Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

At one point, back-channel negotiations with Cuba during the Carter administration offered easing of restrictions, maybe an end of the blockade, in return for Cuba abandoning the support of liberation forces in Angola—Cuba sent troops that were absolutely essential in that struggle. Cuba refused.



Photo by Bill Hackwell

On Jan. 10, Cuba, invoking Article 63 of the Statute of the Court, filed in the Registry of the Court a declaration of intervention in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (*South Africa v. Israel*).

It’s no surprise that Cuba has put liberation and ethics above everything because that is in Cuba’s history.

Cuba has an internationalist viewpoint. (It hasn’t just been healthcare, though it has done tremendous work in sending doctors to post-colonial and other countries in times of peace as well as in times of epidemic and disaster.) Cuban intervention (1975–1991) not only secured the independence of Angola’s government but also had profound regional meaning, leading to the independence of Namibia and the destabilization of the apartheid government in South Africa as well.

Let’s go straight to Nelson Mandela, speaking in 1991 about Cuba and Angola:

The crushing defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanvale was a victory for the whole of Africa! The overwhelming defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanvale provided the possibility for Angola to enjoy peace and consolidate its own sovereignty! The defeat of the racist army allowed the struggling people of Namibia to finally win their independence! The decisive defeat of the apartheid aggressors broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors! The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people inside South Africa! Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanvale our organization [the ANC] would not have been unbanned! The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanvale has made it possible for me to be here today! Cuito Cuanvale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation! Cuito Cuanvale has been a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!

Shakur, living in freedom in Cuba, refers in her autobiography, *ASSATA*, to the Cuban people: “They stand with their hands on their hips, acting like they own the place. I guess they do. They’re not afraid.”

Cuba, beyond its general internationalist goals and ideals, is aware that the whole world owes a debt to Africa. Not in any way incidentally, a high percentage of Cubans have some recent African descent—mainly people stolen from West Africa.

When enslaved African people were brought to Cuba, Yoruba people from the area that is now northern Nigeria and Carabali people from further south, they brought their

religion and culture though they could bring nothing else. These cultures have developed in resistance to slavery, in escape, in communities of free people in armed struggle—they constitute a culture of resistance and a revolutionary process, and Cuba is Africa in diaspora to an extent you would never guess by looking at Miami.

There is a saying “*En Cuba, quien no tiene de congo, tiene de carabali*”—it means that everyone has some African heritage.

This is a source of strength and revolution. This is the culture of resistance that makes it possible for Cuba to be free. And that’s why it’s important for all of us to support Cuba’s struggle for freedom.

Now we have a small victory in a long and difficult ongoing struggle.

On Jan. 14, the Biden administration announced these actions related to Cuba:

- Removal from the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism List
- Suspension of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act
- Elimination of the list of restricted entities (in Cuba) with which financial transactions are prohibited for individuals and companies

It is a victory for the solidarity activists, for the people of Cuba, for the hundreds of civil society organizations in Cuba ranging from the Council of Churches to the Federation of Cuban Women, from the Canine Federation of Cuba to the professional associations of every medical specialty, from the Network of Lesbian and Bisexual Women to the Barrio Network of Afro-descendants, all of which signed a letter to Biden a few months ago.

It’s a victory for the thousands of organizations and noted intellectuals worldwide who signed the Ignacio Ramonet letter to Biden recently. It’s a victory for the 123 countries that demanded this action in June 2024 in a joint statement in the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council and for the 187 countries that voted against the blockade of Cuba at the United Nations in October of this year.

However, the illegal U.S. blockade of Cuba remains intact and if the banks and other financial systems believe that Trump will return Cuba to the SSOT, and reverse the other Biden moves, they will be unlikely to dismantle their Cuba-related risk avoidance policies.

We’ve still got work to do.

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

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Thank You, Mike Rhodes!

Mike Rhodes was a co-founder of the *Community Alliance* newspaper and was the longtime editor. Although he is stepping down from any official role with the newspaper, we will continue to recognize him as Editor Emeritus and an esteemed adviser.



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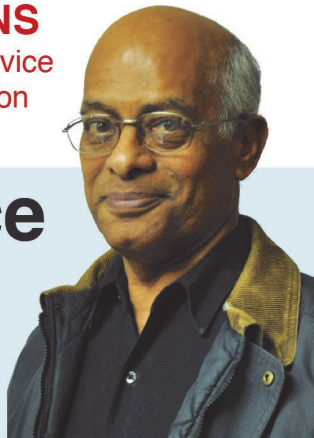
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Lessons from Nuremberg

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

(Editor's note: At press time came the announcement of the Jan. 15 ceasefire and prisoner/hostage exchange between Hamas and the Israeli government. This agreement is welcome, but it remains to be seen whether the terms of the agreement will be met. Either way, the situation on the ground in Gaza is horrible, the harm done is beyond imagination and the Palestinians still have not achieved self-determination.)

It's 2025, and we are fast approaching the 80th anniversary of the Nuremberg trials.

Held shortly after World War II, these military tribunals were intended to put an end to Nazism, to expose the depravity of the Nazi "Master Race" ideology, to document their war crimes and crimes against humanity, to condemn the Nazis' "final solution" to "the Jewish problem" and to bring accountability to the worst of the worst Nazi perpetrators.

Nuremberg contributed to the evolution of international norms in restricting barbarity in warfare. These include the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the additional protocols of 1977 and 2005 aimed at preventing future genocides and punishing genocidal actors.

My family has a connection to the Nuremberg trials. My wife's father served as a military police officer in the Nuremberg courtroom. My own father served in the army unit that liberated Dachau, a concentration camp on the outskirts of Munich, in late April 1945. Some of the infamous photos of starved and naked dead bodies stacked in railroad cars were taken by my father, supplying the kind of evidence used at Nuremberg.

A Little Matter of Genocide

The term *genocide* was coined by Polish-Jewish attorney Raphael Lemkin in 1944. Since then, the meaning of the word *genocide* has been disputed. So what is *genocide*?

It's a bit of a slippery term. Some assume that unless every last member of a group is exterminated or "disappeared," it's not genocide. That's not true.

The Geneva Convention of 1948 defines *genocide* as "the commission of grave harm against members of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group by killing, causing serious physical and mental harm, imposing measures to prevent births or forcibly taking away children"—with the intent of destroying the group as a group.

It's not a "little" matter. But it is controversial because nobody wants their group to be accused of genocide. It just isn't a good look.

Building Some Context

Which brings us to the current moment and a big question: Are the Israelis conducting genocide against the Palestinians?

To answer that question, we need to zoom out and acknowledge that the present situation did not begin with the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023. Let's build some context.

The Jewish people have a long, tortured history in Europe. Antisemites (Jew haters) consistently spread vicious lies against Jewish people (the "Christ killers" lie, the "blood libel" lie, the lies about world domination perpetrated in the forgery of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion). Periodically, pogroms would break out and whole Jewish communities would be massacred or driven off. Anti-Jewish hatred eventually culminated in the Nazis' murder of six million Jews.

After World War II, to assuage European guilt over the Holocaust, the United Nations created space for a new independent nation-state in the Jews' erstwhile-biblical homeland. The Israelis' main patron in this effort, and the world hegemon at the end of World War II, was the United States.

The UN decision initially spoke of a two-state solution: an Arab/Palestinian state and a Jewish state. But fighting soon broke out. The murder and mayhem lasted two years, with Israel emerging as the victor. It devastated the Palestinians. They call it the Nakbah ("catastrophe" in Arabic)—530 Palestinian villages were burned to the ground or depopulated, resulting in more than 700,000 Palestinian refugees. Many of those refugees ended up in Gaza.

If we want to be truthful and fair, we need to acknowledge that Arabic-speaking Palestinians (majority Muslims, minority Christians) are the longstanding indigenous people of that land. Therefore, we cannot simply "erase" the Palestinians with clever-sounding slogans like "a land without a people for a people without a land." That is a lie. Palestine was a flourishing, populated place before the Israelis took over.

Furthermore, the Jewish nationalists who founded the modern state of Israel never intended to live side by side in peace with their Palestinian neighbors. The plan all along was to occupy as much of the land as possible, by means legal and extralegal, and to replace the original inhabitants with Jewish settlers. That is what the "Jewish settlements" are all about: making life difficult or impossible for Palestinians, grabbing land that was in Palestinian hands and parceling it out to Jewish settlers.

It is inaccurate to call the Israel-Palestinian conflict a "war." The term *war* assumes some measure of balance between the combatants, of militaries confronting each other and duking it out on fields of battle.

Not a one-sided fight in which one side has an unlimited bank account that it can draw upon (the United States) and all the latest technology and advanced killing machines. Not when one side kills men, women, babies, children and old people indiscriminately and with utter impunity—while the other side has been forced into abject poverty by the oppressors and yet somehow still manages to resist complete subjugation.

But Is It Genocide?

By the numbers, Israel has killed more than 46,000 Palestinians in the present conflict. More than 109,000 have been wounded, and more than half of those were women and children. More than 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced.

The International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UN organizations are saying that Israel actions in Gaza are plausibly "genocide" or are "consistent with the characteristics of genocide." The Jewish Voice for Peace calls it "live-stream genocide."



Some of the Nazi leaders during the Nuremberg trials (c.1946). Front row, from left: Herman Goering, Rudolf Hess, Joaquin von Ribbentrop and Wilhelm Keitel. Second row, from left: Karl Doenitz, Erich Raeder, Baldur von Schirach and Fritz Sauckel.

Photo courtesy of The Commons

On the other hand, the conservative American Jewish Committee claims it is not genocide, places all the blame on Hamas and claims that Israeli actions reflect "the desire to spare Palestinian civilians, not deliberately harm [them]."

Moreover, pro-Israel bias is rife in our legacy media. At the *New York Times*, top editors ordered journalists to restrict the use of terms such as *genocide* and *ethnic cleansing*, in effect hiding from their readers the awful reality.

Meanwhile, Biden's State Department gaslights us, asserting that the accusation of genocide is "certainly unfounded."

All this while white American "evangelicals" say that no matter what the United States must support Israel as we tumble ever more chaotically toward the End of the World.

Let's measure the Israeli government's actions against the UN definition of *genocide*.

Has there been grave harm committed against members of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group? Check.

Has there been killing, causing serious physical and mental harm? Check.

Have measures been imposed to prevent births or forcibly taking away children? Check.

Have actions shown an intent to destroy the group as a group? Check.

To elaborate, in Gaza the Israeli Defense Forces have engaged in a campaign of cultural and physical elimination. They have

- ordered Palestinians by phone or text to leave their residences "temporarily," then bombed those places to oblivion
- ordered Palestinians to evacuate to "safe zones" and then attacked those so-called safe zones
- flattened large sections of the territory
- drastically reduced food and water, subjecting the Palestinians to forced starvation
- restricted needed medicines from entering the territory
- destroyed water and sewer infrastructure
- destroyed electric infrastructure
- destroyed 80% of schools and 100% of the universities (all 12 of them)
- destroyed the last three functioning hospitals in North Gaza, stripping and detaining dozens of medical workers and arresting the head of the hospital, holding him in a secret location where torture is known to happen
- targeted and killed more than 200 Palestinian journalists and media workers who were clearly marked as journalists, attempting to cut off the information flow of what they are doing
- targeted children (with a proliferation of head wounds from bullets)
- used drones to assassinate suspected Hamas members, heedless of innocent civilians nearby

A Lamentation

We don't have the space here to go into how Israel's actions mirror U.S. history with regard to how we have treated the Indigenous people of this land.

But it brings me consternation and heartache to realize that Israel could not continue to practice its genocide of the Palestinians without the assistance and tacit approval of my own country.

We Americans take great pride in seeing our country as "the leader of the free world." And yet somehow we are openly supporting genocide, the very thing we fought against in World War II, and the very thing the Nuremberg trials and subsequent humanitarian laws were explicitly designed to establish a bulwark against.

Shamefully, our political class (the majority of both Republicans and Democrats) has learned nothing from the Nuremberg trials.

Bayard Taylor is a Fresno County activist, a nature lover and a graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Contact him at bayardtaylor1@aol.com.

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Peace & Social Justice Calendar February 2025

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

WEEKLY

Raza Against War Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. 2500 Tulare St. For more info, contact comworkeradvocate@gmail.com.

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.

SAT 01 Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley 9 a.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: Fresno City Council Member Annalisa Perea. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or claval@comcast.net.

Trailblazers Awards Banquet 5:30 p.m. Regency Event Center, 1600 Willow Ave., Clovis. Honoring Central Valley African American leaders. Honorees: Dr. Kim Armstrong, Dr. Monique Bell, First Lady Valerie Binion, Larry Burrus, Charah Coleman, Valette Farwell, Dr. Cassandra Little, Dr. Robert Stewart, Honorable Keshia Thomas, Taylor Ashby and Dr. Nzash Lumeya. \$125/person. For more info, visit aamcentralvalley.com.

MON 03 Soup at the Center 12:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Group discussion. Sweet potato beef stew. For more info, contact 559-237-3223 or info@centerfornonviolence.org.

TUE 04 City of Fresno Civic Academy: Session 3 5 p.m.–7 p.m. City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. Learn about city government, engaging with your city council representative, city departments and functions, and the difference your participation can make in the city. For more info, contact 559-508-6421 or robin.mcgehee@fresno.gov.

National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) 5:30 p.m. Sequoia Brewery North, 1188 E. Champlain Ave. Speaker: Dora Westerlund, founder, president and CEO of the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation. Topic: Fostering Entrepreneurship. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

WED 05 California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) 1 p.m. Via Zoom. Regional meeting. Link: us06web.zoom.us/j/2284684729. For more info, contact ycuevas@californiaalliance.org.

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

THU 06 Lecture: A Christian Vision for Justice Reform 7 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Lin Family Performance Studio, Warkentine Culture & Arts Center, Fresno Pacific University. Matthew T. Martens, a trial lawyer with an international law firm in Washington, D.C., describes how scripture provides guidance on loving our neighbors and how this can shape a new view of criminal justice. For more info, contact 559-453-3677 or wayne.steffen@fresno.edu.

FRI 07 CineCulture: Democracy Noir 5:15 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Connie Field (director). The compelling story of three women—Timea Szabo, one of the few women serving in the Hungarian Parliament; Nikolett Antal, a young activist; and Babett Oroszi, a young journalist—confronting the policies and corruption of Hungary's autocratic Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

Language Politics and Literary Creation in the Armenian Diaspora's Formative Years 7 p.m. Room 101, Grosse Industrial Tech Building, Fresno State. Speaker: Talar Chahinian, Ph.D., a lecturer in the Program for Armenian Studies at UC Irvine. Her new book, *Stateless: The Politics of the Armenian Language in Exile*, focuses on two key moments and places of Western Armenian literary history, post-WWI Paris and post-WWII Beirut, to examine how a stateless language sustained itself in a diasporic setting. Organized by the Armenian Studies Program.

SAT 08 Southeast Fresno Block Party 9 a.m.–noon. Calwa Park, 4545 E. Church Ave. Join tenantstogether and your local community for a rent control block party. Casa Colores will be on-site to connect with you and share upcoming projects. For more info, contact shar@tenantstogether.org.

SUN 09 PFLAG Fresno 2 p.m.–4 p.m. Fireside Room, Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E. Barstow Ave. Supporting, educating and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and their families. For more info, contact pflagfresno@gmail.com.

MON 10 Soup at the Center 12:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Group discussion. Creamy potato soup. For more info, contact 559-237-3223 or info@centerfornonviolence.org.

Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) 5 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. For more info, contact swgamble@aol.com.

TUE 11 City of Fresno Civic Academy: Session 4 5 p.m.–7 p.m. City Hall, 2600 Fresno St. Learn about city government, engaging with your city council representative, city departments and functions, and the difference your participation can make in the city. For more info, contact 559-508-6421 or robin.mcgehee@fresno.gov.

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

Kings County Democratic Central Committee 6 p.m., Round Table Pizza, 208 N. 12th Ave., Hanford. For more info, contact cathyjorgensen@hotmail.com.

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

KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

WED 12 KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up! 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

Housing Learning Labs 5 p.m. 3253 E. Shields Ave. Session 4: Home Ownership Strategies. Discover who provides affordable housing and how to access it, how to advocate for your rights and afford rent increases. For more info, contact juana@tcmfresno.org.

THU 13 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@ymail.com.

FRI 14 CineCulture: Following Harry 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Susan Rostock (director). An intimate portrait of legendary musician and civil rights icon Harry Belafonte whose work dedicated to social justice continued until his death in 2023 at age 96. Sponsor: Africana Studies Program. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

SAT 15 Central Valley Progressive PAC 3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or swhalenr79@gmail.com.

MON 17 Soup at the Center 12:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Group discussion. Cheeseburger soup. For more info, contact 559-237-3223 or info@centerfornonviolence.org.

TUE 18 Central Valley Partnership 5:30 p.m. Room 251, Old Administration Building, Fresno City College. For more info, contact admin@centralvalleypartnership.org.

Kings County Jimmy Carter Club 6 p.m. Lemoore. For more info, contact kcyjimmycarterclub@gmail.com.

KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

WED 19 Daytime Speaker Series 10:30 a.m. William Saroyan Theatre, 730 M St. Speaker: Joy Harjo, a luminary in poetry, storytelling and activism. Topic: Beyond Words—A Poetic Resonance. As a member of the Muscogee Nation, Harjo's voice elevates the American language, culture and soul. \$60. For more info, contact 559-444-2180 or valleytownhall@gmail.com.

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.

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Speaker: R.W. Kerrigan. Topic: (Very) Stormy Weather: From the Great Flood of 1862 to Forecasts for the 21st Century. Review the history of multiple "megastorm" events over the past 2,000 years and address how individuals, families, communities and society can begin to prepare to cope with future extreme storm events. Visit sierraclub.org/tehipite and look for the registration link. Advance registration required.

THU 20 Clovis Democratic Club 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For more info, contact 559-322-9740 or clovisdemocraticclub@gmail.com.

FRI 21 CineCulture: Armenian Short Films 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: TBD. Sponsors: Armenian Studies Program, Armenian General Benevolent Union, Greater Fresno Chapter and AGBU Arts' Armenians in Film Series. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

- *All I Need*: A woman returns to her ancestral land and confronts her family's history during the Armenian genocide.
- *Romeo*: Where does visual artist Romeo Melikyan find his colors and shapes? "I used to paint crowds, now buildings, after maybe nature. What will I paint after that? That's what I'm afraid of."
- *The Ticket*: A boy travels through the whole city using one ticket.
- *It Takes a Village*: Mariam lives in an Armenian village where there are no men. After her hopes of a reunited family are shattered, she must put aside her own crushed dreams and help her friend as she embarks into motherhood.
- *The Egg*: A failed actor now entertaining kids seeks his fate through endless castings and auditions. Continuous setbacks pushed him into motivational media.
- *Areg and Manushak*: Armenian composer and pianist Tigran Hamasyan uncovers the deep connection between music and storytelling through ancient hymns and the spiritual image of a bird, depicted on papyrus by monks over the centuries.

SAT 22 Central Valley Leadership Round Table 10 a.m. Club Morelos, 111 E. 11th St., Merced. Speaker: State Senator Anna Caballero. For more info, contact 559-250-1253 or gamayer20@gmail.com.

MON 24 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.

Soup at the Center 12:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Group discussion. Red lentil soup. For more info, contact 559-237-3223 or info@centerfornonviolence.org.

TUE 25 KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

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

THU 27 Central Valley Indivisible 6 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St. For more info, contact 559-495-0606 or pattycapp@gmail.com.

Peace Fresno 6:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Monthly meeting to plan antiwar strategies. For more info, contact 559-513-0199 or president@peacefresno.org.

FRI 28 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: My Motherland (Ma France à moi) 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Benoit Cohen (director). A woman in her 60s, who has been living alone in her Parisian apartment since her husband's death, hears on the radio that an NGO is putting in touch homeless migrants and people who are willing to welcome them. She decides, against her family's wishes, to welcome a young Afghan, broken by war and exile. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu or visit cineculture.csufresno.edu/.

Save the Date! Environmental and Land-Use Reality Tour

April 26, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Join us on an informative and fun tour to better understand the causes of the ecological deterioration of San Joaquin Valley land, air and water and to explore mechanisms for restoration and enhancing livability in the area.

Who decides how our land here in the San Joaquin Valley is used? How do these decisions affect our lives? What can we do about it?

To participate, to be a sponsor or to learn more, e-mail info@fresnoalliance.com.

Submit upcoming community activities to calendar@fresnoalliance.com by the 15th of the month preceding publication, or you can post anytime online at fresnoalliance.com (select Calendar).

Managing Valley Aquifers

Continued from page 9

"There are huge gaps in it, but we are at this point where, you know, DWR has been providing funding and technical assistance to agencies to provide community engagement. Some major concerns that we have are things like having translation at meetings, making sure that the materials are prepared in a way so that they are accessible to community members, [and] that they are not using a lot of jargon and technical language when explaining these things."

Working residents, she adds, also have difficulty even attending agency meetings or following the latest developments. "I think the local agencies should work with community-based organizations like Community Water Center and Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability to make those connections happen in a more proactive manner, instead of just expecting people to show up at these agency meetings that are held during the day or don't have a Spanish translation option."

Tran acknowledges that the process has improved over time, with stakeholders listening to all concerns, and collaborating toward a common goal: "I would say my relationship with the Kaweah Sub-Basin has evolved a lot. It has become a lot more collaborative where we can work together and talk through issues and highlight really serious water quality concerns that have to be addressed."

Valley residents have another formidable ally in Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability. A powerhouse of attorneys, experts and policy advocates, they are deeply involved in seeking environmental justice for underserved and disadvantaged communities.

Dr. Nataly Garcia has been studying and working on SGMA issues for nearly eight years. Her Ph.D. thesis focused on implementation of the landmark groundwater law. She has developed expertise on overdrafted Valley aquifers in the region, from Merced to Kern counties.

Garcia recounts that groundwater sustainability plans began to take shape in 2018 when water advocates began to provide feedback on what those plans should look like. "When these plans were really shaping up there had already been thousands who had been left without water. And we were finding that a lot of these plans were going to put thousands more at risk of having their systems dewatered."

As local groundwater agencies crafted plans, Garcia noticed that some were not considering the overall environmental concerns of residents and small farmers, "Sadly, what we were finding was that a lot of agencies were unwilling to really take that responsibility which they had signed up for. I think a lot of them were mostly focused on making sure that the agricultural economy wasn't impacted." By 2023, state regulators cracked down and started putting some basins on probation.

Facing a state-mandated probation, the Kaweah Sub-Basin groundwater agency revised its original plan to meet the DWR standards. A January meeting with state officials was cancelled in light of those changes.

Tran says the groundwater sustainability plan has improved a lot: "I would say they made a lot of progress, and I'm hoping that other agencies can look to the Kaweah and take some of their best practices and incorporate [those] into their plan, so that they don't have to go through this process of not getting approved, potentially going on probation and then having their local control removed."

Disagreements within some of the groundwater basins, Garcia observes, have complicated planning and led to divisions. "The Kern groundwater authority is probably the prime example of massive splintering where you had a lot of different irrigation water agencies kind of decide they don't want to be part of this bigger umbrella. Most of the time, the disagreement is about how you are going to handle the overdraft and who is going to pay the bill for that."

There are disagreements in the Tule Sub-Basin as well. According to Garcia, the dispute is around land subsidence. "For most areas of the state, we have inelastic land subsidence, which means once the land collapses, it is essentially gone. Some of the worst land subsidence we have in the San Joaquin Valley is in the Tule Sub-Basin."

"You have seen some of the lawsuits around the Friant-Kern canal where land subsidence around canals is quite dangerous and potentially extremely expensive basically for everybody, including the taxpayer."

Disputes around data are also complicating the planning process. Who has the most accurate accounting of the amount and nature of the aquifers. Garcia says that is where the DWR helped advance the planning process.

"I think that is a part of the state intervening, making sure that data is consistent across these plans so we have a holistic picture of what's going on. You have some sub-basins that have multiple plans, and then these multiple plans are all depending on different data that can sometimes be inconsistent with one another. So even really basic things like data have been an issue with some of these sub-basins."

Agriculture in the region uses 91% of the groundwater with urban use at 7%. Regional groundwater levels are rated by the state as much below normal or at an all-time low. Those levels have dropped considerably during the 20-year mega-drought the state has experienced.

Tran describes what happens to water quality in depleted aquifers when the Valley has a run of dry years. "We always try to make the connection between drought and overpumping. As the water table drops, it can have a higher concentration of contaminants. It can lead to people drinking even more contaminated water."

"Another scenario is that overpumping can also move around different contaminant plumes toward more shallow domestic wells depending on what the pumping practices and groundwater flows look like."

Finding the sweet spot of equitable water use is the critical element and challenge of the SGMA, according to Garcia, "We're not in the business of trying to make agriculture go away. I think for us, we just want to figure out where the balance is here. I don't know why we don't shift the way we've done agriculture in the past to be able to reach some kind of sustainable use of groundwater."

Recharging aquifers has become a key element in groundwater sustainability plans. But the relentless warming of the planet and especially California makes it difficult to bring the system into balance.

Garcia considers recharging an inadequate solution. "We don't have that water. Even in really heavy rain years we can only capture so much. It is also not realistic that I can recharge my way out of this problem. It implies you are leaving something behind if you're just capturing the water to then use it later that year. You are just banking it."

Water quality and access is also a concern on California's central coast. Even though the Pacific Ocean is next door, it does not mean there is an ocean of water underground. Fresh water is in relatively short supply all along the state's coastline. Ironically, the rising sea, induced by global warming, is causing contaminated groundwater to move closer to the surface.

Tran explains that the Salinas and Pajaro valleys are dominated by industrial farming. "The Central Coast is known as the salad bowl of California. That's where you get all your greens. That's also where you get all your berries."

"The soil is very overused. For example, even within one year you might get four crop rotations of berries or four crop rotations of lettuce and spinach. And what that means is a lot of fertilizer use. There's a lot of nitrates and different pesticides going into the groundwater."

Another major issue near the coast is called groundwater rise. Rising sea levels can potentially make groundwater move upward and have contaminated water layers come closer to the shallower domestic wells. People living near industrial areas are especially vulnerable.

"We work in Salinas Valley and Pajaro Valley and have a couple of different technical assistance projects where we're trying to think about how we can consolidate them to nearby systems as part of their long-term solution, so that they don't have to just manage the well on their own," says Tran.

California's water managers need to adopt a holistic perspective on the nature of that resource. According to hydrologists, it is one very large, very complex system from mountain snowpack, through flowing watercourses, into reservoirs and canals, and ultimately sinking underground. It has not been handled that way but rather in silos as separate entities. Garcia believes this is a drawback for achieving a balanced approach to water use.

"This is one entire system. We've just chosen to regulate it separately. And honestly, I think that has been a disadvantage to the system, that we have decided that surface water and groundwater are somehow separate."

"Even when boundaries for these GSAs are created, they do not follow hydrology. They follow political lines. I just don't think that's a great way of getting us to a healthier system if we continue to act as if we can impose these hypothetical boundaries onto a system that just doesn't work that way."

Climate change impacts such as global warming and more tempestuous weather events featuring atmospheric rivers and drought are the new normal. How well groundwater management works in the future must take those factors into account. That is not a simple calculation when drafting groundwater plans, as Garcia indicates.

"A lot of these water budgets are based on average scenarios, like an average year. But because of climate change that's just not real for California. We don't have average years, it's just not our normal."

"If the law required you to actually take into consideration our extremes, you would have people moving toward management a lot sooner. I'm really curious how the state is going to reconcile this difference between surface and groundwater rights and management."

In some ways, the SGMA process has been a work in progress. Garcia notes that sometimes state guidance is a one-size-fits-all approach. "The state could have done a much better job of providing especially local oversight as to how these agencies were engaging all different users of groundwater. It is one of those things that the law did not totally think through when it was passed."

Water marketing is another element in the groundwater equation that is being discussed in the state, but Garcia is skeptical. "I think we will start to see more and more water markets pop up in the next five years. Generally, we do not support groundwater markets because we know how markets work, and there is far too much room for inequity."

"If you are going to do a market, it has to be hyper localized. And even then, you might still not be able to avoid impacts. I always think it's a slippery slope when you commodify a natural resource."

Garcia concludes that for groundwater management to be successful, there should be changes to the state's surface water rights. "As somebody who has been studying water for quite a long time, I think folks in the groundwater sector could do everything right, but if we don't fix things on the surface water rights it is just going to be even harder for them to get it right on the groundwater side."

"Realistically, I think you will have some sub-basins that are going to be pretty successful. And I'm willing to bet that the more successful ones are going to be those basins that have higher surface water rights than others."

It is estimated that a million acres of San Joaquin Valley cropland could be fallowed to bring aquifers into balance two decades from now. Kaweah's groundwater plan has been revised, and the state is moving toward acceptance. If they craft a plan that works for all stakeholders, Tran says it could be a model for other groundwater agencies in the Valley to follow toward a sustainable future.

Tran emphasizes that safe, affordable and accessible water benefits Valley farmers and communities alike. For groundwater sustainability plans to meet the state's requirements, hard decisions will have to be made about agricultural land use. The CWC is calling for widespread groundwater monitoring to make sure aquifers are not being depleted.

"[The] Community Water Center has been really emphasizing actual demand management," says Tran, "making sure that these local agencies set out allocations and have a better understanding of what their water use is. And then also, making sure that they have pumping restrictions especially on the larger industrial agricultural pumpers."

"Because this pattern of overpumping can't keep happening if we want communities to thrive and still live in the San Joaquin Valley."

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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Rally Against 1,3-D

Continued from page 6

A Broken System: Double Standards and Corporate Influence

Advocates also criticized the DPR for creating unequal standards for farmworkers and residents. "The DPR has two different assumptions about the levels that cause cancer within one regulation for the same pesticide," Lopez said.

"Farmworkers are only protected from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., but children and residents are exposed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

Mark Weller, an advocate with CPR, called out the influence of corporate interests. "Dow Chemical gets more money, and communities like this get more cancer. It's environmental racism, plain and simple."

A Call for Change

The rally and hearing reflect the urgent need for stronger regulations to protect farmworkers and rural communities from the dangers of 1,3-D. Advocates called for a uniform standard of four parts per billion, in line with the OEHHA's

recommendations, and an end to the double standard that leaves vulnerable populations at risk.

An attendee emphasized the importance of solidarity. "We must support our environmental justice colleagues, our civil rights colleagues and all those who are under the oppression of unequal distribution of these pollutants. The people on the front lines, the ones who suffer from pesticides and toxic pollution, need our support. They deserve higher protections from California."

As the public comment period continued until Jan. 24, advocates urged the DPR to listen to the voices of those most affected by pesticide exposure and to prioritize public health over corporate profits. The agriculture industry has had decades to make changes that would benefit farmworkers and consumers but have sacrificed our health for their profit.

Nothing Is Set in Stone

When it comes to these regulations, the DPR encourages people to reach out and share their thoughts and concerns. The regulations it is planning can be changed and are supposedly influenced by input from our communities.

A spokesperson for the DPR at the public hearing stated, "Well, I'll just take a step back and again, why we're here today, is to hear from the community. And we want their comments and we want this feedback and all of that participation and engagement does inform our regulatory structure and regulatory actions. And so it's really valuable and important that we're hearing those voices here tonight."

The DPR also encourages farmworkers to report pesticide violations to their county agriculture commissioners—something you can do anonymously if there is fear of retaliation.

Contact CPR (pests@pesticide-reform.org) to report pesticide violations and learn more about the movement against dangerous pesticide use.

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

CENTRAL VALLEY BRIEFS

Gender-Affirming Surgery Support

Trans-e-Motion has reopened its Community Care Grants, which fund gender-affirming surgeries for Central Valley residents, thanks to a \$5,000 grant from Equality California/Out Against Big Tobacco and \$630 of donations from the community. This grant fund will remain open while funds last. To donate to this program or to apply for a grant, contact transemotion@gmail.com.

Border Patrol Activity

Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria (D-Fresno) has issued the following statement on recent Border Patrol activity in the Central Valley:

"As a daughter of immigrant farmworkers, it is more important than ever that we ensure our farmworker communities are safe, and feel safe.

"These operations by U.S. Border Patrol officials are causing fear and panic in our Central Valley communities among families, workers and individuals who are not criminals.

"I want to be crystal clear: The individuals detained by immigration officials that have committed crimes should be held accountable. Behind every crime there is a victim, and we should do everything we can to protect victims, prevent more victims and take criminals off the street.

"Immigration officials need to take a surgical approach to apprehending criminals to ease community concerns among those who are traveling to work, raising families and contributing to their community every single day. Without this approach, we will see a destabilization in our small towns, communities and our agricultural economy, negatively impacting the entire country's food supply."

Soria, along with the California Latino Legislative Caucus, strongly urges the Border Patrol to announce its planned raids and maintain its established protocols of avoiding raids at sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals and places of worship. These venues should remain free from operations; otherwise, a chilling effect could prevent law-abiding residents from visiting these locations and utilizing their vital services.

Soria represents the 27th Assembly District, which includes communities in Fresno, Madera and Merced counties.

Prioritizing Social Activism

The United States has a long history of social movements, from its founding to more modern efforts for racial equality and climate activism. While social activism happens across the country, some states provide better environments for citizens to advocate and make a difference.

To determine where social activism is prioritized the most, SmileHub compared the 50 states across 15 key metrics. The data set ranges from the number of rights/activism charities per capita to civic education engagement to hate crimes per capita.

The results for social activism in California are as follows:

- Overall rank: 12th
- 1st in Rights & Activism Charities per Capita
- 38th in Civic & Social Organizations per Capita
- 48th in Share of Population Belonging to an Organizational Membership
- 9th in Access to Public Transportation
- 1st in Voter Accessibility Policies
- 43rd in Hate Crime Incidents per Capita
- 27th in Share of Residents Living in Poverty

SmileHub is a nonprofit tech company that uses data to rate charities and provides resources that make it easy for donors to find more information and maximize the impact of their donations. Its platform is designed to help users find and donate to causes and charities that align with their values and interests.

Sierra Health Foundation at 40

"At the start of this new year, we recognize that our shared health equity and racial justice aspirations and strategies are once again under attack," says Chet P. Hewitt, president and CEO of the Sierra Health Foundation.

"As fires continue to rage through Southern California and the incoming federal administration threatens the health and safety of many California communities, the big question for philanthropy is: how will we respond? At Sierra Health Foundation, we plan to move forward unafraid and with an even deeper commitment as we navigate the uncertain environment ahead.

"We take heart in the progress we have made with our many partners and the promise of health equity for all."

This year, the Sierra Health Foundation celebrates 40 years of grantmaking, partnership and changemaking to improve the social determinants of health for California's marginalized communities.

"These four decades bear witness to how community-driven investments can transform systems, save lives and help solve our most intractable issues," notes Hewitt.

"We enter 2025 celebrating our 40-year legacy of impact and resoluteness in pursuit of our North Star goal: a healthful life for all Californians. May this year bring us another step closer to achieving it."

Community Organization Focus

The Central Valley Empowerment Alliance (CVEA) is a multi-ethnic group with a grassroots community membership stretching across five counties (Madera, Fresno, Tulare, King and Kern) in the Central Valley. The CVEA uses the Industrial Areas Foundation organizing model, which builds from hundreds of one-on-one individual house visits and larger broad-based community assembly where specific actions are discussed and developed for mobilization.

The CVEA aims to address economic and educational inequity, advocate for affordable housing and empower underserved communities in the Central Valley.

Its strategies are as follows:


- Empower communities to use their voice to create change.
- Provide free health resources to underserved communities.
- Advocate for housing in low-income communities, keeping families and entire support systems together for the betterment of generations to come.

Current programs include the following:

- LUPE's Promise Youth Leadership:** Promoting youth leadership by developing their skills through community engagement and creating a safe place for the youth to be accepted as they are.
- Larry Itliong Resource Center:** Providing a safe space for the community to assemble as needed as well as a place for youth to study for their future, this judgment-free building helps future leaders grow.
- El Mercado:** Providing community food banks to help feed local communities as well as health initiatives alongside street medicine. This monthly effort has helped keep communities strong and vitalized.

To learn more, visit cvempowermentalliance.org/.

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Todo esto significa que de aquí en adelante veremos redadas, arrestos indiscriminados, cambios radicales en las leyes migratorias destinadas a reducir el ingreso de inmigrantes, agresiones verbales y físicas contra personas no-blancas que parecen extranjeros, intensa propaganda contra estas personas, y más.

¿Cómo llegamos a esta situación?

Contra aviso no hay engaño. Trump anunció lo que su gobierno haría. Expresó su odio contra los inmigrantes, los insultó una y otra vez y prometió sacarlos del país. ¿Por qué no hubo una reacción seria de los activistas y de muchas de las organizaciones que, supuestamente, los defiende? Es decir, por qué no profundizaron el trabajo político, educativo, en las comunidades inmigrantes para evitar que Trump llegara al gobierno? Sirve ahora protestar, marchar contra las deportaciones? Cómo es posible que muchos nuevos ciudadanos (de origen mexicano) hayan votado por Trump sabiendo que las deportaciones podrían afectar a sus familiares y amigos? Y lo más grave, cómo es posible que muchos hijos de inmigrantes indocumentados votaron o apoyaron a Trump? O sea que votaron para que sus padres sean deportados.

Si, marchar y protestar es importante. Tenemos que hacer sentir nuestro repudio a estas políticas racistas. Pero lo más importante es el trabajo educativo para que los votantes elijan candidatos que apoyen a los inmigrantes. Debemos participar de este proceso—a veces lento y hasta difícil de entender—para

asegurarnos que ningún racista llegue a puestos de poder, incluso en nuestras ciudades y condados.

Incluso debemos aprender que donar a las campañas políticas—de acuerdo a nuestra posibilidades económicas—nos da poder frente a los candidatos. Esto es parte del juego político de la sociedad en la que vivimos y tenemos que aprender a jugar con sus propias leyes.

Las recomendaciones al estilo de “Conoce tus Derechos” son importantes pero no van a impedir que una persona sea deportada si es indocumentada. Por eso necesitamos representantes que apoyen la migración, para que las leyes represivas e irracionales sean derogadas y en su lugar se implemente una reforma migratoria.

Pelear para que reduzcan las deportaciones es importante pero es solo una solución transitoria. Si solo nos entretenemos en esto sin cambiar de fondo las leyes, no habrá mejoras reales y a largo plazo.

Es hora de educarnos y unirnos. Y de tener presencia política en las elecciones y presionar a los políticos para lograr soluciones PERMANENTES.

En cada familia de inmigrantes hay personas indocumentadas pero también residentes y hasta ciudadanos. Estos últimos tienen que ser nuestros aliados y votar por nosotros. En todas las elecciones.

La educación política significa conocer las reglas básicas de las elecciones, conocer a los candidatos y cuál es su agenda para decidir a quién apoyaremos. No es fácil ni habrá efectos inmediatos. Pero si no ganamos la lucha a largo plazo solo dedicaremos nuestro tiempo en marchar y protestar sin producir cambios de fondo.

Y si nos deportan?

Nadie quiere decirlo pero sin duda no es lo que un inmigrante desea. Y ni se diga si esto implica separarnos de nuestras familias—Trump prometió deportar a los indocumentados Y A SUS FAMILIAS, incluso a los niños aunque hayan nacido en EE.UU. La amenaza es seria, quienes están hoy en el poder son fanáticos anti-inmigrantes.

Ante esto, ¿está México preparado para recibir a miles de deportados? En parte sí. Pero solo temporalmente. Quizá provea alimentación y albergue para las familias por algunos días, pero no parece que México esté preparado para aprovechar las habilidades de sus paisanos deportados. La mayoría son trabajadores experimentados que podrían aportar al desarrollo y superación de la sociedad Mexicana. Y sus hijos hablan inglés, aparte de español y, en algunos casos, también idiomas indígenas como mixteco, zapoteco, etc.

El gobierno de Claudia Sheinbaum debería realizar una rápida evaluación y/o encuesta de cada persona deportada y ayudarlo a establecerse y trabajar productivamente. Este proyecto sería de gran valor para el país y las familias que deberán reintegrarse a una sociedad que los expulsó pero que ahora debería recibirlos con los brazos abiertos.

Los deportados no llegarán al infierno. México es un país desarrollado con un gran potencial y una cultura y paisajes sin igual, además de un gran futuro del cual los que regresen podrán aportar orgullosamente.

Eduardo Stanley es el editor de Community Alliance.

Consejos para inmigrantes indocumentados

Busque pronto una consulta legal.

Para abogados privados: Llame a la Asociación Estadounidense de Abogados de Inmigración al 1-800-954-0254 para obtener una referencia.

Para organizaciones sin fines de lucro que emplean abogados con licencia en los EE. UU. o representantes acreditados por el Departamento de Justicia: Puede encontrar una lista de estas organizaciones en la Red de Defensores de la Inmigración (immigrationadvocates.org).

Cree un plan de seguridad:

Identifique sus contactos de emergencia y memorice sus números de teléfono.

Proporcione a la escuela o guardería de su hijo un contacto de emergencia para que lo recoja a sus niños en caso de que usted sea deportada/o.

Brinde una autorización por escrito para que su contacto de emergencia tome decisiones médicas y legales por su hija/o.

Dígalos a sus seres queridos que si ICE lo detiene, pueden intentar usar el localizador de detenidos en línea de ICE para encontrarlo (locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search)

Reúna sus documentos en un lugar seguro.

Guarde su información de identidad y su información financiera en un lugar seguro.

Reúne documentos que demuestren el tiempo que lleva en Estados Unidos; los dos años más recientes son los más importantes. Esto puede incluir declaraciones de impuestos en Estados Unidos, facturas de servicios públicos, contratos de alquiler, registros escolares, registros médicos, registros bancarios u otros documentos.

Asegúrate de que tu contacto de emergencia pueda acceder a todos estos documentos.

Si tienes DACA y te queda menos de un año, renueva lo antes posible.

Si tienes DACA y es posible que debas viajar o que te cases con un ciudadano estadounidense en un futuro cercano, debes solicitar una versión de emergencia de libertad condicional anticipada si eres elegible.

Lee y practica la guía (immigrantjustice.org/) del Centro Nacional de Justicia para Inmigrantes (NIJC) sobre qué hacer si te encuentras con ICE en tu comunidad.

Evita el fraude migratorio.

Solo busca asesoramiento legal de un abogado o un representante acreditado en una organización sin fines de lucro reconocida por el Departamento de Justicia.

Los abogados deben tener una licencia de un estado de EE. UU. para ejercer la abogacía. Pide ver su licencia de abogado. Las licencias de abogado de otros países no autorizan el ejercicio de la abogacía en los Estados Unidos.

Los representantes acreditados deben estar acreditados y trabajar para una agencia sin fines de lucro reconocida por el Departamento de Justicia. Pida ver sus documentos de acreditación.

Nunca firme una solicitud con información falsa.

Nunca firme un formulario en blanco.

Pida copias de todo lo que firme.

Si el consejo suena demasiado bueno para ser verdad, obtenga una segunda opinión antes de presentar una solicitud de inmigración.

Lea la guía completa del NIJC (immigrantjustice.org/) sobre cómo evitar el fraude migratorio.

Esté alerta a las estafas digitales.

Sea escéptico con las publicaciones en las redes sociales que prometen un alivio migratorio nuevo o rápido.

Tampoco caiga en pánico con los mensajes en las redes sociales sobre arrestos masivos en su área, pero protéjase.

El gobierno de los EE. UU. (incluido el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, los Servicios de Ciudadanía e Inmigración de los EE. UU., el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas y el Departamento de Estado) nunca se comunicará con usted a través de WhatsApp o redes sociales.

Con excepciones limitadas, como las personas que son liberadas de la detención y se les dice que deben registrarse con ICE por teléfono, el gobierno de los EE. UU. generalmente no se comunica con las personas por teléfono. Si recibe un mensaje o una llamada telefónica inesperada de alguien que dice ser un funcionario de inmigración u otro funcionario del gobierno, no responda ni comparta información personal. No envíe ni transfiera dinero para pagar una “tarifa de procesamiento” ni por ningún otro motivo. En caso de duda, consulte con un abogado o un representante acreditado antes de tomar cualquier medida.

Evite compartir información no verificada en las redes sociales.

Fuente: Centro Nacional de Justicia para Inmigrantes (immigrantjustice.org/)

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 Joaquín. *Alianza Comunitaria* aboga por

- la justicia racial, social, ambiental y económica;
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Manifestación

Continúa de página 24

El 1 de enero de 2024, el DPR implementó su nueva regulación para el uso de 1,3-D en residentes, estableciendo el nivel de exposición objetivo en 0,56 ppb, lo que permite 14 veces más 1,3-D en el aire que el umbral oficial de riesgo de cáncer de por vida del estado, y se alinea perfectamente con el deseo declarado de Dow Chemical.

Nayamin Martínez, directora ejecutiva de la Red de Justicia Ambiental de California Central, se hizo eco de estas preocupaciones, enfatizando el daño generalizado causado por el 1,3-D. "Este pesticida daña el medio ambiente, la tierra, el agua y la salud de nuestras comunidades", dijo.

"Causa irritación de la piel, náuseas, vómitos, migrañas, depresión, daño hepático y más. La exposición prolongada es la más peligrosa porque causa cáncer. ¿Por qué hay 34 países que ya han prohibido este pesticida, pero todavía se usa aquí?"

Martínez también señaló las disparidades raciales en la exposición a pesticidas. "El 1,3-D se usa en las comunidades latinas e inmigrantes a una tasa 10 veces mayor que en las comunidades blancas. Los 25 condados donde más se usa este pesticida son de mayoría latina. Esto es racismo ambiental".

La audiencia: una plataforma para las voces de la comunidad

La manifestación precedió a una audiencia pública celebrada por el DPR para recabar opiniones sobre las regulaciones propuestas para el 1,3-D. Dentro de la audiencia, trabajadores agrícolas, defensores y miembros de la comunidad compartieron historias personales y evidencia científica para instar al DPR a adoptar protecciones más estrictas.

Sandra García, una trabajadora agrícola con 35 años de experiencia, habló sobre el impacto devastador de la exposición a pesticidas en su familia y colegas. "Mi madre murió de cáncer pulmonar. Mis compañeros también murieron; los vi morir. No he visto mucho cambio en todos estos años.

"Quiero ver cómo están educando o ayudando a los trabajadores agrícolas a protegerse de estos pesticidas. Si no es en el campo, es en la carretera, o los niños se están enfermando. Necesitamos proteger a nuestros trabajadores".

Bianca López, directora ejecutiva del Proyecto de Mejora del Valle, criticó al DPR por no seguir las recomendaciones científicas. "La DPR ha ignorado el límite legal de cuatro partes por mil millones establecido por la OEHHA y en su lugar ha elegido 56 partes por mil millones. ¿Cómo se salieron con la suya? La ciencia debe guiar nuestras regulaciones, no la política racista".

El costo humano de la exposición a pesticidas

Felipe Pérez, alcalde de Firebaugh, compartió su desgarradora experiencia con la exposición a pesticidas. "A los 13 años, estuve expuesto a pesticidas. No es una buena historia. Sientes que te estás quemando y no hay nada que puedas hacer.

"En las áreas donde no tenemos buena atención médica, la gente muere más a causa de los pesticidas. Estos pesticidas no se destruyen; se transforman, y nosotros, los trabajadores rurales, somos los que más sufrimos".

Soraya Ceda, residente de Fresno, destacó el impacto en los niños. "Tengo un hijo que tiene asma y los pesticidas le han causado asma. Muchos agricultores sufren de cáncer. Tenemos que detener esto por el bien de nuestras comunidades".

Un sistema roto: doble moral e influencia corporativa

Los defensores también criticaron al DPR por crear estándares desiguales para los trabajadores agrícolas y los residentes. "El DPR tiene dos suposiciones diferentes sobre los niveles que causan cáncer dentro de una regulación para el mismo pesticida", dijo López.

"Los trabajadores agrícolas solo están protegidos de 8 a.m. a 4 p.m., pero los niños y los residentes están expuestos las 24 horas del día, los 365 días del año".

Mark Weller, un defensor de CPR, denunció la influencia de los intereses corporativos. "Dow Chemical obtiene más dinero y comunidades como esta padecen más cáncer. Es racismo ambiental, simple y llanamente".

Un llamado al cambio

La manifestación y la audiencia reflejan la necesidad urgente de regulaciones más estrictas para proteger a los trabajadores agrícolas y las comunidades rurales de los peligros del 1,3-D. Los defensores pidieron un estándar uniforme de cuatro partes por mil millones, en línea con las recomendaciones de la OEHHA, y el fin del doble estándar que deja a las poblaciones vulnerables en riesgo.

Un asistente enfatizó la importancia de la solidaridad. "Debemos apoyar a nuestros colegas de justicia ambiental, nuestros colegas de derechos civiles y todos aquellos que están bajo la opresión de la distribución desigual de estos contaminantes. Las personas en primera línea, las que sufren los pesticidas y la contaminación tóxica, necesitan nuestro apoyo. Merecen mayores protecciones de California".

A medida que el período de comentarios públicos se prolongó hasta el 24 de enero, los defensores instaron al DPR a escuchar las voces de los más afectados por la exposición a pesticidas y a priorizar la salud pública sobre las ganancias corporativas. La industria agrícola ha tenido décadas para hacer cambios que beneficiarían a los trabajadores agrícolas y a los consumidores, pero ha sacrificado nuestra salud por sus ganancias.

Nada está escrito sobre piedra

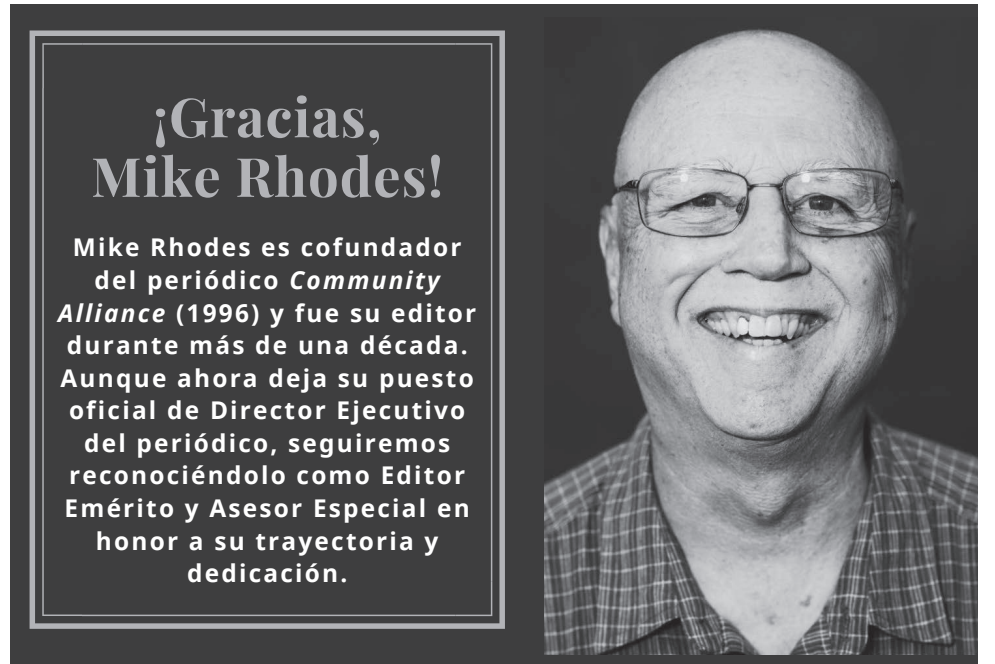
En lo que respecta a estas regulaciones, el DPR alienta a las personas a acercarse y compartir sus pensamientos e inquietudes. Las regulaciones que está planeando se pueden cambiar y supuestamente están influenciadas por las opiniones de nuestras comunidades.

Un portavoz del DPR en la audiencia pública declaró: "Bueno, daré un paso atrás y, nuevamente, el motivo por el que estamos aquí hoy es para escuchar a la comunidad. Y queremos sus comentarios y queremos que esta retroalimentación y toda esa participación y compromiso informen nuestra estructura regulatoria y acciones regulatorias. Y por eso es realmente valioso e importante que escuchemos esas voces aquí esta noche".

El DPR también alienta a los trabajadores agrícolas a denunciar las violaciones de las normas sobre pesticidas a los comisionados agrícolas de su condado, algo que puede hacer de forma anónima si existe temor a represalias.

Póngase en contacto con CPR (pests@pesticideform.org) para denunciar las violaciones de las normas sobre pesticidas y obtener más información sobre el movimiento contra el uso peligroso de pesticidas.

Paulina Deeds Ortiz es una ex becaria del periódico Community Alliance. Es una inmigrante mexicana que actualmente asiste a Fresno State y está trabajando para obtener una licenciatura en antropología con una especialización en psicología. Pasa su tiempo libre escribiendo poesía o pintando.



**¡Gracias,
Mike Rhodes!**

Mike Rhodes es cofundador del periódico Community Alliance (1996) y fue su editor durante más de una década. Aunque ahora deja su puesto oficial de Director Ejecutivo del periódico, seguiremos reconociéndolo como Editor Emérito y Asesor Especial en honor a su trayectoria y dedicación.

"Alas de la Ciudad"

Actualmente, Fresno State exhibe cinco de las nueve esculturas de bronce de la colección "Alas de la Ciudad" ("Wings of the City") del artista mexicano Jorge Marín. Las estatuas se realizaron entre 2005 y 2010.

Las esculturas se exhibieron originalmente en 2010 en la Ciudad de México como parte de una gran exposición en el lado del Bosque de Chapultepec del Paseo de la Reforma. Desde entonces, la exhibición ha viajado alrededor del mundo por ciudades de Medio Oriente, Europa, Asia, África y América del Norte. La exhibición está patrocinada por el Consulado de México en Fresno, Diplomacia Cultural de México y el programa de Actividades Educativas Relacionadas de Fresno State.

Varias de las piezas tienen figuras masculinas de bronce más grandes que la vida con alas. Las figuras están en equilibrio sobre orbes. Una figura sin alas parece desafiar la gravedad al equilibrarse sobre una pelota. Otras tienen

figuras aladas sobre pedestales. Hay una sensación de equilibrio y naturalismo en todas las estatuas que están sobre bolas, que se contrarrestan con las cualidades místicas de las máscaras y las alas.

La exposición permite un vínculo vital entre los estudiantes artistas y los miembros de la comunidad, facilitando un entorno en el que los visitantes pueden interactuar con el arte y reflexionar sobre su significado.

"El hecho de que la Universidad Estatal de California, Fresno, exhiba por primera vez una exposición de un escultor mexicano y que, además, elija colocar las piezas en un lugar icónico del campus, demuestra que la universidad entiende y reconoce que la comunidad mexicana y latina constituye una parte importante de la cultura de la región", dijo el artista Marín.

Con las alas desplegadas o atrapadas en pleno movimiento, los seres invocan curiosidad, potencial y empatía al tiempo que invitan a la interpretación individual y al significado de su existencia. Las cinco esculturas de

bronce se exhiben centralmente a lo largo del Maple Mall en Fresno State y permanecerán para el disfrute y enriquecimiento de los estudiantes y la comunidad hasta agosto de 2025.

FRESNO ARTS COUNCIL MEASURE P

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LUGARES

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Arte Américas • 1630 Van Ness Ave. • arteamericas.org	Fresno Art Museum • 2233 N. First St. • 559-441-4221 / fresnoartmuseum.org	La Boulangerie • 730 W. Shaw Ave. • 559-222-0555	Save Mart Center • 2650 E. Shaw Ave. • savemartcenter.com	Warnors Theatre • 1400 Fulton St. • 559-264-2848 / warnorscenter.org
CMAC • 1555 Van Ness Ave. • 559-266-2622 / cmac.tv	Fresno Convention Center • 700 M St. • 559-621-8789	Paul Shaghoian Concert Hall • 2770 E. International Ave. • 559-327-5000	Selland Arena • 700 M St. • 559-621-8789	William Saroyan Theatre • 700 M St. • 559-445-8100
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Dulce UpFront • 2026 N. Van Ness Blvd. • 559-202-3099	Fulton 55 • 875 Divisadero St. • info@fulton55.com / fulton55.com	Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre • 1226 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-266-9494 / rogerrockas.com	Tower Theatre • 815 E. Olive Ave. • 559-485-9050 / fresnotowertheater.com	

Nota: Todos los locales están ubicados en la Ciudad de Fresno salvo que se indique lo contrario.

ARTE Y CULTURA DE FRESNO

CALENDARIO FEBRERO 2025

23

ALLIANCE
FEBRERO 2025

01

Capítulo Dos (hasta feb. 23) 2nd Space Theatre. Un viudo y una divorciada se conocen, se casan y casi arruinan su relación. Boletó \$29.49

Hermoso: El musical de Carole (hasta marzo 16) Roger Rocka's. La celebración de los éxitos más importantes y gustados de una leyenda del rock 'n' roll.

Arte del mundo: Érase una vez un libro (hasta junio 29) Jueves-Domingo, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Con las ilustraciones originales de Erase una vez un libro, que enfatiza el poder de los libros para ayudar a experimentar otros lugares fuera de su propia realidad.

Exhibición de Arte Público Internacional: Alas de la Ciudad (hasta agosto) Maple Mall, Fresno State. Las criaturas míticas de bronce del mundialmente famoso artista mexicano Jorge Marín se han posado, observando en silencio el bullicio de la vida del campus.

Búsqueda Jurásica 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Fresno Convention Center. La exhibición itinerante de dinosaurios más grande y realista en gira en los Estados Unidos, tiene dinosaurios animatrónicos, un Spinosaurus de 60 pies de largo, un Apatosaurus de 80 pies de largo y un T.rex de tamaño real. \$27.85+

Purple Ones 9 p.m.-11:30 p.m. Fulton 55. Un insaciable tributo a Prince. \$27+

Womxn 2 Womxn, Celebración de las Artes y la Cultura 2 p.m.-5 p.m. Dulce Upfront. Arte, música y presentaciones, talleres, vendedores y más. Todas las edades. Gratis.

02

Búsqueda Jurásica 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Fresno Convention Center. Ver listado de Feb. 1.

La Bohème 2:30 p.m.-5 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. La ópera clásica cantada en italiano con subtítulos en inglés. Interpretada por el Teatro de la Ópera Estatal de Fresno y el equipo artístico de la Orquesta Sinfónica Estatal de Fresno. \$10+

03

Mes de la Historia Negra, Exhibición de Arte (todo febrero) 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Room 186, Dean's Gallery, Music Building, Fresno State. Las obras vibrantes y evocadoras de Vanessa Addison-Williams exploran temas de identidad, fuerza y herencia cultural, tejiendo narrativas que honran las luchas y los triunfos de la experiencia negra.

05

Taller: Escritura de un guión 6 p.m.-8 p.m. CMAC. Toda gran película comienza con la escritura; este taller cubre la estructura y los diversos formatos para contar historias.

El Atraco 7 p.m. Strummer's. "I owe the IRS 60K Dollars Tour (continuación)" con Dylan Reese. El proyecto musical de Michael Garmany, la música tiene influencias del R&B, reggae y hip-hop. \$23+

06

ArtHop 5 p.m.-8 p.m. En el centro de Fresno. Entrada gratuita a exposiciones, muestras en galerías, actuaciones especiales y experiencias artísticas únicas para amantes del arte de todas las edades. facebook.com/FACarthop/

Dopethrone, Kadabra, Chrch, Beastmaker and Smoking Mirror 7 p.m.-11:30 p.m. Fulton 55. Una noche de heavy metal. \$21+

08

Taller: Editando con Adobe Premiere 10 a.m.-1 p.m. CMAC. Aprenda los conceptos básicos de la edición de video con el software de edición de video líder de Adobe, Premiere Pro.

Violinistas Tradicionales y Música Improvisada 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Santa Fe Basque. Gratis

Benise 6:30 p.m. Tower Theatre. El "Príncipe de la guitarra española", ganador de un premio Emmy, captura la música y el romanticismo de España. \$130+

Hearts of Soul 7 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. Rose Royce, Dazz Band y otros artistas legendarios de los años 60 y 70 en una velada de amor, soul y éxitos clásicos. \$75+

Gabriel Iglesias: Don't Worry Be Fluffy 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. Comediante icónico con su estilo de comedia intercultural y de lenguaje claro. \$75+

Metalachi 8 p.m. Fulton 55. Locura de Heavy metal y mariachi. \$32+

09

Sesión de melodías irlandesas y bretonas 2 p.m.-4 p.m. La Boulangerie. Sesión abierta de melodías irlandesas y bretonas en el patio. Gratis

10

Sun Room 7 p.m. Strummer's. Banda de surf estadounidense del sur de California con un toque de rock de garaje de décadas pasadas. \$23+

11

Annie 7:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. El querido musical regresa en una nueva producción itinerante de Broadway. \$49+

12

Annie 7:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. Ver listado de Feb. 11.

El Salvaje Llamado Maxx 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. Una nueva versión de "Donde viven los

monstruos" ambientada en la Nueva York actual con temas actualizados para la generación del milenio. \$15+

13

Sonidos del Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. La Dixieland Society de Fresno presenta música en vivo en cuatro lugares diferentes bajo un mismo techo. \$20+

El Musical Dogman 6:30 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. George y Harold, estudiantes de quinto grado que han estado creando cómics juntos desde que eran pequeños, deciden que es el momento adecuado para llevar su colorida creación, Dog Man, al escenario en su propio musical.

Cowboy Bebop Live 9 p.m. Tower Theatre. Una experiencia multimedia completa que resalta la historia del aclamado anime Cowboy Bebop en la pantalla grande con música en vivo de Bebop Bounty Big Band. \$37+

14

Sonidos del Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. Ver listado de Feb. 13.

Noche de San Valentín a las 7 p.m. Selland Arena. Baila y canta toda la noche con algunos de tus artistas favoritos del R&B, incluidos Jacques, Lloyd, Nina Sky, Pretty Ricky y el recientemente anunciado cabeza de cartel Bow Wow. \$50+

Dusty Slay: The Night Shift Tour 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. Con el pelo largo, tabaco, gafas enormes y una gorra de camionero, Dusty Slay es un comediante sureño modesto con un don para la comedia relajada, observacional y cercana de la clase trabajadora. \$43+

Concierto Walk in Peace 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. Los coros de Fresno State y Fresno City College se reúnen anualmente para una celebración conmovedora y edificante de la música, la unidad y el legado perdurable del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. \$15+

Brincos Dieras 8 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. Experimenta la escandalosa comedia de Brincos Dieras, aclamado como "el payaso más irreverente de toda América Latina". \$107+

15

Sonidos del Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. Ver listado de Feb. 13.

Filarmónica de Fresno 7:30 p.m. Paul Shaghoian Concert Hall. Estreno mundial de una nueva obra, "Meguru: Dreams of Harvest", de las compositoras californianas Hitomi Oba y Erika Oba, inspirada en la vida y los escritos del autor y agricultor de duraznos orgánicos de Fresno, David "Mas" Masumoto. \$30+

El Amor Más Grande de Todos: un Tributo a Whitney Houston 7:30 p.m. Teatro William Saroyan. Un emotivo viaje a través de los grandes éxitos de Houston con Belinda Davids con sonido, iluminación, visión y efectos teatrales de última generación. \$45+

Conjunto de Danza Contemporánea 2025 (hasta el 22 de febrero) 7:30 p.m. John Wright Theatre. El Departamento de Teatro y Danza de Fresno State destaca los clásicos contemporáneos, la innovación creativa y las colaboraciones entre estudiantes y profesores. \$10+

16

Sonidos del Mardi Gras 2025 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. Ver listado de Feb. 13.

Filarmónica de Fresno 7:30 p.m. Paul Shaghoian Concert Hall. Estreno mundial de una nueva obra, "Meguru: Dreams of Harvest", de las compositoras californianas Hitomi Oba y Erika Oba, inspirada en la vida y los escritos del autor y agricultor de duraznos orgánicos de Fresno, David "Mas" Masumoto. \$30+

El Ballet The Great Gatsby Ballet 6 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. La compañía World Ballet está de gira con una producción de estreno mundial de la apreciada novela de F. Scott Fitzgerald. \$65+

18

Jazz en la Biblioteca 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Biblioteca Woodward Park Library. Jazz en vivo.

19

¿Por qué no Miércoles? 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Fulton St. (de Mono a Fresno). Feria callejera que transforma Fulton Street en un vibrante mercado temporal, con una mezcla diversa de vendedores, puestos de comida, artistas y música en vivo. 559-490-9966

Taller: Podcasting 6 p.m.-8 p.m. CMAC. Aprende a hacer un podcast exitoso.

Bromas en Art Grooves 7 p.m. Micrófono abierto (límite de 3 minutos para chistes, canto y poesía); 7:30 p.m., concurso de talentos de comedia. River Park Art Groove.

Reverend Horton Heat 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Con los invitados Black Joe Lewis y Pinata Protest. Reverend Horton Heat toca psychobilly que "revela y reinterpreta las raíces country, blues y rock de la música estadounidense". \$38+

20

ArtHop 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Área metropolitana de Fresno. Entrada gratuita a exposiciones, muestras en galerías, presentaciones especiales y experiencias artísticas únicas para amantes del arte de todas las edades. facebook.com/FACarthop/

Gira de Comedia Bored Teachers 7:30 p.m. Teatro William Saroyan. Los comediantes y educadores sensación del Internet

traen a Fresno su estilo único de comedia basada en el aula. \$135+

Gira de Sam Grow Feels Like Driving Acoustic 2025 9 p.m. Fulton 55. Música country en vivo para bailar y cantar. \$26,95+

21

John Sierra: Muestra Retrospectiva Arte Américas. Nacido en Kerman, el trabajo de Sierra como muralista, autor, ilustrador y educador no sólo ha dado forma al paisaje artístico del Valle Central, sino que también ha fomentado la creación de Arte Américas.

Fresno Filmworks: Cortometrajes Nominados al Oscar 2025 5:30 p.m. animación, 8 p.m. Acción en vivo. Fresno City College. \$25.31+

La Sirenita 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Warnors Theatre. Ballet interpretado por el State Street Ballet de Santa Bárbara. Una versión imaginativa de una historia clásica. \$60+

Gira Good Life 2025, de Steve Trevino 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. "El marido favorito de Estados Unidos" entró en la conciencia cultural durante la pandemia gracias a sus sketches en TikTok y YouTube. \$135+

Inner Ear Beat Down Slams 7 p.m. micrófono abierto, 7:30 p.m. slam. River Park Art Groove. Presentado por Bryan Medina.

Concierto Internacional Para Teclado de Philip Lorenz: Nikolai Lugansky 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. El pianista ruso Lugansky, un artista de extraordinaria profundidad y versatilidad, interpreta piezas de Mendelssohn, Schumann y Wagner. \$40

Chelo: El Adiós De Una Grande 7:30 p.m. Save Mart Center. "La Voz Ranchera de México" es una célebre cantante mexicana conocida por su rango vocal dinámico y profundidad emocional y sus contribuciones a la música tradicional mexicana. \$73+

Show: The Michael Jackson HIStory [Tributo] 8 p.m. William Saroyan Theatre. En esta producción teatral a gran escala, Garth Field es MJ con una banda en vivo, bailarines coreografiados, vestuario auténtico, sonido de última generación e iluminación teatral, visión y efectos especiales. \$55+

22

Fresno Filmworks: Cortometrajes Nominados al Oscar 2025 1 p.m. documentales, 4 p.m. animación, 7:30 p.m. acción en vivo. Fresno City College. \$25.31+

25

Taller: Producción de Estudio 4 p.m.-7:30 p.m. CMAC. Aprende los conceptos básicos de la grabación en el estudio

28

Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play (hasta marzo 8) 7:30 p.m. FCC Theater. En este futuro post-catastrófico donde la red eléctrica ha fallado, un grupo de sobrevivientes se reúne para reconstruir su mundo a través del acto de afirmar la vida de contar historias bajo las estrellas, durante el cual comienzan a contar el episodio de *Los Simpsons*, "Cape Feare". \$14.

La Importancia de Llamarse Ernesto (hasta abril 19). 2nd Space Theatre. La obra de Oscar Wilde sobre amigos fugaces e identidades falsas; farsa en su máxima expresión. \$29.49+

Colección de Arte Afroamericano Harmon & Harriet Kelley: Obras Sobre Papel (hasta el 29 de junio) De jueves a domingo, de 10 a. m. a 4 p. m., Fresno Art Museum. Las 65 obras de esta exposición datan de fines del siglo XIX hasta 2002 y representan solo una fracción de una de las principales colecciones de arte afroamericano del país.

Tony Natsoulas: Artist Heroes (hasta el 29 de junio) Jueves-Domingo, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Fresno Art Museum. Natsoulas, alumno del famoso ceramista y educador Robert Arneson, continúa el movimiento Funk Clay de la década de 1960 en el siglo XXI.

Pixels: Imágenes Como Mitología, Pinturas Contemporáneas de Michael Azgour (hasta el 29 de junio) Jueves-Domingo, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Fresno Art Museum. Esta exhibición explora las diversas formas en que se han utilizado las imágenes para contar historias a lo largo del tiempo.

Banda MS 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. La Banda MS, también conocida como Banda MS Sinaloa Sergio Lizarraga, se formó en 2003 y ha entretenido al público con su toque moderno de música tradicional mexicana basada en instrumentos de viento. \$105+

Tribute of a Down 8:30 p.m. Fulton 55. Homenaje a la legendaria banda System of a Down. \$29

Envía eventos relacionados con las artes a calendar@fresnoalliance.com antes del día 15 del mes previo a su evento, o puede publicar en cualquier momento en línea en fresnoalliance.com (seleccione Calendar).

ALIANZA COMUNITARIA

LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

Inmigración: Empiezan las Redadas Masivas de Indocumentados

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

La nueva administración estadounidense del presidente Donald Trump empieza a cumplir las promesas electorales del hoy presidente de deportar millones de indocumentados.

La obsesión contra los indocumentados y la inmigración en general es parte de un plan de "purificación racial". Trump ha nombrado en su gabinete a personas abiertamente racistas, como es el caso de Steven Miller quien en el primer gobierno de Trump (2016-2020) fue asesor presidencial y responsable de la decisión de separar a niños inmigrantes de sus familias detenidas al cruzar la frontera México-Estados Unidos.

Esta vez, Miller—ironicamente de origen judío—ocupará un puesto más importante en la administración Trump y es considerado el "cerebro" detrás del plan de deportaciones masivas, ya que, según él mismo dijo, Estados Unidos es solo para los estadounidenses—es decir, para los blancos.

El ataque contra los inmigrantes, especialmente de piel oscura, es parte del discurso constante de la derecha en todo el mundo. Durante el surgimiento del nazismo, en la Alemania de los 30s, el discurso anti-inmigrante y anti-judio precedió a los ataques y posterior asesinato masivo de judíos, gitanos, personas LGBT y opositores políticos, especialmente socialistas y comunistas.



Imagen de archivo de la detención de un inmigrante indocumentado. La nueva administración de EE.UU. inició sus planes de deportaciones masivas de indocumentados además de medidas adicionales para evitar la llegada de más personas al país.
Foto cortesía de The Commons

Hoy el gobierno de EE.UU. está implementando una política similar de odio y expulsión de extranjeros, especialmente indocumentados. Durante años—desde su primera campaña electoral de 2016—Trump insultó a los inmigrantes, especialmente mexicanos, y los acusó de ser violadores y sucios.

En su segunda campaña electoral de 2024, prometió deportaciones masivas en casi todos sus "rallies" para felicidad de sus seguidores y repitió sus insultos, además de acusar a los inmigrantes haitianos de comer las mascotas de los vecinos de Springfield, Ohio—algo completamente falso.

En otras palabras, Trump expresó abiertamente su rechazo a los inmigrantes y ahora quiere cumplir su promesa de deportarlos. Y para esto no solo dispone de su poder como presidente sino que además los Republicanos en el Congreso, con la complicidad de muchos diputados y senadores Demócratas, están implementando leyes para facilitar el arresto indefinido de inmigrantes que cometan delitos menores aún sin que se les haya comprobado su culpabilidad. Este es el caso de la llamada Acta Laken Riley (S5, presentado por la senadora Republicana Katie Boyd Britt, de Alabama, el 6 de enero de 2025), y que está a la firma del presidente para convertirse en ley.

Continúa en página 21

Manifestación Contra el Pesticida 1,3-D en Visalia

POR PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

Trabajadores agrícolas, líderes comunitarios y defensores del medio ambiente se reunieron en Visalia para protestar contra el uso del pesticida 1,3-dicloropropeno (1,3-D o Telone) y exigir protecciones regulatorias más fuertes del Departamento de Regulación de Pesticidas de California (DPR).

La manifestación, que se llevó a cabo afuera de una audiencia pública sobre las regulaciones propuestas para el químico, destacó el impacto desproporcionado de la exposición a pesticidas en las comunidades latinas e inmigrantes en el Valle de San Joaquín.

Organizado por Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) y otros grupos de justicia ambiental, el evento reunió voces de toda la región para pedir límites más estrictos al 1,3-D, un fumigante del suelo vinculado al cáncer, la enfermedad de Parkinson y otros problemas de salud graves.

El pesticida, comúnmente utilizado en cultivos como fresas, uvas, almendras y nueces, ha sido prohibido en 34 países y la mayor parte de Europa debido a sus peligros, pero sigue siendo ampliamente utilizado en California.

Un llamado a la justicia y a regulaciones basadas en la ciencia

Angel García, codirector de CPR, abrió la manifestación con una declaración contundente: "Estamos aquí como un acto de resistencia, un acto de oposición a la exposición al cáncer. Estamos aquí con familias, comunidades, aliados y organizaciones de diferentes partes del Valle de San Joaquín.

"Queremos que el estado escuche lo que preocupa a las comunidades. Queremos protección contra el pesticida 1,3-D en consonancia con lo que los expertos científicos del estado dicen que debería ser".

En 2022, la Oficina de Evaluación de Riesgos para la Salud Ambiental de California (OEHHA) emitió un umbral de advertencia de cáncer de por vida para el 1,3-D de 3,7 microgramos por día. Respirar aire contaminado con solo 0,04 partes por mil millones (ppb) de 1,3-D expone a los trabajadores agrícolas y las comunidades adyacentes a 3,7 microgramos por día.



Alma Beltran, alcaldesa de Parlier, habla a la concurrencia sobre los efectos del pesticida 1,3-D. La ciudad de Parlier registró los más altos niveles de 1,3-D en el aire. Foto cortesía de Alicia Acevedo

Dow Chemical, el fabricante de 1,3-D, argumentó ante la OEHHA que el nivel de riesgo no significativo para el 1,3-D debería ser de 50 microgramos por día, el equivalente a respirar aire concentrado con 0,56 ppb de 1,3-D. Dow Chemical es la misma empresa que produjo en masa el fumigante cancerígeno Agente Naranja durante la Guerra de Vietnam.

Una de las oradoras dijo que perdió a dos miembros de su familia por culpa de los productos químicos de Dow. Su madre perdió la vida debido a los pesticidas mientras trabajaba en los campos y su hermano fue víctima del Agente Naranja mientras luchaba en Vietnam.

Corporaciones químicas como Dow Chemical han estado destruyendo familias durante generaciones.

Continúa en página 22