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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

THE VOICE OF THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT SINCE 1996



EN ESPAÑOL
PÁGINAS 18–20

Rapid Response Squad Helps Immigrants

BY VIC BEDOIAN

"The work that we do here is mutual aid and rapid response." —Mark Godfree
"Seeing grown men weeping hard is overwhelming. But seeing young boys, to see them coming out, they could be my nephews, they could be my grandchildren." —Monica Butterfly



ICE headquarters at 733 L St. in Fresno. *Photo by Peter Maiden*

Nearly every day, four or five volunteers show up at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office in Fresno to give aid and assistance to immigrants who are released from detention onto L Street. For some, it is the only help available to people who find themselves in a strange place with little or no resources. If they are lucky, they will be greeted by a volunteer with a helping hand.

The Fresno headquarters of ICE is a large, gray brick building downtown. Human beings from the world over are processed here. Some are summoned and show up voluntarily. Others are brought here in white vans and swallowed into the imposing structure. After questioning by immigration officials, they either end up in a detention camp or back on the street. That's where Mark Godfree and Monica Butterfly come in. They're here six mornings a week to provide help for those who are released and are trying to find their way back home.

Mark and Monica are part of a small crew of locals dedicated to providing some comfort and practical assistance to immigrants who find themselves on the street in a strange place. A complete unknown with no direction home, as the song goes. Most are traumatized by what they've experienced. During this particular outreach effort, they share the street with a vigil sponsored by Faith in the Valley, whose members offer prayers and bear witness to the suffering of fellow humans.

Mark describes what happens when they encounter immigrants as they leave the ICE building. He's wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the message "We Are Here to Help" in numerous languages. "The first thing we do is, is we greet them and try to get them to recognize us as friendlies, right? That we're here to help. And that's, this shirt is part of that. And then we try to determine what language they speak so we know who in our group... And basically, we're only really equipped to handle English and Spanish." He adds that they meet people speaking many other languages whom they try their best to assist.

ICE releases people into the city with a few belongings in the kind of red plastic net bag you might get at a market holding onions or oranges. Volunteers like Mark and Monica offer them backpacks filled with some clothing and personal care items. It's an out-of-pocket contribution by those doing the work. One of the ways they provide aid is the Backpack Project. Monica says it helps restore a measure of dignity.

Continues on page 4

The Villegas Campaign is on a Roll

BY PETER MAIDEN

Randy Villegas is better educated than the average congressional candidate. He has a PhD in Politics with an emphasis on Latin American and Latino Studies from the University of California Santa Cruz.

He teaches at the Tulare and Hanford campuses of College of the Sequoias and stays busy working at his car repair shop, a small business he owns in Bakersfield.

Villegas, who is 31 years old, is the first generation in his family to go to college. His parents, who did not finish high school, are preparing for the GED exam.

Talking with a couple of volunteers in his new Bakersfield office, Villegas said his parents wanted to go out to an event the previous week, but he told them, "No, you should stay home and do your schoolwork!"

"I flipped the script," he said, smiling.

A Progressive Campaign

Villegas is running an innovative campaign for Congress in District 22, which was redrawn by Proposition 50, making it more likely to go to a Democratic candidate. It includes areas of Kern, Kings, Tulare, Madera and Fresno counties. His office was a hive of activity when it opened on September 11.

His opponent, incumbent Republican David Valadao, has returned to office several times. Valadao is of Portuguese background and comes from a family of dairy farmers. In June, Villegas beat Jasmeet Bains, a more conservative Democrati Primary challenger.

His campaign has received national attention, as it is considered key to a Democratic re-taking of the House. He has been endorsed by Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Latino Voters Distancing Themselves from Republican Party

An Associated Press-NORC poll says between March of 2025 and July of 2026 Latino support for Trump nationwide dropped 18% compared to 9% among other groups.

AP-NORC reported that as of early September, Villegas is ahead of Valadao by four percentage points.

However, he isn't letting the early successes go to his head. "I tell folks I'm always running like we're 15 to 20 points down and I need to work twice as hard because we can't take anything for granted in this race or in this district," he said in the interview.

"I'm grateful for the support that we have seen and the fact that we overcame so much in the primary, even having to beat the establishment within our own party."

Villegas advertises he does not take corporate money; he depends on small dollar

Continues on page 4



Randy Villegas in his campaign headquarters in Bakersfield. *Photo by Peter Maiden*

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From the Editor



Dear readers,
Turn these pages and you will find the same story told six ways. County supervisors want more guns in county buildings and fewer books in county libraries. A grassroots group of community volunteers meet people on L Street where they have been displaced and released into a city they've never been. A Central Valley congressional incumbent voted to strip $880 billion from Medicaid. McClatchy cut the reporters who would have told you: this is an attack on our rights. Not one blow but a steady narrowing of what we can read, where we can walk, who gets care and what we are allowed to know. You'll read in the Measure S article that when supervisors refused to let voters decide how their own sales tax is spent, ordinary people gathered 32,000 signatures, survived a delay tactic and a lawsuit and still got it put on the ballot. Power was not handed to them, they took it.
November 3 matters. Vote. Bring everyone you can. After that, show up to a county board meeting, union hall, the library, the corner where the vigil stands… a ballot is a single instrument, and the people shrinking our lives work every other day of the year.
Thirty years in, this paper still believes the Central Valley is where the country turns. Here, change has never arrived as lightning. It looks like a folding table on a hot sidewalk, a neighbor silent last spring now standing at the microphone. Nothing supernatural—only ordinary people becoming. Prove us right. Solidarity as always.

Enrique Little, Editor

Letter to the Editor

Good Guy Mike Rhodes

I was at the National Women's Political Caucus luncheon on September 12 where longtime *Community Alliance* editor and activist Mike Rhodes was honored with the "Good Guy" award. Later, when I opened my September issue of the newspaper, there Mike was along with a history and photos of his early work. Over the years, his work has centered on the unhoused, tenants'rights, feeding the hungry, gun and domestic violence, ICE concentration camps, the threat of AI to our water, air and jobs—it is hard to find a pressing issue that Mike has not touched. His daughter, Simone Rhodes-Whalen accepted the award on behalf of her father who was unable to attend. True to his spirit, she asked us all in attendance to peacefully act.
Thank you, to the extraordinary Mike Rhodes.

Patricia Brown



Left to right: Mike Karbassi, Ariana Martinez Lott, Enrique Little, Linda Tubach, Bob McCloskey, Simone Cranston-Rhodes, Dee Barnes, Genoveva Islas, David Rowell and Jeni Kern

30th Anniversary Reception & Fundraiser



Above: *Photo by Arthur Robinson*
Below: *Photo by Peter Maiden*
For more photos of the event, please see page 19



On the evening of September 19, several dozen community members gathered downtown at the Law Office of Kevin G. Little to celebrate the 30 year anniversary of the *Community Alliance* newspaper.
The crowd reflected the multicultural diversity of Fresno and was intergenerational. Folks in attendance ranged from having been around since the paper's inception to members of Gen Alpha, a group of adolescents inspired by their parents' lifelong dedication to social justice work.
Speakers included community members and activists working in education, immigration, pesticide reform, police accountability, housing issues and more. Throughout the evening and into the night, critical conversations were had, laughs echoed into the slight breeze and tears were shed.
Co-founder and longtime editor Mike Rhodes was unable to attend the event due to ongoing health issues related to cancer, a diagnosis he received nine years ago and that he has been publicly open about. The hosts ended the evening by playing a pre-recorded message from Rhodes for the crowd.
After final counts, the fundraiser brought in $2,944 with several people doubling their donation with the encouragement of former *Community Alliance* Spanish editor Lourdes Oliva.
Kevin Little, local civil rights attorney with 35 years of practice centering principles of "integrity, advocacy and fearless representation," and father of the newspaper's Editor Enrique Little, offered to host the fundraiser after the announcement in the August Special Edition declared the paper is experiencing a financial crisis and needs community support.
"It is the community that has gotten us through the hard times over the past three decades," shared co-founder and board president Pam Whalen.
If you'd like to support the newspaper, please visit fresnoalliance.com/support to sign up to become a monthly sustainer or to make a one time donation. To donate via mail, please send cash or check to:
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2026 Primary Elections

Summer Elections
Democratic Socialist
Forecast The Future

—Homer Gee Greene Jr.

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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Rapid Response

Continued from page 1

"That project was started by another couple escorting one of the men back to his family," Monica explains. "They met halfway between here and Los Angeles. And she was very troubled when he got off to see his wife and children to be dressed in that fashion and carrying that red bag. And she just was so distraught. And she says, 'We've stripped them of all their dignity. What can we do to give that back?'"

Clean clothing and decent shoes are an important part of the provisions that immigrants are given. Mark gestures to a nearby thrift store where people are taken to get regular street clothes. "Because they come out in the grays and basically they look like someone who's been in jail. So, we offer them a change of clothing, which helps them begin to feel a little more human. They're dressed normally like a regular human being. And it's clean because they smell when they come out, because they (ICE) don't give them a lot of showers. And occasionally some of them will come in for a check-in and they won't come out. And of those people, I would say 100% are deported."

Mark points out that individuals ICE puts on the street have another critical need: a way to contact family and friends and navigate their way home. "Communication. We can let them call their family using our cell phones. And we also have an agency in town that's buying cell phones for us." Volunteers also provide transportation to places where released detainees can meet with their family, or to the airport, train station or bus depot. If needed, they buy the individual a ticket for travel.

The ICE office has no set schedule and releases detainees at any time of day or night. So there are times when nobody is there to offer help and guidance. Monica worries that a lot of released immigrants in need of assistance are falling through the cracks.

"Because we're such a small group of volunteers and we direly need people to help, especially those with a multiple language skill set. We're only here in the morning because if it gets too hot, even we can't tolerate the heat. Or we're exhausted, right? So, we go home by 11, 12, 1 o'clock and we're done for the day. We don't have enough people to be able to be here from 3 to 5 p.m."

Mark says they rarely interact with ICE officials. But he says that one immigration officer indicated he disagreed with the policy of random releases and wished to coordinate the timing of releases so that volunteers could be there at the right times to help people. There are other signs that the Trump administration's policy of inflicting intentional cruelty on those who have been captured is not embraced by all the people working in the system.

"When I've talked to the transportation guards, who are contractors, not ICE. They're very clear. They want you to know the job is just to move people." Mark relates how one of the transportation guards distanced himself from the abusive actions of some ICE officers. "You know, all of that cruelty and stuff, that's not me. That's ICE. I want you to know that I do some paperwork and I bring them here and take them back, and that's my involvement."

Monica describes the daily scene of chaos in front of the ICE headquarters. Signup tables for those summoned for an interview are set up on the sidewalk. There's no shade to blunt the often triple-digit heat, no cover should it rain, no chairs for the infirm and not nearly enough room.

"These people are crowded 30, 40 in a line waiting for their names to be called. You see the, the sidewalk is not that wide. So where do they go? They spill onto the road. So, why isn't the city intervening is my question. Why isn't the county, the Department of Health? This is a public health hazard, a public health issue."

Neither the city of Fresno nor the county has offered any help, and both have a policy of not interfering with federal government operations. That leaves the task of caring for those caught up in the brutal deportation system to people like Mark Godfree, Monica Butterfly and their colleagues. Their service to humanity may be little noticed, but it will be long remembered by those they have helped.

*****

Vic Bedoian is a freelance journalist in the San Joaquin Valley who works primarily in radio news.

Villegas

Continued from page 1

donations from supporters. His campaign volunteers go door to door and are "people who
are willing to sacrifice their sweat and their sunscreen and triple digit heat for a campaign and a vision and a platform to believe in."

"I call myself a populist," Villegas said, "because the campaign that we are running and the ideas that we are running are really popular across the political spectrum.

"I've talked to Republicans at the doors who agree with me that we shouldn't be spending roughly a billion dollars a day on this war in Iran that nobody asked for, who agree that we should ban members of Congress from trading stocks and we should ban private equity from buying single family homes.

"And I think that's why we have the support of not just Democrats and progressives, we have the endorsement of a local Republican mayor, which I think says a lot about this fight not being about left versus right or an ideological fight.

"It's really 'us versus them.' [We are] working families in the Central Valley who've been left behind by politicians in both parties who would rather cater to corporate interests and billionaires."

One of the biggest differences between the Villegas and Valadao campaigns is that Villegas' messaging tackles real issues.

For example, on his website, Villegasforcongress.com, he stakes out clear positions on areas from cost of living to immigration to artificial intelligence.

As a MAGA Republican, Valadao's campaign has had to be more opaque (ValadaoforCongress.com). Villegas invited Valadao to debates in the Fresno and Bakersfield media, as well as in Spanish local media, and Valadao did not respond. Then on September 21 Villegas posted on Instagram that Valadao finally decided to debate him on Bakersfield's KGET on October 6.

Hot Button Issues: Flock and Data Centers

Villegas offered his opinions about two hot-button tech issues in the Central Valley: the installation of Flock surveillance cameras on the streets and the building of data centers.

"I am opposed to Flock," he said. "I think [their system] is a violation of our civil liberties. I have a lot of concerns about where this data is being stored and who has access to it, whether it be government agencies or individuals who are using this data for nefarious purposes. I believe strongly in our civil liberties and we have the right to privacy laid out in our constitution."

In response to his thoughts on the possibility of data centers being built in the Central Valley, he said, "We can have strong guardrails when it comes to data centers. We can ensure that any increase in terms of electricity or utilities is paid for by big tech and not passed on to our working families here in the Central Valley.

"We need to ensure that there are actual regulations in terms of potable water that's used for these data centers. I mean, we have communities here in the Central Valley that don't have access to safe, affordable and clean drinking water.

"There are a lot of good union jobs for our brothers and sisters in the trades when it comes to data centers, but people in the Central Valley should be able to make the decisions, not billionaires in Silicon Valley or 'data center David,' who continues to stay silent on these issues."

It All Comes Down to November 3

Valadao voted in favor of the "Big, Beautiful Bill," which stripped $880 billion in funding for Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California), in order to put into place tax cuts for the oligarchy.

The AP reported that Democrats estimate 57,000 constituents in District 22 will stand to lose their medical coverage when the bill goes into effect later this year. Few other areas of the country would be so impacted. Valadao only said to the AP that this projection is "overstated."

Villegas said if and when the Democrats take back the House and Senate, the cuts to Medicaid could be reversed. That spells a clear advantage to the Villegas campaign among voters in his district. It all comes down to the results on November 3.

*****

Peter Maiden is photo editor and a writer for Community Alliance. Contact him at maidenfoto1@gmail.com

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Keep Libraries Public!

BY SHANNON WISE

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors was expected to review a report on library privatization from County Administrative Officer Paul Nerland on October 20. Supervisor Garry Bredefeld asked for the report toward the end of a board meeting on June 2, where the board addressed a budgetary shortfall of about $300 million.
However, at the September 22 Board of Supervisors meeting, Nerland was directed to instead send the information to the officers as a Board Briefing Report that will be available to the public online.

FCPL: More than Just Books

The FCPL was founded34 when the first branch opened on February 1, 1892. There are currently 34 branches, including those in small communities like Kerman, Kingsburg, Yokuts Valley, Shaver Lake, Riverdale and Orange Cove.

In many of these small communities, the library offers essential services community members would not be able to obtain otherwise. For example, in Orange Cove and Riverdale, there is no Fed Ex Office, so if you need to run copies of your small restaurant's menus or print your resume, the library is the only place available to do that.

Libraries are able to provide these services, among others, through Measure B, which is an eighth of a cent sales tax. The measure was overwhelmingly approved by Fresno County voters. Libraries also receive part of the property tax residents pay. Between those two taxes, 97% of the library's budget is funded.

These taxes also help pay for library staff, extended hours and capital improvements, like the remodeling of the Selma and Sanger branches. They have made new branches in Clovis and Reedley possible, paid for the Fig Garden expansion and are paying for the Leo Politi branch to move to a much larger location that is long overdue for that community.

Libraries give more to the community than just books. Here are some examples of free services and loan items they provide beyond physical books: audio books, online streaming of television shows and movies, California State Parks passes, seed libraries and telescope lending. The genealogy and local history library and a veteran's resource center are also part of the county library system

Many of the branches also offer classes and shows for people of all ages, including jazz performances, the bubble man, fossil presentations, story time, yoga, crochet classes and other arts and crafts.

Additionally, the San Joaquin Valley Library System (SJVLS) is a consortium of libraries from Merced to Kern Counties. The network of libraries shares their collections, so if you request a book that is not available in Fresno County but is in Tulare County, the book can be shipped to you, free of charge.

The heavy lifting of SJVLS—transporting books and internet maintenance—are handled by Fresno County. This service plays an exceptionally vital role in how our libraries operate together in these counties.

FCPL: Bredefeld's Scapegoat for the Budgetary Shortfall

Bredefeld is misleading the community when he says that the FCPL is going to be the source of the county's looming budgetary shortfall.

In reality, the shortfall is coming from implementation of the current federal administration's "Big Beautiful Bill," which aims to drastically cut public services.

For example, 25 percent of the general fund is allocated to "justice services," which includes the courts and the sheriff's department. Additionally, 63 percent of the county's human services budget (social workers, benefits workers and more.) comes from the general fund and from funding from the federal government.

While library funding isn't affected by the Big Beautiful Bill, they are the first target for Bredefeld.

The Library System Under Privatization

Maryland-based Libraries Systems and Services (LSS) is the primary, for-profit company that runs libraries. So how does LSS turn a public service into a profit-motivated industry?

The first thing LSS will do if they receive a contract from Fresno County is fire all of the current library staff. They must reapply for their jobs, usually at lower rate of pay and with inferior benefits (if they give you enough hours to receive benefits) or leave.

The second thing LSS will do is diminish the collections. They will order books from New York Times bestseller lists and on the shelves of Barnes and Noble, but they will stop ordering books that aren't popular.

They will stop ordering collections in languages that are not English. For example, in Jackson County, Oregon, LSS stopped ordering Spanish language books. The San Joaquin Valley has a large non-English-speaking population—monolingual Spanish, Hindi, Punjabi and Hmong speakers are among the most populous. The library will no longer order books for these members of our community.

Third, programming will all but disappear or LSS will approach the Friends of the Fresno County Public Library (FOL) to pay for programming.

The purpose of the FOL is to support libraries by

purchasing supplies and paying for programming that is not in the library's budget. With LSS, there will be no budget for programming and responsibility will fall on the FOL, a non-profit with already limited resources.

Finally, interlibrary loan system will disappear. This doesn't just affect Fresno County, it affects every county between Merced and Kern. The service will stop because the vehicles are driven by Fresno County employees, and LSS won't spend money to keep it operable.

Conclusion

The government exists to serve us, not the other way around. Privatizing a service that was never meant to turn a profit is a fiscally unsound idea. Additionally, there are countless legal questions Bredefeld and the board have not asked that need to be answered.

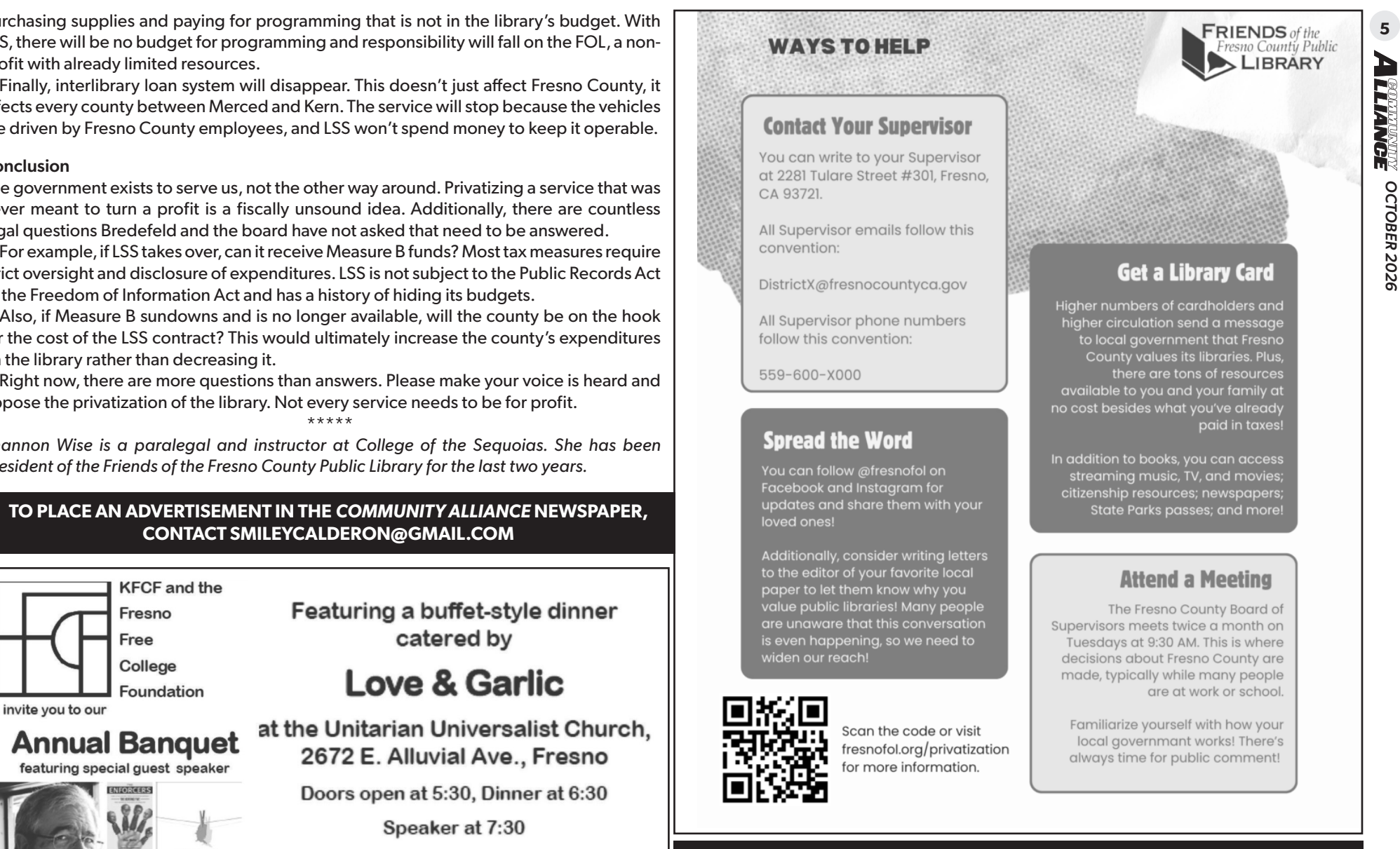
For example, if LSS takes over, can it receive Measure B funds? Most tax measures require strict oversight and disclosure of expenditures. LSS is not subject to the Public Records Act or the Freedom of Information Act and has a history of hiding its budgets.

Also, if Measure B sundowns and is no longer available, will the county be on the hook for the cost of the LSS contract? This would ultimately increase the county's expenditures on the library rather than decreasing it.

Right now, there are more questions than answers. Please make your voice is heard and oppose the privatization of the library. Not every service needs to be for profit.

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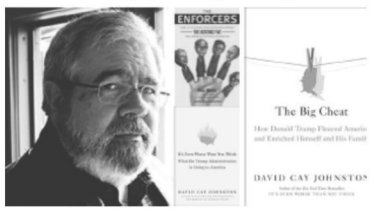
Shannon Wise is a paralegal and instructor at College of the Sequoias. She has been president of the Friends of the Fresno County Public Library for the last two years.



Call to Action! Make your voice heard! Above are some ways to support our library system. For more information and to get involved with this effort, scan the QR code or visit the website fresnofol.org/privatization

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Housing and Homelessness: Q&A with Council Candidate Dr. joaquín Arambula

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

The *Alliance* recently sent out a questionnaire on housing and homelessness to all 2026 Fresno City Council candidates; Robert Fuentes and Naindeep Singh in District 1, joaquín Arambula and Keshia Thomas in District 3 and Nav Gurm and Ariana Martinez Lott in District 7.

We received one response, from current District 31 assemblymember and District 3 candidate Dr. joaquín Arambula.

Dr. Joquin Arambula's on Housing and Homelessness

Alliance: On the availability of affordable housing, 46 percent of U.S. renter households are cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent. Nearly one-quarter are severely cost-burdened and pay at least half their income on rent. In Fresno, many renters pay more than half of their monthly income on rent. The lack of supply, especially for those with the lowest incomes, has only made this problem worse. What would you do to encourage the production of more affordable housing in Fresno? Do you support rent stabilization (rent control)? Will you support further funding for eviction protection? Will you support funding for rental assistance?

Dr. Arambula: Fresno's affordability crisis requires both more housing and stronger renter protections. Building enough housing takes years even when everything goes right, so renters need relief now.

Production — build affordable housing faster and at lower cost. I will push to streamline density bonus and ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) approvals and expand incentives so affordable and mixed-income projects clear permitting faster. I will also push to streamline permitting approvals at City Hall, to reduce the time and cost of producing new units. I would look into dedicating ongoing city housing funds to leverage Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Fresno's own housing strategy shows what's possible when the city puts real money behind production.

Eviction protection funding — Very few Fresno tenants facing eviction have lawyers, while most landlords do. I support continued funding of advice and legal assistance so tenants' ability to remain housed does not depend on their income.

The lack of affordable housing is a huge problem for many households in Fresno. Families are paying too much of their scarce income for housing. I would encourage the production of more affordable housing in our city, especially in my district.

Alliance: On mobility and discrimination, many low-income families face barriers to moving to high-opportunity areas, including discrimination based on source of income and lack of access to housing assistance. What actions would you take to encourage mobility and stop the sources of income discrimination?

Dr. Arambula: I oppose discrimination and believe everyone should have access to high-opportunity areas. We must also improve Fresno's urban core so residents need not leave for better schools or safer streets.

Source of Income Discrimination—In 2020, I supported SB 329, which bars landlords from rejecting tenants who use housing vouchers or other public rental assistance. I would urge the Fair Housing Council of the San joaquín Valley to routinely test local listings for "No Section 8" discrimination and refer confirmed violations to the state Civil Rights Department.

Build on Voucher Incentive Program—Fresno Housing reports that landlord signing incentives, damage-repair funds and vacancy-loss payments significantly increased the number of voucher holders who were able to find housing. We should consider permanently funding these incentives, especially in higher-opportunity neighborhoods where voucher acceptance is lowest.

Use City land-use tools to open opportunity areas, not just subsidize access—Through zoning, density bonuses and affordable housing requirements, I will prioritize siting a meaningful share of new affordable and voucher-accepting units in higher-resource areas of Fresno, rather than concentrating them in high-poverty districts — so mobility isn't solely the individual burden of a family finding a willing landlord

Alliance: On achieving racial equity, because of centuries of structural racism and ongoing discrimination in the housing market, people of color are far more likely than white Americans to face evictions and experience homelessness in the United States today. This is especially true in Fresno, where the Black population is 6.8 per cent of the population, yet, are 15 per cent of the homeless population. What is your plan to remedy these injustices and promote housing stability for communities of color?

Dr. Arambula: I will actively seek enforcement of all laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination. I am aware of past injustices, as well as redlining and prohibitions on owning homes in certain neighborhoods. I am committed to support efforts to provide a level playing field for everyone, regardless of language, religion or ethnicity.

Alliance: On homelessness, on any given night, more than 3,000 people are experiencing homelessness in Fresno, sleeping outside or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. What will you do to end homelessness?

Do you support a housing first approach? Do you support the concept and construction of tiny home villages?

Will you exert pressure on Fresno County officials to expand and improve mental health and drug rehabilitation treatment programs for those experiencing homelessness?

Do you support interim solutions such as the establishment of safe camps and safe lots?

Will you support ending the criminalization of those experiencing homelessness by ending the No Camping Ordinance? Do you recognize that this ordinance has caused immense suffering, is discriminatory, is very costly to enforce and has been a total failure in reducing homelessness?

Dr. Arambula: Fresno's homelessness crisis combines housing shortages, inadequate treatment capacity and years of policy drift. On tiny home villages and safe camps/safe lots. I support both. Poverello House's 30-unit Village of Hope, built in partnership with the City, shows the model's promise. I will seek city land and gap funding to expand this model. I also support managed safe camps and lots with sanitation, security and case management as interim options for people not ready for shelters.

Pressuring the county for mental health and treatment capacity— I will use public pressure, joint city-county coordination and state and federal advocacy to push the County to close treatment gaps despite budget cuts. I will also support expanding programs such as the state-funded Behavioral Bridge Housing Program for people with mental illness or substance use disorders.

On the No Camping Ordinance — I support reform, not repeal. The ordinance, in effect since September 2024, bans sitting, lying, sleeping, or camping in public spaces and allows fines up to $1,000 and misdemeanor charges for repeat refusal. I understand why residents and businesses pushed for it — encampments create real health and safety concerns, but ongoing federal litigation and a dismissed enforcement case raise constitutional and procedural issues. I support limiting enforcement to sensitive areas, including schools, active neighborhood parks and urban-core businesses with documented safety or sanitation hazards—not blanket sweeps.

Alliance: On legislative and regulatory changes to federal housing programs, severe funding reductions by the Trump administration to federally assisted housing programs have been introduced and will soon be implemented. Section 8 housing vouchers will be reduced by as much as 50 per cent. Many Section 8 renters could become homeless. Would you support local funding to supplement federally assisted housing programs that serve low-income households?

Dr. Arambula: I will urge our state and federal representatives to oppose these funding cuts. I will also closely review the City's budget for resources to expand the supply of new affordable housing units and upgrade existing units, to give low-income residents more options.

For eight years, I chaired the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, where I was responsible for overseeing funds spent to provide health care and social services for California residents. I dedicated significant time and effort to thoroughly understanding each program and its budget, collaborating closely with staff to better address the real needs of the people these programs are designed to serve. I commit to carefully reviewing the City of Fresno's budget to ensure our tax dollars are used wisely and to find resources available to expand and improve our housing stock.

Alliance: On preservation of affordable housing, the preservation of existing affordable housing, including public housing and developments receiving project-based rental assistance, is a critical and cost-effective component



Dr. Joaquín Arambula. *Photo by Bob McCloskey*

in addressing the housing crisis. Due to chronic under funding, there is a backlog in deferred maintenance for public and rental assisted housing. Low income Fresno renters are being impacted because of the lack of maintenance updates for public housing developments, as well as developments receiving project-based rental assistance. What would be your plan to preserve and maintain existing affordable public housing?

Dr. Arambula: Preserving public housing and Section 8-assisted units is essential. Because HUD, not city code enforcement, inspects public housing, I would seek to allow City inspections when renters document unresolved patterns or serious violations. If a repeat violator also operates subsidized units, I would support directing Code Enforcement to coordinate with HUD and Fresno Housing so documented health and safety violations affect future contract renewals and new allocations — repeat violators shouldn't get first crack at public subsidy dollars.

Strengthen code enforcement accountability for repeat violators—Too many families live in unsafe, substandard rentals. I want to strengthen city code enforcement accountability for repeat violators. Fresno already has the legal tools; I will ensure they are funded and enforced. The Anti-Slum Enforcement Team (ASET) can pursue major offenders through fines, cost recovery, attorney fees and receivership, but these penalties are inconsistently applied. Landlords with ten or more citations across ten or more properties in a year should not be allowed to treat routine $250 fines as a cheaper alternative to fixing dangerous conditions. I would:

- Direct the City Manager's Office to publicly report ASET case outcomes on a fixed schedule so residents and tenant advocates can see which repeat offenders are actually being brought into compliance, not just cited.
- Provide enough City Attorney staffing to defend ASET citations on appeal and prevent technical errors from undermining enforcement. Everyone deserves a safe, habitable, affordable home.

This concludes the answers from Dr. Arambula to the questionnaire from the Alliance.

*****

Bob McCloskey is an activist and Alliance reporter bobmccloskey06@gmail.com



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Who Loves Guns and Hates Libraries? Fresno's Board of Supervisors

BY RACHEL YOUDELMAN



District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp addresses the Board. *Screenshot from meeting livestream.*

Board Advances Arming of Even More County Employees

At its September 8 meeting, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the first reading of an amendment to the county ordinance code that would let the district attorney authorize prosecutors and special investigators in her office to carry concealed guns on county property.

The ordinance was brought forward by Chair Garry Bredefeld (District 2), Sheriff John Zanoni, District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp and Supervisor Nathan Magsig (District 5), giving the impression that together they form a tough law-and-order flank. Smittcamp was present to speak about the ordinance, which was triggered by an August 20 incident in which a prosecutor was stabbed in Courthouse Park by a former defendant.

The decision follows a June expansion of a November 2020 "concealed-carry weapon" policy, which allows sitting members of the Board and their staff to carry guns on the job. This vote expanded that permission to the county administrative officer (CAO), county counsel—and, with the CAO's permission, any other county employee. It was unclear why yet another guns-on-the-job amendment was needed.

Bredefeld described the stabbing incident, shrugging often as he spoke, as though to indicate that the new ordinance was necessary, long overdue, obvious and inevitable.

Smittcamp, noting that the injured prosecutor had recovered and returned to work, admitted that her office was "still developing a policy" regarding guns and workplace safety. If workers carry weapons, they must be trained, she said, raising questions about why such a training and safety policy had not been developed before determining that more employees should be authorized to carry guns.

Smittcamp spoke animatedly and at length about threats and harassment she herself has experienced and about California state policies to which she objected, such as the mental-health diversion law (Penal Code Section 1001.36), a pretrial program that allows eligible people who have qualifying mental-health disorders to receive treatment rather than go to trial or serve jail time.

Smittcamp complained that "people who commit attempted murder are eligible for mental-health diversion" based on a court order, calling it a "state issue" and implying that legal solutions were beyond the county's jurisdiction. She cited a particular offender, an attorney whose wife is a doctor, who she said often threatens her. Other recent threats, she noted, came from someone she called a "beautiful criminology major" at Fresno State who has expressed opposition to prosecutors carrying guns. "We cannot rely on the criminal justice system that we are a part of to protect us," Smittcamp said, appearing to make the case for arming her staff based on state laws she doesn't like or to which she is ideologically opposed.

However, Smittcamp did not mention that the mental-health diversion law has recently been reformed: Assembly Bill 46, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in June 2026 and taking effect in January 2027, changes the current law by requiring defendants to prove that their qualifying diagnosis was made within five years before the alleged offense, to prevent opportunists from getting a new diagnosis for the purpose of evading criminal charges.

Zanoni said that the demand for concealed-carry gun permission "keeps growing." He described monthly "mass trainings" of 200 people at the sheriff's range.

He, too, said that "we need a policy," adding for emphasis, "training, training, proficiency, proficiency." Again, these disclosures gave the impression that the ordinance was being rushed through without detailed provisions for training and safety protocols.

Though Zanoni repeated the false claim that the increased presence of guns "will deter incidents," he also brought up the county's potential liability in case of "accidents" but offered no details, raising yet another concern about the prematurity of the ordinance.

Magsig made bold to say that "we will not tolerate crime" and that "we're very supportive" of those "exercising their Second Amendment rights."

Supervisor Luis Chavez (District 3), appearing to question the need for the ordinance change but framing his question in a diffident manner, asked Smittcamp if there was "anything else we can do to make sure our folks are safe," to which she replied that arming her staff with deadly weapons was "just one step."

She mentioned the need to "increase security staff" in the courthouse, which she noted would require more funding, and added that staff must apply to her, as head of the department, for the gun permit.

As these remarks wound down, Bredefeld was heard clearing his throat as though plotzing to speak. He began by lamenting the state government, as he often does: "We live in a society here in California" without a "real justice system."

In a "real" one, there would be no mental-health diversion program, and those such as the man who harassed Smittcamp "would be in prison." He reasoned that "police can't be everywhere," implying that ordinary citizens have no choice but to take up the slack by packing pistols. "We believe in the Second Amendment," he said, quipping with a snicker that "an armed society is a 'polite' society."

There were no public comments on the item.

Bredefeld Ascends Soapbox

Bredefeld used the section of the meeting when supes discuss committee work or goings-on in their districts to grandstand about the upcoming anniversary of 9/11 as well as that of the murder of right-wing activist Charlie Kirk, who died by gun violence on September 10 last year. Bredefeld read from a written statement, complete with syntactical oddities and full of references to his many bugaboos.

He dispatched his September 11 speech with stock statements about heroic first responders, noting that America was in an "ongoing war against evil and terrorism," adding "God bless America, the greatest country on earth," before pivoting to his more emotionally charged speech about Kirk, which he framed in terms of an urgent moral battle. He called Kirk "brilliant" for "going into the lion's den" of college campuses to conduct "debates" about culture-war issues. Kirk opposed "woke ideology," "genital mutilation" (an allusion to gender-affirming care) and other things Bredefeld hates and often invokes, even when not the subject at hand. Kirk, posited Bredefeld, "was murdered for speaking the truth," hyperbolically framing the right-wing provocateur as a martyr. Now Kirk was "in the arms of Jesus," according to Bredefeld.

No remarks from Chavez, Buddy Mendes (District 4) or Brian Pacheco (District 1). Pacheco was conspicuously silent throughout the meeting. While he has often said that he speaks only when necessary, by remaining silent, he implicitly permits other voices and opinions to dominate, and observers may have the impression that he is disengaged.

Public Comment: Library Privatization?

Four library employees, union members wearing "Keep Libraries Public" T-shirts, were present to speak against the threat of privatization of the county library, in reaction to Bredefeld's recent request to CAO Paul Nerland for a report on the feasibility of privatization.

Union representative Riley Talford, also in a "Keep Libraries Public" T-shirt, said he was present in support of the library's union employees.

Bredefeld suggested privatizing the library because he objected to the inclusion of gay-themed young-adult books in its collection. Critics and observers say that Bredefeld has not otherwise been successful at banning such books and sees privatization as a sure means of doing so. Nerland has not said when the requested report would be available, but local activists and library supporters have been organized and outspoken in opposing any attempt at privatization.

*****

Rachel Youdelman is a former photography editor and lives in Clovis. She attended UC Berkeley, CalArts and Harvard University. Contact her at rachel27@berkeley.edu.

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Research Before Voting for Fresno Democratic Party Endorsed Candidates

BY DEE BARNES

On September 2, the Fresno County Democratic Central Committee (FCDCC) held its endorsement vote for 15 local races including city councils and school boards throughout the county.

Nine candidates received the FCDCC endorsement during votes taken early in the meeting when most of the members or their alternates were in attendance either in person or via Zoom.

But late into the night, just before the meeting adjourned and when most of the attendees had already left the meeting, Nelson Esparza, Fresno's District seven city councilmember, moved to reconsider the vote on one of the State Center Community College District (SCCCD) races.

The motion drew a negative response from several members. The FCDCC chair, Ruben Zarate, ruled that the body would not reconsider the endorsement. Esparza then moved to overrule the chair and his motion passed.

A new vote was taken and the candidate favored by Esparza ultimately received the endorsement. This was not the will of the body as a whole, but the will of those remaining at the very end of the meeting.

"How did we get here?"

Ahead of the March 2024 primary election, city councilmembers Esparza, Annalisa Perea and Tyler Maxwell each contributed $4,900 from their city council campaign accounts to fund New Horizons Political Action Committee to help elect friends and loyalists to the FCDCC.

To put that in perspective, typically the average candidate for the FCDCC spends anywhere from zero to $500 on their campaign.

The PAC helped elect Esparza, his partner Sandra Garcia and eight associates. The new members and their alternates (assigned to vote on their behalf when absent) combined with existing allies on the FCDCC has allowed Esparza to serve as kingmaker within the body.

Esparza has largely exercised that influence in the endorsement process and to get his people appointed as chairs to key standing committees, like the Candidate Development & Recruitment Committee, which oversees the endorsement process.

Esparza has also been actively involved in the Youth Save Democracy (YSD) PAC, and his personal consulting firm is one of six local consulting businesses benefiting financially from the YSD PAC.

The large amounts of capital raised with the promise of turning red districts blue, have largely been used to benefit friends and candidates supported by YSD co-founder and Fresno city council candidate Nav Gurm and Esparza—both of which have received large consulting fees and campaign donations.

The Fresno Bee published several pieces on the YSD PAC, exposing its questionable practices, especially in local politics.

According to The Bee, Youth Save Democracy spent $1.45 million of its $1.74 million total expenditure to pay for political consultants, texting software, legal compliance, fundraising and website software and more between January 2025 and March 2026.

Moreover, Gurm and Esparza were the driving force behind the decision to ban the *Community Alliance* newspaper from the Fresno County Democratic Party Headquarters and discontinue the FCDCC sponsored page in the newspaper because they disliked published content that criticized councilmembers.

And in the category of "you can't make this stuff up," Gurm is advertising his candidacy in the *Community Alliance* newspaper.

Research and Vote!

Under the direction of former chair Michael D. Evans, the FCDCC was focused on building the party and engaging with local Democrats and like-minded organizations—not advancing the political careers of FCDCC members and their friends.

There are excellent FCDCC members doing the important work of connecting with allies, running the headquarters, engaging local Democrats to phone bank and sending postcards to voters ahead of the fall election—work that has been ignored by the Esparza regime.

Esparza's delegation secured endorsements in three Fresno city council races for the primary election: District 1 candidate Rob Fuentes, District 5 candidate Danielle Parra and District 7 candidate Gurm, all of whom were also endorsed by Jerry Dyer, Fresno's Republican mayor.

Voters also have the option of choosing District 1 candidate Naindeep Singh and District 7 candidate Ariana Martinez Lott in November's general election. Incumbent District 5 councilmember Brandon Vang defeated Parra in the June primary.

Many community members and leaders believe that Dyer is looking for the next city council to greenlight his coveted Southeast Development Area (SEDA) project, the controversial $4.3 billion mega-development plan to convert 9,000 acres of mostly agricultural land.

The FCDCC also endorsed District 1 Board of Supervisors candidate Mike Karbassi, who will soon be terming out of his Fresno city council seat. In this Democrat versus Democrat race, the party did not take a position in the primary. Esparza's collective was able to secure his endorsement for the general election.

Karbassi is another politically ambitious candidate. He previously ran for State Assembly and planned to run against James Kus for County Clerk/Registrar of Voters. He recently moved into District 1 and appears to be unfamiliar with the constituency or the problems in the district. His opponent, Maria Pacheco, is the current mayor of Kerman, a key municipality in this largely rural District.



Fresno Democratic Party headquarters. *Photo by Dee Barnes*

Instead of accepting the Fresno County Democratic Party endorsements at face value, do some research to decide for yourself who the best candidates are. Ballots for the November 3 general election will be mailed out on October 5. Plan to vote early.

*****

Dee Barnes has been a registered Democrat for 53 years and learned about local Democratic Party politics in 2014 during the Measure G campaign when the City of Fresno attempted to privatize residential trash service. Since then, she has been an avid party activist.

YOUR LOCAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Fresno County Democratic Central Committee (FCDCC) consists of 23 elected Democrats representing each of the county's supervisorial Districts and ex-officio members of the Democratic candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the primary election for state and federal offices overlapping Fresno County.

The election for the 23 members occurs during the Presidential primary, and candidates file at the Registrar of Voters office a few months before that election.

You can learn more about your local Democratic Party by attending the monthly meetings of the FCDCC in person or via Zoom. The meetings are at 6 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St.,Fresno). E-mail fresnocountydemocraticparty@gmail.com to be added to the FCDCC mailing list and to receive the Zoom link to the meetings.

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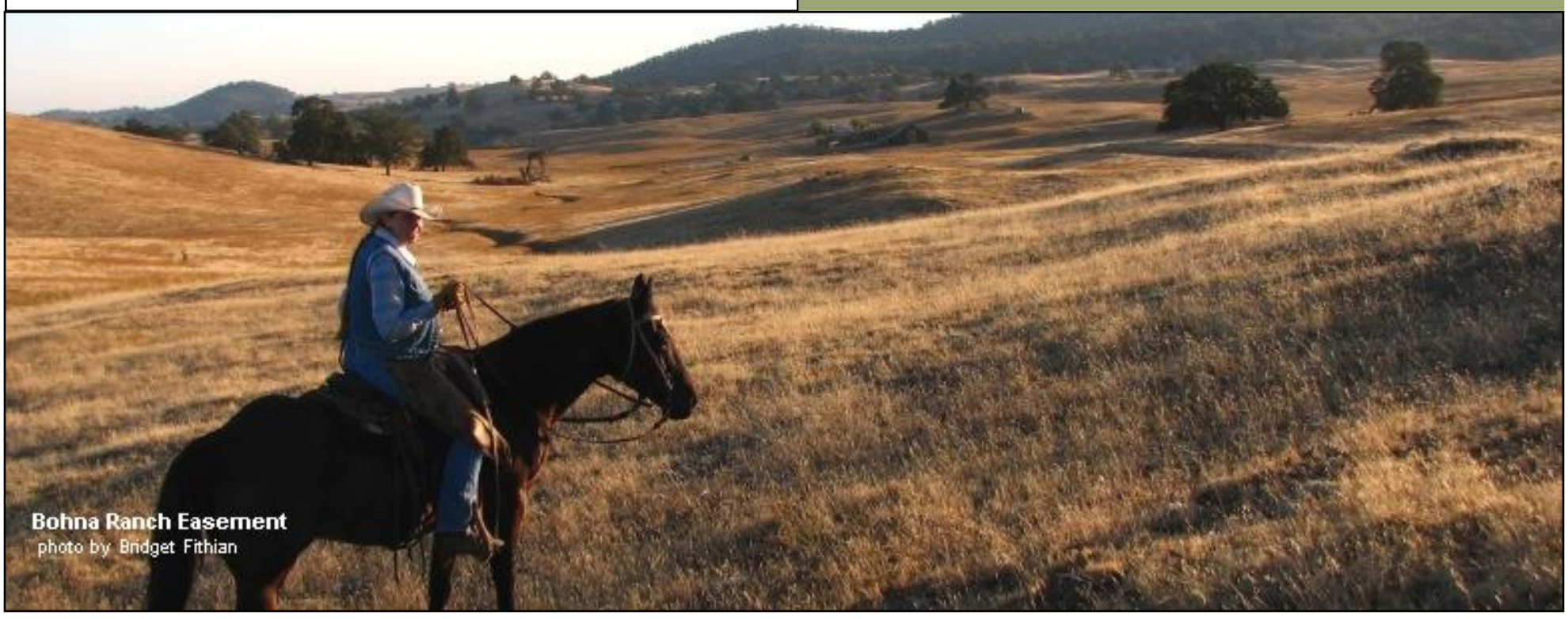
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Bohna Ranch Easement
photo by Bridget Fithian

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Just as the hummingbird moves through the world with purpose and resilience, hovering in moments of stillness and darting forward with unstoppable momentum, the Colibri Fund exists to help people do the same — navigating life's challenges while remaining rooted in joy, dignity, and spiritual connection.

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We rise together. We protect one another. We lift one another toward liberty.

Because liberty and justice are not just a destination — they are a way of moving through the world.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Give Financially Donate Supplies Volunteer

CASH DONATIONS NEEDED

Visit:
fresnobhc.org/donate
*Make sure to designate your donation to the Colibri Fund.

Personal Hygiene Items
Soap, deodorant, cleaning rights, toothpaste, and similar travel-sized items

Non-Perishable Snacks and Bottled Water

Clothing
New or gently used men's and women's clothing in all sizes

Basic First Aid Supplies

Backpacks
New or gently used

Your donation helps provide food, emergency shelter, transportation, communication support, and essential resources to community members in pursuit of freedom and liberty.

Drop off supplies or donations Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM at:

Fresno Building Healthy Communities
367 N First St.
Fresno, CA 93702

Contact us:
(559) 256-8722

Learn more:
www.fresnobhc.org

THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY FRESNO BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

West Fresno Family Resource Center

www.wfresnofrc.org
(559) 374 - 5750

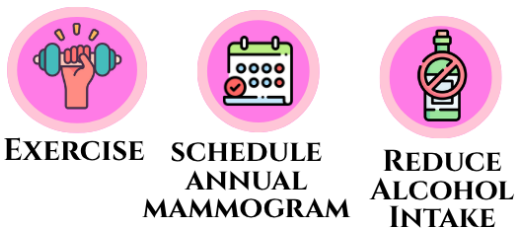
Celebrating 25 Years of Sevice
Legacy of Care

Community Health Worker Service
Working One-on-one to connect you to the care you need

- Mental Health Support
- Preventative Care
- Food Security Resources
- Health Education and Advocacy
- Health Coverage Enrollment
- Connecting to Resources
- Job Searching
- Social Service Referrals
- **and more...**

Breast Cancer Awarenss Month

Steps to Reduce Risk



Imporant Information

- Breast Cancer is one of the most common cancers in the U.S.
- 1 in 8 women are diagnosed in their lifetime
- Early awareness has dropped breast cancer death by 44% since 1989

Breast Cancer Resource Organizations

BCRF Breast Cancer Research Foundation — bcrf.org

National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. — nationalbreastcancer.org

P.A.T.H.W.A.Y
A FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

Recruiting partners of Black birthing women with a child/children ages 0-2 years for a 6-week program designed to equip fathers with the tools and education needed to thrive.

$600 Stipend

CONTACT Rick Darrough, MSW
559-213-9928 rdarrough@wfresnofrc.org

Upcoming Events

Food Distribution
New Kingdom Church
1825 S Delno Ave, Fresno CA
Every Thursday 1PM - 3PM

Wellness Wednesday
Annadale Commons
1515 E Annadale Ave, Fresno CA
10/7/26 - Arts & Mental Health
10/21/26 - Breast Cancer Awareness 10AM - 12PM

Thriving Families
Nubia Marquez
(559) 374.5750
10/22/26 5pm-6pm
Online Ed. about Dental Hygiene

Family Reading Night
Kirk Elementary School
2000 E Belgravia Ave, Fresno CA
10/08/26 5:30PM-7:00PM

Halloween Trunk or Treat
Chuckchansi Park
1800 Tulare ST. Fresno CA 93721
Including Movie NIght. Visit the West Fresno Family Resource Center booth for candy, prizes, and fun.
10/30/26 5pm-6:30pm

West Fresno Family Resource Center
700 Van Ness Ave Suite 201,
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 374 - 5750
www.wfresnofrc.org

PAC

LOCAL PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATES

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC) educates and mobilizes voters to elect progressive candidates to local office.

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CVPPAC ENDORSED CANDIDATES



Randy Villegas
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Maria Pacheco
Fresno County Supervisor District 1



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Fresno County Superior Court Judge



Naindeep Singh
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Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Fresno City Council District 3



Ariana Martinez-Lott
Fresno City Council District 7



Dr. Deshunna Ricks
Fresno Unified Trustee Area 1



Riley Talford
Fresno Unified Trustee Area 3



Genoveva Islas
Fresno Unified Trustee Area 4

HOW THE COMMUNITY CHANGED MEASURE C

BY JIM MENDEZ

Wesley Lowery wrote in his 2016 book They Can't Kill Us All, "Power is never given, it's taken." That can be seen in the way Measure S reached the November 2026 ballot.

Over the opposition of businessman Brooke Ashjian, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, especially Supervisor Garry Bredefeld and other Republicans, the citizen-led initiative Measure S has made it to the November 3, ballot for the people to decide how they want to spend their taxes.

Measure S, the S is for Safety, would continue the half-cent sales tax established under Measure C in 1986. If Measure S passes, it would change the decision-making process from one dominated by transportation agencies, politicians and appointed committee members to a process in which communities would have a greater role in deciding what transportation improvements they need.

For the past 40 years, Measure C revenue has been heavily used for regional transportation and freeway expansion. During that same period, many older neighborhoods in Fresno and the smaller cities of Fresno County have continued to face major road-maintenance needs.

The allocation of Fresno city and county transportation funds has historically been a top-down approach. County government would allow the public to express its concerns, but the actual decisions would be made through transportation agencies and steering committees composed of politicians, business leaders and other appointees. The Measure C Renewal Steering Committee became an example of that process.

History of Measure C

Measure C was first passed in 1986. For the next 20 years, from 1987 to 2007, about 75% of the revenue was allocated to highway capital improvements, including the construction and improvement of Highways 41, 168 and 180. At least 25% went directly to cities and the county for local transportation purposes.

Those freeways allowed land developers to build housing and commercial developments farther and farther from downtown.

Much of Fresno's sprawl can be attributed to the way transportation investment helped facilitate development at the city's expanding edges. While Fresno's boundaries were expanding with new housing and commercial ventures, older roads and roads in smaller cities continued to require additional investment.

Measure C was renewed in 2006 for another 20 years and expires June 30, 2027. The 2007-2027 Measure C expenditure plan directed 34.6% of funds to local transportation, 30.4% to regional transportation, 24% to public transportation, 6% to grade separation, 3.5% to environmental enhancement and 1.5% to administration and planning.

Continued on page 14



A Fresno street in need of repair. Photo by Jim Mendez

2026 Primary

NOTE FROM THE COMMUNTY ALLIANCE TEAM: WHILE WE DO NOT ENDORSE CANDIDATES, EVERY ELECTION WE PUBLISH AN ENDORSEMENT GRID TO SHOW WHO IS ENDORSING WHO. VOTERS CAN USE THIS AS A TOOL IN THEIR DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

Office	DEM	REP	Labor	Chamber	CVPPAC	Stonewall
Federal						
Congressional District 5	Masuda	McClintock	Masuda	—	—	—
Congressional District 13	Gray	Lincoln	—	—	—	—
Congressional District 18	Lofgren	Lewis	—	—	—	—
Congressional District 20	—	Fong	—	—	—	—
Congressional District 21	Costa	Kirkland	Costa	Costa	—	Costa
Congressional District 22	Villegas	Valadao	Villegas	—	Villegas	—
State						
Governor	Becerra	Hilton	Becerra	—	—	—
Lieutenant Governor	Ma	Romero	Ma	—	—	—
Secretary of State	Weber	Wagner	Weber	—	—	—
Controller	Cohen	Morgan	Cohen	—	—	—
Treasurer	Kounalakis	Hawks	Kounalakis	—	—	—
Attorney General	Bonta	Gates	Bonta	—	—	—
Insurance Commissioner	Allen	—	Kim	—	—	—
State Superintendent*	Barrera	Shaw	Barrera	—	—	—
Board of Equalization District 1	Esparza	Grove	Esparza	—	—	Esparza
State Senate District 12	—	Magsig	Magsig	Magsig	—	—
State Senate District 14	Soria	DuPont	Soria	Soria	—	Soria
State Senate District 16	Hurtado	Gonzalez	Hurtado	—	—	—
State Assembly District 8	—	Tangipa	—	—	—	—
State Assembly District 27	Pacheco	Murphy	Pacheco	Pacheco	—	—
State Assembly District 31	Perea	Polsgrove	Perea	Perea	Celedon	Perea
State Assembly District 33	—	Macedo	—	—	—	—
Fresno County						
Board of Supervisors District 1	—	—	a	Karbassi	Pacheco	Pacheco
Superintendent of Schools	Copher	—	Copher	Copher	—	—
City of Fresno						
Fresno City Council District 1	Fuentes	—	b	Fuentes	Singh	Singh
Fresno City Council District 3	—	—	Arambula	—	Arambula	—
Fresno City Council District 7	Gurm	—	c	Gurm	Martinez Lott	Martinez Lott

Note: An "—" indicates there was no endorsement in that race or the endorsement has yet to be publicly posted.

**State Superintendent of Public Instruction*

DEM: California Democratic Party/ Fresno County Democratic Party

REP: California Republican Party/ Fresno County Republican Party

Labor: AFL-CIO, California Labor Federation & Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council

Chamber: California Chamber of Commerce & Fresno Chamber of Commerce

Stonewall: Fresno Stonewall Democrats

CVPPAC: Central Valley Progressive PAC

a: Pacheco and Karbassi
b: Singh and Fuentes
c: Martinez Lott and Gurm

Measure S

Continued from page 13

How Measure C Funding Decisions Were Made

The 1986 Measure C created the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) to oversee the sales tax revenue. The Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) was responsible for regional transportation planning and preparation of the Measure C expenditure plan.

The 2006 renewal shifted some money from freeways toward local transportation, but regional transportation remained a major part of the expenditure plan. The Regional Transportation Program received 30.4% of the revenue and was used for freeway interchanges, adding lanes, improving safety and major commute corridors.

Over the following 20 years, transportation advocates increasingly argued that too much emphasis remained on outward expansion and not enough on maintaining existing streets, sidewalks and other local transportation infrastructure. As of 2026, there was an estimated $3 billion in deferred road maintenance throughout Fresno County.

In 2022, Fresno COG attempted another renewal of Measure C. It formed a Measure C Renewal Steering Committee to develop a new Measure C for voters to approve. The committee was made up largely of politicians, business representatives and industry appointees, with limited participation from other community members.

Transportation for All (T4A)

Instead of accepting the same allocation of funds, a social justice community group called Transportation For All (T4A) formed and requested more spending on local roads and less on regional roads and freeways. The group included community organizations and environmental justice advocates such as Fresno Building Healthy Communities, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, the League of Women Voters, Cultiva La Salud and the Youth Leadership Institute.

T4A wanted more money directed toward local roads rather than more freeway expansion. The group argued that freeway expansion had contributed to Fresno's sprawl and central disinvestment. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors and Fresno COG did not agree to the changes requested by T4A.

In response, T4A participated in the "No on C" campaign in 2022. The campaign included the Central Valley Community Foundation and anti-tax Republicans in Northeast Fresno and Clovis.

The 2022 Measure C renewal required a two-thirds vote because it was a special tax placed on the ballot by a government agency. The measure received about 58% of the vote and failed.

Fresno COG did not make another attempt in 2024. It later formed another Measure C Renewal Steering Committee. Originally consisting of 26 members, the committee included local politicians, business representatives and industry representatives. It first met in April 2025.

In May 2025, T4A began community sessions across Fresno County to identify the transportation needs and priorities of residents, especially those in poorer and more rural areas. After months of meetings, they found that communities wanted more repair and maintenance of local roads, more sidewalks, safe bicycle paths and safe routes to schools.

T4A began forming a community-based version of what Measure C should look like. They envisioned a Measure C that would benefit more people throughout the county, not just those buying newer and bigger homes on the ever-growing Fresno City boundary.

T4A Pressures Frenso COG

T4A began pressuring Fresno COG to accept changes to Measure C. When Fresno COG initially refused to give T4A seats on the Measure C Renewal Steering Committee, T4A warned that if they were not part of the discussion, they would gather signatures for their own community-based initiative.

The pressure finally got results. In July 2025, under the "One County, One Plan" compromise between Fresno COG and the T4A coalition, the FCOG Policy Board added 12 members from T4A to the Measure C Renewal Steering Committee. The addition expanded the committee from 26 to 38 members and changed its dynamics.

T4A Attacked

Some original members of the Measure C Renewal Steering Committee strongly opposed having progressive community members on the committee. Among the most outspoken critics were Supervisor Garry Bredefeld and former Fresno Unified School District trustee Brooke Ashjian.

Ashjian, founder and CEO of Seal Rite Paving and Grading, advocated for a large share of the funds to be spent on freeway and road projects. After Ashjian was removed from the committee, Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer recommended that Ashjian continue serving as one of the City of Fresno representatives.

After six months of negotiations, the two groups on the steering committee were unable to agree on how to divide the funds among new roads, road maintenance, public transportation, sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure. A government-sponsored renewal did not move forward.

Rather than work toward a compromise, Bredefeld blamed the "radicals" in T4A for the failure to develop a measure. He repeatedly accused members of the coalition of wanting to take away people's cars and have everyone ride bicycles.

T4A Launches "Better Roads, Safe Streets"

Given the failure to reach agreement on renewing the county's Measure C transportation sales tax, on January 7, the Fresno COG Policy Board voted 9-3 not to move forward with the renewal.

A citizen-led initiative became the remaining path to place a transportation tax before voters. Unlike a government-sponsored special tax, which required two-thirds approval, a citizen initiative would require a simple majority.

On January 14, the T4A coalition launched Fresno's "Moving Forward Together" campaign as the signature-gathering vehicle for the "Better Roads, Safe Streets" initiative, later called Measure S. Their goal? Gather 35,000 signatures to qualify the initiative for the November ballot.

Initially there were two competing initiatives, but Henry Perea and Bredefeld's "Fix Our Roads" initiative failed to gather enough signatures and subsequently folded.

T4A's Better Roads, Safe Streets initiative would direct 65% of revenue to existing neighborhood roads and related sidewalks, bicycle paths, pedestrian facilities and safe routes to schools. Twenty-five percent would go to public transit, 4% to regional road, street and highway projects, 4% to transit and transportation programs, and 2% to Fresno Yosemite International Airport and administration.[

Measure S also contains a "no-sprawl" provision stating that revenue allocated to existing neighborhood roads cannot be used for new street construction in "new growth areas" or "new town developments" until all roads in a city are at least "fair" on the Pavement Condition Index.

On April 14, T4A turned in more than 32,000 signatures to the Fresno County Clerk's Office. After a review of the signatures, the County Clerk's Office certified on July 8 that there were enough valid signatures to qualify Better Roads, Safe Streets for the November 3 ballot.

The BOS Creates Legal Problems

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors then had to act on the certified initiative. Three of the five supervisors—Bredefeld, Nathan Magsig and Buddy Mendes—opposed the measure.

Instead of placing the measure on the ballot at its July 14 meeting, the Board voted 3-2 to request a 30-day economic impact study. Bredefeld, Magsig and Mendes voted for the study, while Supervisors Brian Pacheco and Luis Chavez voted against it and asked that the measure be placed on the ballot.

The economic impact study was scheduled for August 11, after the August 7 deadline for ballot measures. If the delay had succeeded, voters would not have been able to decide Measure S until at least March 2028.

Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer and the Fresno City Council were concerned that without a transportation measure on the November ballot, the city would face a major loss of transportation revenue for road repairs, street maintenance and public transportation.

The Response to the BOS Delay Tactic

In anticipation of Measure S not appearing on the ballot and the expiration of Measure C, Mayor Dyer, City Council President Nelson Esparza and Councilmember Mike Karbassi introduced a half-cent general sales tax measure that would apply only to the City of Fresno.

The tax would begin after Measure C expires. The money would go into the City's general fund and could be used for city services, although road repairs were a principal reason for proposing it. The measure was called the Fresno Public Safety, Infrastructure Restoration and Essential Services Act. It became Measure D. It would take effect only if Measure S does not pass and would expire after 10 years.

Concerned about the Board of Supervisors' delay, Dyer and other mayors asked Sacramento for help. Better Roads, Safe Streets also hired a Sacramento lobbyist.

On August 3, Assemblymember Esmeralda Soria and State Sen. Anna Caballero introduced emergency legislation, AB 1923, addressing the placement of Measure S on the ballot. The Legislature passed the bill and Gov. Gavin Newsom signed it before the August 7 deadline.

After the legislation took effect, County Clerk James Kus said he would follow state law and place Better Roads, Safe Streets on the November ballot.

The requested economic impact study was presented to the Board of Supervisors on August 11, after the ballot deadline. In another 3-2 vote, Bredefeld, Mendes and Magsig voted to place Measure S on the March 7, 2028, ballot and to sue the state, Kus and the Measure S campaign to have the measure removed from the November ballot. The county argued that the new state law violated the state Constitution.

The case went to court. On August 31, before the final September 3 deadline, the judge ruled against the county. The county did not appeal. Measure S therefore remained on the November 3, 2026, ballot, along with Measure D.

So now voters in the City of Fresno have two transportation-related tax measures to consider, while voters throughout Fresno County will see Measure S.

The people behind Measure S have been working for years to change the process of which roads get built, which roads get repaired and how the people's money is spent. They asked to be included in the process and were denied. They fought their way to the table, but their model for funding local roads was again rejected.

They then took to the streets and gathered signatures to put their measure on the ballot. In an attempt to prevent them from controlling the future of the transportation sales tax, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors tried a delay tactic and then a lawsuit.

An emergency state law and a court ruling kept the measure on the ballot.

This is truly an example of a community taking power to make decisions it believes will benefit its residents.

*****

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

I'm joining the fight for truth and justice—choose your level of support:

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Total enclosed: $ ..... **Date:** ..... **Name:** .....

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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

FRESNO ARTS & CULTURE

OCTOBER 2026 CALENDAR

Weekly

The Joe Lenigan Quartet Plus One (Sundays) 10 a.m.–1 p.m. Chez Maryse.

Fort Washington Farmers Market (Sundays) 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Fort Washington Shopping Center.

Jazz Jam Sessions with Bobby Griffin (Sundays) 4 p.m.–7 p.m. California Catering.

Acoustic Honkey Tonk Jam (Mondays) 4 p.m.–6 p.m. Santa Fe Basque.

Art Grooves Got Jokes (Mondays) 7 p.m.–8:15 p.m. Art Groove Event Center.
River Park Farmers Market (Tuesdays) 5 p.m.–9 p.m. River Park.

Open Mic Night (Tuesdays) 7 p.m. Locked In Sports Bar.

Open Mic Night (Tuesdays) 7:30 p.m.–2 a.m. Strummer's.

Vineyard Farmers Market (Wednesdays) 3 p.m.–6 p.m. 100 W. Shaw Ave.

Kenny Hall's Friends (Wednesdays) 5 p.m.–7 p.m. Santa Fe Basque.

Pass the Aux (Wednesdays) 8:30 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Strummer's.

Arte, Pero Later (Thursdays) 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Arte Américas.

Karaoke Night (Thursdays) 9 p.m.–1 a.m. Club One Casino.

Vineyard Farmers Market (Saturdays) 7 a.m.–noon. 100 W. Shaw Ave.

THU OCT 1

Ali Wong 7 p.m. Warnors Center.
Fresno Pacific University Joint Band/Choir Concert 7 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Warkentine Culture and Arts Center.

FRI OCT 2

Souldies & Coldies with DJ Carinyo 9 p.m.–1 a.m. Strummer's.
Is This a Room? 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.

SAT OCT 3

Bilingual Storytime & Art Workshop 10 a.m.–noon. Fresno American Indian Health Project.
The Way of Matcha: The Art & Culture of Japanese Matcha 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Shinzen Friendship Garden. $25–$35.
The Alley Streetwear Fashion Show Part IV 6 p.m.–9 p.m. BreakBox Thought Collective.
Silent Movie Night 6:30 p.m. doors, cartoons 7 p.m., movie 8 p.m. VISTA Theater. Pay what you want.
Sexolandia: Cachirula & Loojan 9 p.m. Rainbow Ballroom.

SUN OCT 4

Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Concerts: Angel Stanislav Wang 3 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall.
Is This a Room 2 p.m. Fresno State Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.

MON OCT 5

Fresno City Jazz Composers Orchestra 7p.m. Fresno City College Theatre.

Is This a Room? 7:30 p.m. Fresno State, Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.

WED OCT 7

The Big Fresno Fair—Opening Day. Fresno Fairgrounds Admission $15; parking $20.
Table Mountain Concert Series 7 p.m. Paul Paul Theatre at the Big Fresno Fair. Tickets 200 plus fair entrance and parking.
Is This a Room 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.

THU OCT 8

Respite by the River 6 p.m. River Center. Free. Music by Scats on the Sly; reading by Brynn Saito at 7 p.m.
Is This a Room 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.
Gazebo Gardens: Glenn Delpit Unplugged 6 p.m.

FRI OCT 9

Marco Antonio Solis—Tour Gratitud 2026 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. Tickets from $80.
1984: A Live Radio Drama 7 p.m. Fresno City College Studio Theatre. $10 cash.
Is This a Room 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.
Gazebo Gardens: Hillbilly Jazz 6 p.m.

SAT OCT 10

1984: A Live Radio Drama 7 p.m. Fresno City College Studio Theatre. $10 cash.
Is This a Room 7:30 p.m. Fresno State Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre.
Gazebo Gardens: The Merry Makers 6 p.m.

THU OCT 15

Gazebo Gardens: Natural Bridge 6 p.m.

FRI OCT 16

Calavera Mask Workshop 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Arte Américas. $15 materials fee.
Beat Down Slam 7:30 p.m. River Park's Art Groove Event Center. $10 entry.
Glenn Delpit & The Subterraneans Gazebo Gardens 6 p.m.

SAT OCT 17

Big Fresno Fair Car Show. Fresno Fairgrounds.
Bilingual Storytime & Art Workshop 10 a.m.–noon. Pixley Community Services Center. Free.
Napoleon Dynamite 7:30 p.m. Warnors Center. $47.
Gazebo Gardens: Central Valley Groove 6 p.m.

SUN OCT 18

Sunday Brunch 10 a.m. Gazebo Gardens.
The Big Fresno Fair—Final Day. Fresno Fairgrounds.
Los Tigres del Norte 7 p.m. Paul Paul Theatre at the Big Fresno Fair. Tickets from $39.
Japanese Tea Ceremony 11 a.m. Shinzen Friendship Garden. $15.

MON OCT 19

Art Grooves Got Jokes 6:30 p.m. doors; open mic 7 p.m.–7:30 p.m.; comedy contest 7:30 p.m.–8:15 p.m. River Park's Art Groove Event Center.

TUE OCT 20

Jazz at the Library: The New Organ Trio—Music of Don Patterson 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Woodward Park Regional Library.
Easy Star All-Stars: Dub Side of the Moon Live 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. $35.

WED OCT 21

Souls of Mischief 8 p.m. Fulton 55. Tickets from $33.

THU OCT 22

Gazebo Gardens: Monkey Wrench 6 p.m.

FRI OCT 23

Calavera Mask Workshop 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Arte Américas. $15 materials fee.
Jim Henson's Labyrinth in Concert 7:30 p.m. Warnors Center. $47.
Gazebo Gardens: Square One 6 p.m.

SAT OCT 24

Make Your Own Pocket Ofrenda 1 p.m.–3 p.m. Tioga-Sequoia Beer Garden.
Fresno Filmworks & FCC Film Appreciation 2nd Annual Spooktacular 1 p.m. Fresno City College Old Administration Building. $10 per film.
Gazebo Gardens: Southern Comfort Band 6 p.m.

MON OCT 26

Robert Maldonado Graduate Art Exhibit opens. M Street Arts Complex.

TUE OCT 27

Fresno City College 46th Annual Choral Festival 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Fresno City College OAB Auditorium.

WED OCT 28

Fuerza Regida—This Is Our Dream Tour 2026 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. Tickets from $75.
Fresno City College 46th Annual Choral Festival 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Fresno City College OAB Auditorium.

THU OCT 29

Fresno City College 46th Annual Choral Festival 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Fresno City College OAB Auditorium. Free.
Isabel Bayrakdarian—Ancestral Songs, Prayers & Lullabies of Armenia 7:30 p.m. St. Paul Armenian Church. $30.
Robert Maldonado Graduate Art Exhibit Reception 5 p.m.–7 p.m. M Street Arts Complex.

FRI OCT 30

Isabel Bayrakdarian—Ancestral Songs, Prayers & Lullabies of Armenia 7:30 p.m. St. Paul Armenian Church. $30.
Madre Cumbia—Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto, Carmelo Torres & Fruko 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Tickets from $26.

VENUES

Arte Américas • 1630 Van Ness Ave. • arteamericas.org	Fulton 55 • 875 Divisadero St. • info@fulton55.com / fulton55.com	River Park's Art Groove Event Center • 80 E. Via Del Oro • 559-840-8886	Tower Theatre • 815 E. Olive Ave. • fresnotowertheatre.com
California Catering • 1603 E St. • 559-222-4202	Kingsburg Historical Park • Kingsburg, CA	San Pablo Park • 511 N. San Pablo Ave. • 559-779-2755	University Presbyterian Church • 1776 E. Roberts Ave. • upc@upcfresno.org
Club One Casino • 3950 N. Cedar Ave. • clubonecasino.com	La Boulangerie • 730 W. Shaw Ave. • 559-222-0555	Santa Fe Basque Restaurant • 3110 N. Maroa Ave. • 559-226-7499	Vibez Lounge • 724 E. Olive Ave. • vibezlounge.com/
Dulce UpFront • 2026 N. Van Ness Blvd. • 559-202-3099	Locked In Sports Bar • 3045 W. Bullard Ave. • 559-369-7684	Save Mart Center • 2650 E. Shaw Ave. • savemartcenter.com	Vineyard Farmers Market • 100 W. Shaw Ave.
Fort Washington Shopping Center • 447 Fort Washington Rd. • 559-490-3600	Rainbow Ballroom • 1725 Broadway St. • 559-354-1017	Shinzen Friendship Garden • 114 W. Audubon Dr. • 559-478-4848	Vista Theater • 1298 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-222-7464
Fresno Art Museum • 2233 N. First St. • 559-441-4221 / fresnoartmuseum.org	River Center • 11605 Old Friant Rd. • 559-248-8480	Strummer's Bar & Grill • 833 E. Fern Ave. • 559-485-5356	Warnors Theatre • 1400 Fulton St. • warnorscenter.org

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

Fresno WILPF
Womxn's International League for Peace & Freedom

BREAKING NEWS

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL ON US GOVERNMENT COMPLICITY IN GAZA



There is a conflict at the heart of US policy. While US laws and international legal frameworks are intended to prevent complicity in human rights abuses, many legal experts and members of the public have raised concerns that existing accountability mechanisms have failed to address the ongoing crisis in Gaza. As military assistance and diplomatic support continue, important questions remain about compliance with US and international law and the responsibility of public officials and institutions.

Through testimony, evidence, and dialogue, the tribunal will explore the role of elected officials and government institutions in shaping US policy toward Gaza. Its purpose is to educate the public, promote informed civic engagement, and build support for policy reforms that strengthen accountability, human rights, and adherence to US and international law.

Join us for a live screening of The People's Tribunal on US Government Complicity in Gaza

Snacks & Refreshments ~ Vendors ~ Art Gallery

Saturday, October 10
10am to 5pm - *come in/out all day*
Fresno Center for Nonviolence
1584 N Van Ness Ave

CENTRAL VALLEY WRADICALS · VETERANS FOR PEACE · WILPF US · AFSC

PEOPLESTRIBUNALUSGAZA.ORG

3.000-Mile Freedom Convoy Set to Make its Way Through the Heartland to Expose Israel's Draining of American Tax Dollars

As American Families Struggle with Soaring Costs of Basic Needs, Grassroots Caravan Demands U.S. Wealth Stay at Home Ahead of Midterm Elections

USA - Just ahead of the critical 2026 midterm elections, a grassroots coalition of American mothers, grandmothers, and citizens of conscience is launching a direct challenge to the growing influence shaping American policy, local government, and civic institutions. On October 16th, the Freedom Convoy will embark on a 10-day, 3.000 mile journey from Hollywood, California, directly to the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

The True Cost of Foreign Influence
While millions of American families struggle with the rising costs of housing, gas, healthcare, groceries, and basic necessities, billions of U.S. tax dollars continue to flow to the "israeli" apartheid state. Since October 2023 alone, our federal government has delievered between $16.3-$21.7 billion in supplemental military aid on top of an annual baseline of $3.8 billion. At the same time, over 27 million Americans remain completely uninsured, carrying more than $220 billion in collective medical debt. Convoy organizers would like to point out that "israeli" citizens benefit from state-guaranteed universal healthcare and subsidized social programs funded in part by U.S. backing, while American taxpayers are told that their own government cannot afford basic domestic safety nets.

Infiltration of Local Treasuries and Civic Rights
The scope of Foreign entanglement extends far beyond Washington and deep into local, state, and municipal governments. Public pension funds and city treasuries across the nation currently hold at least $1.6 billion in foreign "israel" bonds, risking American public retirement dollars while chities face severe local infrastructure crises. Furthermore, private tax-exempt charities funnel over $220 million into illegal "israeli" settlement operations, a practice indirectly subsidized by every U.S. taxpayer through the federal tax code. To shield financial arrangements with "israel" from public debate, laws in 35-38 states now restrict government contractors from taking political stances that counter the "israeli" apartheid state, effectively stripping away the First Amendment free speech rights from local American business owners.

Exposing State Propaganda and Taking Action
This domestic institutional grip is sustained by massive, "israeli"-funded public relations campaigns- known as "hasbara"- which exploded into a $700+ million operations budget in 2026. This funding floods American social media feeds, buys targeted media placements, and finances all-expenses-paid trips for American politicians, faith leaders, and influencers.
The Freedom Convoy exists to expose these propaganda tactics, shatter pro-"israel" lobby narratives, and give voices to the growing majority of Americans who want their tax dollars spent here at home.

Beep beep!
A Fresno local will be joining the Freedom Convoy. Come meet Cam at the Tribunal Watch Event and be sure to follow her journey as part of this historic convoy on Instagram.
@FreedomConvoyUSA
@Stitch2Resist___ *(3 underscores)*
@CentralValleyWradicals



Celebrating One Year of Rudy's Soup Kitchen Serving Fresno's Unhoused Community

I am thrilled to share that September 2026 marks the one-year anniversary of Rudy's Soup Kitchen (RSK) serving the Fresno community. What started as a small effort to provide nourishing meals to those facing homelessness due to their instability living on the streets, continues to get our strong commitment to feeding them in those alley ways, by ways, and off those highways or finding folks in parking lots, store fronts, bus stops, and where out-of-shelter folks might hang out on the Streets of Fresno. RSK is proud to work alongside esteemed partners like Food-Not-Bombs, the Dakota Eco Garden, and WILPF, who is our fiscal agency. Every contribution, big or small, plays a crucial role in helping us provide eco-friendly serving supplies such as bowls, plates, utensils, and water containers.

In line with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of the Beloved Community, Rudy's Soup Kitchen operates under the Fresno WILPF Fresno Human Rights Committee/Beloved Community. This vision promotes a society built on inclusivity, free from poverty, exploitation, and hostility, achieved through peaceful community-building efforts. We are seeing the efforts of the City of Fresno attempt to place our homeless population into shelter. But it also feels like folks are scattered all over. Our approach at Rudy's Soup Kitchen focuses on meeting individuals or groups right where they are at, and serving them a decent meal prepared at the Dakota Eco Garden site, with the help of dedicated volunteers. We are also at Showers of Hope once per month to serve a meal to those using the showers.

I want to express my deep gratitude to all those who support Rudy's Soup kitchen. Together, we are making a positive difference. We sincerely appreciate your support and generous contributions, which allow us to continue our important mission.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, please feel free to reach out at 559-270-1023

Warm regards,
Dr. Jean Kennedy
Rudy's Soup Kitchen



FREE MUSIC LESSONS!
Guitar, baritone ukulele, & voice lessons in Mexican Traditional, Nuevo Canto, Latin American & American Folklore, Rock, Pop, & Contemporary styles
EVERY FRIDAY @ 5PM
FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE
1584 N VAN NESS AVE
559-485-8558

WOMEN IN BLACK
For Justice. Against War.

Women in Black is a world-wide network of womxn committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. As womxn experiencing these things in different ways in different regions of the world, we support each other's movements. An important focus is challenging the militarist policies of our own governments. We are not an organisation, but a means of communicating and a formula for action.

Join our local WiB protest!
Wed, Oct 7 @ 11:30am-1pm
2500 Tulare St
For more info contact Sue:
skern@netptc.net
559-349-3777

WILPF Monthly Business Meeting via Zoom:
Open to all!
Thurs, Oct 8 @ 6:30pm
For Zoom link email
lenivreeves@gmail.com

Stir It Up on KFCF: Wed, Oct 28th @ 3pm
Tune in to 88.1 FM as Dr. Jean Kennedy highlights people and events important to our WILPF community. During this program you'll hear interviews with local and national experts discussing matters relating to WILPF's national issues and study groups such as: water, SWANA, Environment, Corporations vs. Democracy, Building Beloved Community, and more!

The content in this section is paid for by Fresno WILPF

www.facebook.com/FresnoWILPF65

Peace & Social Justice Calendar

OCTOBER 2026
SPONSORED BY THE FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

Weekly

KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro (Tuesdays; Spanish) 7 p.m.–8 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.
Fresno Bridge Brigade (Fridays) 7 a.m.–9 a.m. Shaw Ave. & Highway 41, Fresno. For more info, contact pattycapp@gmail.com.
Kings County Bridge Brigade (Fridays) 7:15 a.m.–8:15 a.m. 19th Ave./Highway 198 interchange, Hanford/Lemoore. For more info, contact karlacalbear@gmail.com.
No War, No ICE, Free Palestine! (Saturdays) 9:30 a.m.–11 a.m. Shaw Ave. and Fresno St. For more info, contact danyaseen@comcast.net.
Visalia Bridge Brigade (Sundays) 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Mooney Blvd. at Highway 198 overpass, Visalia. For more info, contact resist@withvisalia.org.
"ICE Out for Good" Protests (Sundays) 2 p.m. Mooney Blvd. and Caldwell Ave., Visalia. For more info, contact resist@withvisalia.org.

THURS 1

Soup for My Family Gathering 3 p.m.–8 p.m. LGBT EOC Sanctuary, 1252 Fulton St., Fresno. Potluck and community meet-up for nourishment of mind, body and soul.
Tulare Democratic Club 7 p.m. For more info, contact tularedemocraticclub1@gmail.com.

FRI 2

Fresno Bridge Brigade 7 a.m.–9 a.m. Shaw Ave. & Highway 41, Fresno. For more info, contact pattycapp@gmail.com.
Kings County Bridge Brigade 7:15 a.m.–8:15 a.m. 19th Ave./Highway 198 interchange, Hanford/Lemoore. For more info, contact karlacalbear@gmail.com.

SAT 3

Reedley Peace Center Protest/Visibility Event 9 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Corner of Buttonwillow and Manning avenues, Reedley. For more info, contact reedleypeacecenter.com.
Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley 9 a.m.–11 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559–435–4043 or claval@comcast.net.
No War, No ICE, Free Palestine! 9:30 a.m.–11 aa11 a.m. Shaw Ave. and Fresno St. For more info, contact danyaseen@comcast.net.

SUN 4

Visalia Bridge Brigade 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Mooney Blvd. at Highway 198 overpass, Visalia. For more info, contact resist@withvisalia.org.
"ICE Out for Good" Protests 2 p.m. Mooney Blvd. and Caldwell Ave., Visalia. For more info, contact resist@withvisalia.org.

TUES 6

KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro 7 p.m.–8 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

WED 7

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) 1 p.m. Via Zoom. Regional meeting. Link: us06web.zoom.us/j/2284684729.
"Women in Black" Protest 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. 2500 Tulare St., Fresno. WILPF protest for justice and against war.
KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up! 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence hosts the 2nd Wednesday edition of Stir It Up! For more info, visit kfcf.org.
Mixer with the LGBTQ+ and Ally Committee 4 p.m.–6 p.m. Sequoia Brewing, 777 E. Olive Ave., Fresno. Fresno Chamber of Commerce affinity group to strengthen inclusion, visibility and connection in the business community. For more info, contact info@fresnochamber.com.

THURS 8

Porterville Democratic Club 6 p.m. Pizza Factory, 879 W. Henderson Ave., Porterville. For more info, contact contactportervilledems@yahoo.com.
KFCF 88.1 FM: Valley Rising 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Central Valley Partnership radio show. For more info, visit kfcf.org.
Womxn's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) 7 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno. Online/in person. For more info, contact taca_03@ymail.com.

SUN 11

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

MON 12

Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) 5 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St., Fresno. For more info, contact swgamble@aol.com.
Tulare County Stonewall Democrats 6 p.m. Me-n-Ed's Pizza, 1331 W. Henderson Ave., Porterville. For more info, contact tcstonewalldems@gmail.com.

TUES 13

Kings County Democratic Central Committee 6 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 621-A N. Irwin St., Hanford. For more info, contact 559–858–0852.
Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact bapacfresno@gmail.com.
Fresno Stonewall Democrats 6:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org.

WED 14

KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up! 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

THURS 15

Clovis Democratic Club 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For more info, contact clovisdemocraticclub@gmail.com.
Tulare County Democratic Central Committee 7 p.m. In Tulare and via Zoom. For more info, contact tcdccsecretary@gmail.com.

FRI 16

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

SAT 17

Reedley Peace Center Protest/Visibility Event 9 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Corner of Buttonwillow and Manning avenues, Reedley. Bring your signs with whatever is on your mind this week. For more info, contact reedleypeacecenter.com.

MON 19

Free Food Distribution 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Hinton Community Center, 2385 S. Fairview Ave., Fresno. Hosted by the Hinton Center Board and the Fresno Food Bank. For more info, contact 559–287–1308.

TUES 20

Central Valley Partnership 5:30 p.m. OAB 251, Fresno City College. For more info, contact admin@centralvalleypartnership.org.
Kings County Jimmy Carter Club 6 p.m. Lemoore. For more info, contact kcjimmycarterclub@gmail.com.

WED 21

Protest Rep. Vince Fong noon–2 p.m. Corner of Herndon and Clovis avenues, Clovis. For more info, contact pattycapp@gmail.com.
KFCF 88.1 FM: Speaking Truth to Empire 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit kfcf.org.
San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club 6:30 p.m. Round Table Pizza, 3710 W. Shields Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact sjvdemclub@gmail.com.

THURS 22

Peace Fresno 6:30 p.m. Monthly meeting to plan antiwar strategies. For more info, contact president@peacefresno.org.

MON 26

Fresno County Democratic Women's Club 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno. Also via Zoom. For more info, contact claval@comcast.net.

WED 28

KFCF 88.1 FM: Stir It Up! 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit kfcf.org.
Visalia Democratic Club 5:30 p.m. Amigos Restaurant, 5113 W. Walnut Ave., Visalia. For more info, contact colijiafeliz@gmail.com.
Central Valley Indivisible 6 p.m.–8 p.m. The Big Red Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno. Meet like-minded people and take action. For more info, contact pattycapp@gmail.com.
John Robert Lewis Democratic Club 7 p.m. Wesley UMC, 1343 E. Barstow, Fresno. Via Zoom. For more info, contact ibedam@gmail.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).



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 subscripción. Las subscripciones 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;
- Igualdad de derechos para todos, incluidos los inmigrantes, las personas sin hogar y la comunidad LGBTQ+;
- Acceso a una educación pública gratuita y de calidad para todos;
- Acceso a la atención sanitaria para todos;
- Un salario digno para todos los trabajadores.

Nuestro objetivo es exponer los problemas raciales, sociales, medioambientales y económicos e injusticias políticas. Ayudaremos a construir un poderoso movimiento progresista que hará que todas nuestras comunidades sean más seguras, más sanas, más equitativas y más habitables.

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Hasta 200 palabras.

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La Brigada

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"Comunicación. Les dejamos llamar a su familia con nuestros celulares. Y también hay una agencia en la ciudad que nos está comprando celulares". Los voluntarios también dan transporte a lugares donde las personas liberadas pueden reunirse con su familia, o al aeropuerto, la estación de tren o la central de autobuses. Si hace falta, les compran el boleto del viaje.

La oficina de ICE no tiene un horario fijo y libera a las personas detenidas a cualquier hora del día o de la noche. Así que hay momentos en que no hay nadie para ofrecer ayuda y orientación. A Monica le preocupa que muchos inmigrantes liberados que necesitan asistencia se queden sin recibirla.

"Porque somos un grupo muy pequeño de voluntarios y necesitamos con urgencia gente que ayude, sobre todo quienes manejan varios idiomas. Solo estamos aquí en la mañana, porque si hace demasiado calor, ni nosotros lo aguantamos. O estamos agotados, ¿verdad? Entonces nos vamos a casa a las 11, 12, 1 de la tarde y ya terminamos por el día. No tenemos suficiente gente para poder estar aquí de 3 a 5 de la tarde".

Mark dice que rara vez tratan con funcionarios de ICE. Pero cuenta que un agente de inmigración dio a entender que no estaba de acuerdo con la política de liberaciones al azar y que quería coordinar los horarios de salida para que los voluntarios estuvieran ahí a la hora adecuada para ayudar. Hay otras señales de que la política del gobierno de Trump de infligir crueldad intencional a quienes han sido capturados no es compartida por todas las personas que trabajan en el sistema.

"Cuando he hablado con los guardias de transporte, que son contratistas, no ICE. Son muy claros. Quieren que sepas que el trabajo es solo mover gente". Mark cuenta cómo uno de esos guardias se deslindó de las acciones abusivas de algunos agentes de ICE: "Sabes, toda esa crueldad y esas cosas, ese no soy yo. Eso es ICE. Quiero que sepas que yo hago papeleo y los traigo aquí y los llevo de regreso, y esa es mi participación".

Monica describe el caos diario frente a la sede de ICE. Las mesas de registro para quienes fueron citados a una entrevista se instalan en la banqueta. No hay sombra que atenúe el calor, que muchas veces pasa de los 100 grados, ni techo por si llueve, ni sillas para las personas enfermas, ni espacio suficiente.

"Esta gente está amontonada, 30, 40 en una fila, esperando a que digan su nombre. Ves que la, la banqueta no es tan ancha. ¿Entonces a dónde se van? Se desbordan a la calle. Entonces, mi pregunta es por qué no interviene la ciudad. ¿Por qué no el condado, el Departamento de Salud? Esto es un riesgo de salud pública, un problema de salud pública".

Ni la ciudad de Fresno ni el condado han ofrecido ayuda, y ambos tienen la política de no interferir en las operaciones del gobierno federal. Eso deja la tarea de cuidar a quienes quedan atrapados en el brutal sistema de deportaciones en manos de personas como Mark Godfree, Monica Butterfly y sus compañeros. Su servicio a la humanidad quizá pase casi inadvertido, pero lo recordarán por mucho tiempo quienes recibieron su ayuda.

*****

Vic Bedoian es un periodista independiente del Valle de San Joaquín que trabaja principalmente en noticias de radio.

Los despidos de McClatchy dañan la cobertura del Fresno Bee

POR VIC BEDOIAN

Los periódicos de todo el Valle Central han sufrido despidos considerables por parte de McClatchy Media Company, entre ellos el Sacramento Bee y el Fresno Bee. McClatchy fue adquirido en quiebra por el fondo de cobertura Chatham Asset Management en 2020. La firma es conocida por reorganizar empresas reduciendo su personal. Parte de esa reducción implica aumentar el uso de la inteligencia artificial en los periódicos y las plataformas digitales de McClatchy.

Cuando el Fresno Bee fue comprado por Chatham Asset Management, los periódicos atravesaban una crisis financiera en todo el país. Pero cuando la empresa controladora adquirió a este periódico de tradición, subrayó su compromiso con un periodismo local sólido. Desde entonces, el Bee pasó de ser un diario a publicarse tres días por semana, además de su plataforma digital. Joshua Tehee es un periodista veterano del Fresno Bee y dirigente del Bee News Guild, el sindicato del periódico. Dice que los recortes de personal son profundos, de hasta 40%, y que dañarán la cobertura local.

"Aquí en la ciudad perdimos a un reportero de rendición de cuentas, perdimos a un reportero de vigilancia cívica, a un reportero del ayuntamiento. Teníamos a un reportero que cubría Clovis. Así que sin duda se va a sentir. Y es una de esas cosas en las que creo que estos puestos, una vez que desaparecen, va a ser muy, muy difícil recuperarlos".

Algunos de los reporteros del Fresno Bee que perdieron su empleo eran periodistas de investigación premiados que estaban destapando historias importantes. Un reportaje expuso las condiciones peligrosas de trabajo en la planta avícola de Mary's. Otros textos dieron luz sobre la inmigración, las deportaciones y los centros de detención. Una serie denunció la corrupción local. Ha sido un periodismo complejo, a fondo y detallado, y a algunos periodistas les preocupa que el plan de reestructuración de la empresa no lo haya tomado en cuenta y que la inteligencia artificial esté jugando un papel importante en las decisiones de despido de McClatchy. Tehee dice que hay motivos de inquietud, pero explica que es una simplificación concluir que los reporteros serán reemplazados directamente por agentes de inteligencia artificial.

"Es preocupante que estos recortes lleguen en un momento en que la empresa nos ha pedido meternos de lleno en las herramientas de inteligencia artificial o apoyarnos en ellas. A quienes quedamos en las salas de redacción se nos va a pedir hacer más con menos. Y una de las maneras en que la empresa ve estas herramientas es como una forma de ser más eficientes al contar historias".Para los residentes locales, el FresnoBee ha sido más que un periódico local. Se ha convertido en parte del paisaje social. Tehee entiende que las preguntas y preocupaciones del público sobre la inteligencia artificial son legítimas, igual que las preguntas sobre el futuro del papel del Fresno Bee para alimentar el hambre de noticias locales en el Valle de San Joaquín. Describe cómo el mundo digital está cambiando la manera en que se consumen las noticias y en que los periodistas hacen su trabajo, con la esperanza de mantener el legado que construyó el periódico.

"Para nosotros esto es noticia digital. Estamos en el terreno de la noticia digital y todo para nosotros va a estar en línea. Buscamos publicar historias sólidasen todos sus elementos, con buen material visual, y que todo embone".

Los periódicos están cambiando. Pero Tehee afirma que siguen muy vivos. Las salas de redacción ajetreadas y bulliciosas de antes ya no existen. Los reporteros, editores y fotógrafos pueden trabajar a distancia, en el campo o desde casa. Pero dice que todavía hay reuniones y sesiones de trabajo cara a cara, y que los ocho reporteros que siguen en la plantilla trabajan duro para llevarles noticias a los lectores del Fresno Bee.



El edificio del Fresno Bee, clausado en 2020, Foto de Vic Bedoian

"Todavía hay empleados en el Bee. Este es un punto que creo importante señalar. No es momento de darle la espalda al periodismo local. De hecho, es momento de abrazar todavía más el periodismo local, porque podría desaparecer. Puede que estemos acercándonos a un punto de quiebre".

Los despidos en el Fresno Bee no ocurren en el vacío. Periódicos de McClatchy en todo el país sufrieron despidos, incluidos diarios importantes como el Kansas City Star y el Miami Herald, cuyo trabajo periodístico destapó el escándalo de Jeffrey Epstein.

El capítulo del Valle Central de la Sociedad de Periodistas Profesionales (SPJ, por sus siglas en inglés) emitió un comunicado en apoyo a los reporteros despedidos del Bee. La SPJ advirtió que al Valle le irá peor con menos periodistas locales y citó estudios que muestran que quienes viven aquí saben que el Valle de San Joaquín está mal atendido en materia de noticias locales. La SPJ lanzó una campaña de recaudación de fondos para apoyar a los periodistas despedidos y ayudarlos a salir adelante. También le pide al gobernador de California, Gavin Newsom, que firme el Proyecto de Ley de la Asamblea 2222, que ayudaría a fortalecer el periodismo local en California. Newsom tiene hasta el 30 de septiembre para firmarlo o vetarlo.

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Vic Bedoian es un periodista independiente del Valle de San Joaquín que trabaja principalmente en noticias de radio.



Carín León

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escenario principal, lo que le dio un ambiente más íntimo y le permitió convivir más con la gente. Hasta le dio unos tragos a la cerveza mientras cantaba. Era como si estuviera pasando el rato con amigos y familia. León mostró su versatilidad al interpretar la canción de pop latino "Tú", con su propio estilo y con tololoche, pedal steel, bajo sexto y guitarra. En un momento empezó a firmar autógrafos en los sombreros que le pasaban mientras cantaba. También interpretó temas más tradicionales, como "Para siempre perdí", de su primer álbum, y "La farsante", junto con la banda.

Después de ese set regresó al escenario principal y cantó una balada acompañado de una guitarra, con un solo de trompeta. Eso devolvió la atención de todos a él mientras cantaba con el alma. Luego cantó un dueto de salsa muy movido con una de las vocalistas de su banda, cambiando por completo la dinámica. León bailó al ritmo de la salsa, moviéndose por el escenario y alrededor de la sección de metales. Lo volvió a hacer: pasó sin costuras de un género a otro. La pantalla de fondo mostraba un barrio lleno de color y las luces del escenario hacían juego. En cuanto el público escuchó la conocida introducción de acordeón de "Que vuelvas", gritó y empezó a cantar. La canción salió en 2022 en colaboración con Grupo Frontera y de inmediato se volvió un éxito. Salieron llamas del frente del escenario y, así nomás, la banda empezó a tocar "La boda del huitlacoche". La gente se puso a bailar en los pasillos, en las escaleras y frente a sus asientos; nadie se quedó sentado en esa canción. El tema ha tenido un resurgimiento mundial desde que León lo grabó en 2020. Cayó confeti blanco del techo sobre el público, el momento más alto del concierto. Justo cuando parecía que el concierto iba a terminar, las luces se atenuaron y bañaron el escenario de azul, dando entrada a la siguiente canción, "Despídase bien". Los colores hacían juego con la voz llena de sentimiento de León y con los poderosos coros.

León mantuvo la energía toda la noche e interpretó más de 30 canciones, una tras otra.



Carín León. Foto de Mike Miller/Cortesía de Eli Kramer.

Desde el montaje del escenario hasta la lista de canciones, todo estaba planeado con intención para dar el mejor espectáculo y la mejor experiencia posible al público. Con la amplia variedad de géneros que tocó esa noche, hubo algo para el gusto de cada quien. Todavía se puede ver alguno de sus conciertos por Estados Unidos hasta el 9 de octubre de 2026, cuando cerrará su gira en Portland, Oregón.

*****

Beatriz Herrera es directora de mariachi en Fresno State, maestra de música en el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Sanger y violinista y vocalista de mariachi de Fresno.

30th Anniversary Reception & Fundraiser

La noche del 19 de septiembre, varias decenas de miembros de la comunidad se reunieron en el despacho Law Office of Kevin G. Little, para celebrar el 30 aniversario del *Community Alliance*.

El público reflejó la diversidad multicultural de Fresno y fue intergeneracional. Entre los asistentes hubo desde personas que habían estado presentes desde los inicios del periódico hasta integrantes de la generación Alfa, y un grupo de adolescentes inspirados por la dedicación de toda la vida de sus padres al trabajo por la justicia social.

Entre quienes tomaron la palabra, hubo integrantes de la comunidad y activistas que trabajan en educación, inmigración, reforma del uso de pesticidas, rendición de cuentas policial, vivienda y más. A lo largo de la tarde y hasta entrada la noche, se tuvieron conversaciones críticas, las risas resonaron en la ligera brisa y se derramaron lágrimas.

El cofundador y editor de muchos años, Mike Rhodes, no pudo asistir al evento debido a problemas de salud relacionados con el cáncer, un diagnóstico que recibió hace nueve años y del que ha hablado públicamente. Sin embargo, el equipo de liderazgo grabó una entrevista que sostuvieron en su casa el día anterior a la recepción. A través de esta grabación, pudo dirigirse a los fieles seguidores del periódico al que dedicó su vida, al final de la noche.

Tras el conteo final, la recaudación de fondos reunió 2,944 dólares, y varias personas duplicaron su donativo por el ánimo de la exeditora en español Lourdes Oliva.

Kevin Little, abogado local de derechos civiles con 35 años de ejercicio centrado en los principios de "integridad, defensa y representación sin miedo", y padre del editor del Community Alliance, Enrique Little, se ofreció a ser anfitrión de la recaudación de fondos después de que el anuncio en la Edición Especial de agosto declarara que el periódico atraviesa una crisis financiera y necesita el apoyo de la comunidad.

"Es la comunidad la que nos ha sacado adelante en los tiempos difíciles de las últimas tres décadas", compartió la cofundadora y presidenta de la mesa directiva Pam Whalen.

Si desean apoyar al periódico, visiten fresnoalliance.com/support para inscribirse como donantes mensuales o realizar un donativo único. Para donativos deducibles de impuestos, escriban a newspaper@fresnoalliance.com

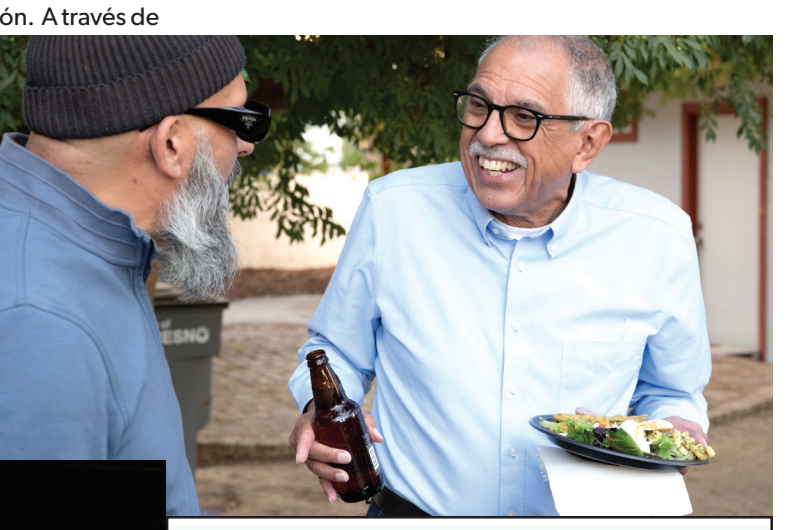








En sentido contrario a las manecillas del reloj, desde arriba: Disfrutando a los oradores, Foto de Arthur Robinson, Lourdes Medina (izq.) y Cristina Gutiérrez (der.), Foto de Peter Maiden, La fila de la comida, Foto de Peter Maiden, Haciendo arte con cuentas, Foto de Peter Maiden, mars santos, directore ejecutive del Community Alliance, Foto de Arthur Robinson, los escritores Jim Mendez (der.) e I. smiley G. Calderón (izq.), Foto de Peter Maiden.





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ALIANZA COMUNITARIA

LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

La brigada de respuesta rápida ayuda a los inmigrantes

POR VIC BEDOIAN

"El trabajo que hacemos aquí es ayuda mutua y respuesta rápida". —Mark Godfree
"Ver a hombres adultos llorando a mares es abrumador. Pero ver a muchachos jóvenes, verlos salir, podrían ser mis sobrinos, podrían ser mis nietos". —Monica Butterfly



La puerta principal de la sede del Servicio de Control de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE) en Fresno. *Foto de Peter Maiden*

Casi todos los días, cuatro o cinco voluntarios llegan a la oficina del Servicio de Control de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE, por sus siglas en inglés) en Fresno para dar apoyo y asistencia a los inmigrantes que salen de la detención y quedan en la calle L. Para algunos, es la única ayuda disponible para quienes se encuentran en un lugar desconocido con pocos recursos o ninguno. Si tienen suerte, los recibirá un voluntario con una mano amiga.

La sede de ICE en Fresno es un edificio grande de ladrillo gris en el centro de la ciudad. Aquí se procesa a seres humanos de todo el mundo. A algunos los citan y llegan por su cuenta. A otros los traen en camionetas blancas y se los traga la imponente estructura. Después del interrogatorio de los funcionarios de inmigración, terminan en un campo de detención o de vuelta en la calle. Ahí es donde entran Mark Godfree y Monica Butterfly. Están aquí seis mañanas a la semana para ayudar a quienes son liberados y tratan de encontrar el camino de regreso a casa.

Mark y Monica forman parte de un pequeño grupo de vecinos dedicado a ofrecer algo de consuelo y ayuda práctica a los inmigrantes que quedan en la calle en un lugar desconocido. Un completo desconocido sin rumbo a casa, como dice la canción. La mayoría llega traumatizada por lo que vivió. Durante esta jornada en particular, comparten la calle con una vigilia organizada por Faith in the Valley, cuyos integrantes ofrecen oraciones y dan testimonio del sufrimiento de sus semejantes.

Mark describe lo que pasa cuando se encuentran con los inmigrantes al salir del edificio de ICE. Lleva puesta una playera con el mensaje "We Are Here to Help" (Estamos aquí para ayudar) en varios idiomas. "Lo primero que hacemos es, es saludarlos y tratar de que nos reconozcan como gente amiga, ¿verdad? Que estamos aquí para ayudar. Y esta playera es parte de eso. Y luego tratamos de determinar qué idioma hablan para saber quién de nuestro grupo... Y básicamente solo estamos equipados para el inglés y el español". Agrega que se topan con personas que hablan muchos otros idiomas y a quienes tratan de ayudar como pueden.

ICE deja salir a la gente a la ciudad con unas cuantas pertenencias en esas bolsas rojas de red de plástico que dan en el mercado con cebollas o naranjas. Voluntarios como Mark y Monica les ofrecen mochilas con algo de ropa y artículos de higiene personal. Es una aportación que sale del bolsillo de quienes hacen el trabajo. Una de las maneras en que dan ayuda es el Backpack Project (Proyecto Mochila). Monica dice que ayuda a devolverles algo de dignidad.

"Ese proyecto lo empezó otra pareja que acompañó a uno de los hombres de regreso con su familia", explica Monica. "Se encontraron a medio camino entre aquí y Los Ángeles. Y a ella le dio mucha tristeza que él se bajara a ver a su esposa y a sus hijos vestido de esa manera y cargando esa bolsa roja. Y quedó desconsolada. Y dice: 'Los hemos despojado de toda su dignidad. ¿Qué podemos hacer para devolvérsela?'".

La ropa limpia y los zapatos decentes son parte importante de lo que se les da a los inmigrantes. Mark señala una tienda de segunda mano cercana a donde llevan a la gente para conseguir ropa de calle. "Porque salen con los uniformes grises y básicamente parecen alguien que estuvo en la cárcel. Entonces les ofrecemos una muda de ropa, que les ayuda a empezar a sentirse un poco más humanos. Andan vestidos normal, como cualquier persona. Y está limpia, porque huelen cuando salen, porque ellos (ICE) no los dejan bañarse mucho. Y de vez en cuando algunos entran a una cita de control y ya no salen. Y de esas personas, yo diría que 100% son deportadas".

Mark señala que las personas que ICE deja en la calle tienen otra necesidad crítica: una manera de comunicarse con familiares y amigos y de encontrar el camino a casa.

Continua en página 3

Carín León: De Sonora Para El Mundo Tour 2026

POR BEATRIZ HERRERA

El ganador de varios Grammy Carín León trajo su gira por Norteamérica, De Sonora Para El Mundo, al Save Mart Center de Fresno el 19 de septiembre. León empezó su carrera como solista en 2018 con el álbum Desvelada con Banda y Mariachi y desde entonces se ha convertido en una superestrella mexicana que agota conciertos en todo el mundo. Ha colaborado con artistas famosos como Alejandro Fernández, Carlos Santana, Maluma, Kacey Musgraves y Jelly Roll, por mencionar algunos. León es conocido por su estilo diverso para cantar y crear, y por mezclar géneros que van del pop latino al soul, el country y la salsa. Esta gira presentó un repertorio amplio y llevó al público a un viaje musical por su mundo.

La pantalla del escenario mostraba imágenes de Hermosillo, Sonora, la ciudad natal de León, mientras el público esperaba su aparición. Había dos secciones distintas, con tres niveles montados para los músicos. A la izquierda estaban la guitarra, el bajo sexto, el bajo eléctrico, la percusión, la sección de metales, el teclado, el tololoche, otros instrumentos folclóricos y tres coristas. A la derecha del escenario estaban la sección de percusiones, la banda completa y un acordeonista. La instrumentación jugó un papel clave durante toda la noche y le permitió a León mezclar con facilidad distintos géneros musicales y hacerlos suyos.

A León lo recibió una casa llena que lo vitoreó mientras salía al escenario entre una nube de humo, acompañado por la banda que tocaba "A través del vaso". Vestía un elegante atuendo todo de negro y su característica tejana al estilo sinaloense. Su presencia escénica cautivó al público, junto con su voz poderosa. Todos se levantaron de sus asientos y empezaron a cantar con él, sin perder el ritmo. En la tercera canción invitó a una de las vocalistas a cantar "Como lo hice yo", un dueto grabado originalmente con Matisse. León mezcló sin esfuerzo el estilo de banda con la balada latina, y las voces de los dos se complementaron muy bien. De pronto, las luces bajaron despacio desde el techo y se atenuaron, dando entrada a la siguiente canción, "Me está doliendo". Las siguientes canciones tuvieron más acordeón, bajo sexto, guitarra, tololoche y pedal steel, lo que les dio un sonido más country.

La banda tocó una pieza instrumental durante una transición mientras León se dirigía a un escenario más pequeño ubicado hacia el fondo del recinto. Los fans se dieron cuenta de inmediato de lo que iba a pasar y rodearon el escenario. De pronto apareció León, vestido con una camisa beige de manga corta con cuello y una gorra de béisbol blanca y negra con su logo. El público gritó al verlo subir. El montaje era mucho más pequeño que el del



Carín León en el Madison Square Garden el 22 de junio de 2026. Foto de Elie Pichanick/MSG Entertainment/Cortesía de Eli Kramer.

Continua en página 3