

# **A** COMMUNITY **ALLIANCE**

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## **STUDENT ACTIVISM IN FRESNO**



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CSU-Fresno students at Shaw and Cedar on November 9, 2007

**DECEMBER 2007**

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

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

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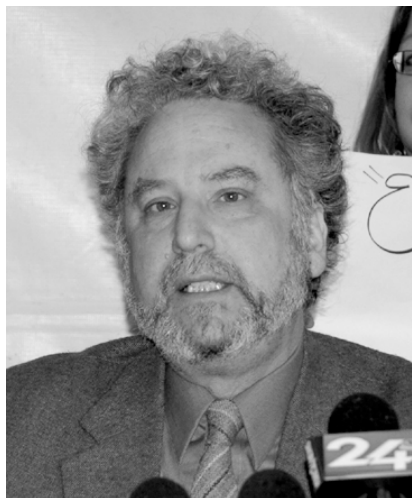
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## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Bridges Still Standing

by Jeremy Weir Alderson aka Nobody

As a homeless activist, I often find myself in discussions with people who ask me if America can actually afford to solve its housing crisis and what it would take to do it. This is the (somewhat updated) reply I sent to one of them, and I hope it will get people thinking:



I'll try to answer your question, but first let me put this into a little bit of context.

The first point of context is that while there are, in my opinion, some absolute moral values, they don't translate into absolute financial values. Would you spend your life savings to save a child? If it's a child you've never met in a country you've never been to, probably not. If it's your child, probably so. But either way, we're talking about saving a child's life. I mention this by way of addressing this question of what can America afford to spend to solve homelessness. The answer to that entirely depends on how important you think it is to do. I think it's very important while, by contrast, people who don't think it's so important thought it was very important to find non-existent WMD's in Iraq. We could have solved homelessness for the amount of money that's been spent on the war, so the money could have been found all along if anybody had wanted to find it, but now it will be much harder, because of what has been wasted in dollars and in human wreckage that we will also surely pay for.

The second contextual piece is that the homelessness problem is, in more ways than one, akin to the problem with our crumbling infrastructure. Putting adequate maintenance funds in our budget would have avoided this problem completely. But we waited to take it seriously (if we are taking it seriously now) until a bridge collapsed in Minnesota and a steam pipe burst in NYC, and it became painfully obvious that there are thou-

sands upon thousands of projects that need to be urgently addressed. Now it's an almost insurmountable problem because we waited so long, but what choice do we have?

So too with homelessness. We didn't even have this problem just a little more than 25 years ago, and by the way, we weren't a communist nation back then. We just had a different brand of capitalism. So this is a problem we can fix without turning our country upside down. Instead of moving to a more socially conscious form of capitalism, though, we moved to a crueler version, and now it will be very tough to fix the homelessness problem, which extends way beyond the people on the streets and is embedded in the very structure of the economy.

On the one hand, it's fair to say that this problem would have been easy to solve, that it's not intrinsically a difficult problem, and that, in fact, it should never have arisen. On the other hand, it's also fair to say that it will be very difficult to solve, but only because we've waited so long and done so many wrong things. What I want to know is, if we can't sit back and watch people die under bridges that have collapsed, how can we sit back and watch people die under bridges that are still standing?

Now, as to the facts of

the situation, I don't, personally, believe that the modern homelessness epidemic has anything to do with either substance abuse or mental illness. It was President Kennedy who signed the 1963 Community Mental Health Centers Act that accelerated the pace of deinstitutionalization, and the homelessness problem didn't arise for another 20 years, so where were all of those people in the meantime? And we had had waves of substance abuse for decades, with great uproars about heroin and LSD, just to name two, but we didn't have this kind of homelessness problem. So for these and many other reasons, I think the real cause of the homelessness epidemic is economic. I'll name just two factors.

If we had kept building low-income housing at the pace we had in the Ford years until today, we'd have spent maybe a trillion dollars (in constant dollars) more than we actually did. It was because we stopped investing in public housing that the low-income housing stock declined from where we had a surplus of low-income housing units to where we have a drastic shortfall. In cities like San Francisco and Boston and New York, a studio apartment can easily cost \$1000 a month or more. That sets the bar too high for many people. Even a street drunk might be able to scrape up a hundred or two hundred a month for rent but not a thousand or two thousand. So the more challenged a person is, the less likely he or she is to be able to afford housing in a society with escalating housing costs.

This dovetails with the other problem, which has been the bi-partisan assault on labor. The minimum wage is at an historic low in terms of purchasing power. And, as has been widely reported, good manufacturing jobs are being shipped overseas. We're turning into a low wage service economy just as rents are going up (the crisis in the housing market may bring rents down, but it will cause enough poverty to offset any "gains").

So the problem isn't that people are falling out of housing, it's that they're being spit out, caught between declining wages and rising prices for domiciles. There isn't

going to be any long-term solution to this growing divide between the gentrified and the reentrified unless we start pushing the income poles closer together with a wide range of measures, like restricting the flight of capital to labor markets overseas (e.g. by withdrawing from NAFTA and WTO), restoring the higher tax brackets, investing in public housing, tilting the legal playing field back towards the unions, instituting a national single-payer health care system and creating government jobs programs (there's so much to do just in terms of making critical repairs to infrastructure that one hardly has to worry that these will be "make work" positions). Those remedies might not be part of our current political dialog, but they're the only ones that, in my opinion, will solve homelessness over the long-term.

For the short term, I would, so to speak, drain the puss out of the wound by creating tent city neighborhoods for homeless people all over the country, so that everyone quickly has a place to stay. These wouldn't be concentration camps, just neighborhoods, where people could come and go freely like in any other neighborhood. These would be neighborhoods with basic services like electricity, waste disposal and water; that would be patrolled by police, who wouldn't be allowed to roust everyone just because one person was suspected of a crime; that would be accessible

to outreach workers, and that would be tied to urban areas by bus lines or other forms of mass transit at reduced rates, so that residents could participate in their larger communities and get jobs. This way we could get everybody off the streets in a few months.

[I add here a section not in my original reply, because I wasn't writing just about Fresno then. Regarding Fresno, I will note that there are rather significant differences between the plan I have outlined above and Fresno's plan for housing up to an additional 88 homeless people in what Mike Rhodes aptly calls "tool sheds" under the auspices of Povarello House. The trouble with Fresno's plan is that there's too much the city of Fresno doesn't get for its money. First and foremost, it doesn't get decent living conditions for poor people. These sheds are tiny, unheated, thinly constructed, uninsulated, with no running water or sanitary facilities inside, and the homeless residents have to share them. Homeless residents also don't get to choose the

Continued on page 5

### LAST CHANCE...

to make a TAX-DEDUCTIBLE donation that directly assists the Community Alliance. The Activist Scholarship Fund (ASF) selected C/A editor Mike Rhodes for its first award, and has been giving a monthly stipend to assist Mike in continuing his full-time work for the Alliance. Donations to the ASF received prior to January 31, 2008, will be included in Mike's award. (After that, money will be raised for the next awardee.) Donations may be made payable to the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno CA 93728 (memo ASF).

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# Rapture Rescue 911: Disaster Response for the Chosen

By Naomi Klein

(from the November 19, 2007 issue of *The Nation* magazine)

I used to worry that the United States was in the grip of extremists who sincerely believed that the Apocalypse was coming and that they and their friends would be airlifted to heavenly safety. I have since reconsidered. The country is indeed in the grip of extremists who are determined to act out the biblical climax—the saving of the chosen and the burning of the masses—but without any divine intervention. Heaven can wait. Thanks to the booming business of privatized disaster services, we're getting the Rapture right here on earth.

Just look at what is happening in Southern California. Even as wildfires devoured whole swaths of the region, some homes in the heart of the inferno were left intact, as if saved by a higher power. But it wasn't the hand of God; in several cases it was the handiwork of Firebreak Spray Systems. Firebreak is a special service offered to customers of insurance giant American International Group (AIG)—but only if they happen to live in the wealthiest ZIP codes in the country. Members of the company's Private Client Group pay an average of \$19,000 to have their homes sprayed with fire retardant. During the wildfires, the "mobile units"—racing around in red firetrucks—even extinguished fires for their clients.

One customer described a scene of modern-day Revelation. "Just picture it. Here you are in that raging wildfire. Smoke everywhere. Flames everywhere. Plumes of smoke coming up over the hills," he told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Here's a couple guys showing up in what looks like a firetruck who are experts trained in fighting wildfire and they're there specifically to protect your home."

And your home alone. "There were a few instances," one of the private firefighters told Bloomberg News, "where we were spraying and the neighbor's house went up like a candle." With public fire departments cut to the bone, gone are the days of Rapid Response, when everyone was entitled to equal protection. Now, increasingly intense natural disasters will be met with the new model: Rapture Response.

During last year's hurricane season, Florida homeowners were offered similarly high-priced salvation by HelpJet, a travel agency launched with promises to turn "a hurricane evacuation into a jet-setter vacation." For an annual fee, a company concierge takes

care of everything: transport to the air terminal, luxurious travel, bookings at five-star resorts. Most of all, HelpJet is an escape hatch from the kind of government failure on display during Katrina. "No standing in lines, no hassle with crowds, just a first class experience."

HelpJet is about to get some serious competition from some much larger players. In northern Michigan, during the same week that the California fires raged, the rural community of Pellston was in the grip of an intense public debate. The village is about to become the headquarters for the first fully privatized national disaster response center. The plan is the brainchild of Sovereign Deed, a little-known start-up with links to the mercenary firm Triple Canopy. Like HelpJet, Sovereign Deed works on a "country-club type membership fee," according to the company's vice president, retired Brig. Gen. Richard Mills. In exchange for a one-time fee

access to medicine, water and food, while those who pay for "premium tiered services" will be eligible for VIP rescue missions.

Like so many private disaster companies, Sovereign Deed is selling escape from climate change and the failed state—by touting the security clearance and connections its executives amassed while working for that same state. So Mills, speaking recently in Pellston, explained, "The reality of FEMA is that it has no infrastructure, and a lot of our National Guard is elsewhere." Sovereign Deed, on the other hand, claims to have "direct access and special arrangements with several national and international information centers. These proprietary arrangements allow our Emergency Operations Center to...give our Members that critical head start in times of crisis." In this secular version of the Rapture, God's hand is unnecessary. Not when you have retired ex-CIA agents and ex-Special Forces lifting the chosen to safety—no need to pray, just pay. And who needs a celestial New Jerusalem when you can have Pellston, with its flexible local politicians and its surprisingly modern regional airport?

## *When disaster strikes - will only the rich be rescued?*



Sovereign Deed could soon find itself competing with Blackwater USA, whose CEO, Erik Prince, wrote recently of his plans to offer "full spectrum" services, including humanitarian aid in disasters. When fires broke out in San Diego County, near the proposed site of the controversial Blackwater West base, the company immediately seized the opportunity to make its case. Blackwater could have been the "tactical operation center for East County fires," said company vice president Brian Bonfiglio. "Can you imagine how much of a benefit it would be if we were operational now?" To show off its capacity, Blackwater has been distributing badly needed food and blankets to people of Potrero, California. "This is something we've always done," Bonfiglio said. "This is what we do." Actually, what Blackwater does, as Iraqis have painfully learned, is not protect entire communities or countries but "protect the principal"—the principal being whoever has paid Blackwater for its guns and gear.

The same pay-to-be-saved logic governs this entire new sector of country club disaster management. There is, of course, another principle that could guide our collective responses in a disaster-prone world: the simple conviction that every life is of equal value.

For anyone out there who still believes in that wild idea, the time has urgently arrived to protect the principle.

of \$50,000 followed by annual dues of \$15,000, members receive "comprehensive catastrophe response services" should their city be hit by a manmade disaster that can "cause severe threats to public health and/or well-being" (read: a terrorist attack), a disease outbreak or a natural disaster. Basic membership includes ac-  
###

The Nation is a weekly magazine (see: <http://www.thenation.com/>). Naomi Klein is a Nation columnist and the author of *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.

# Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

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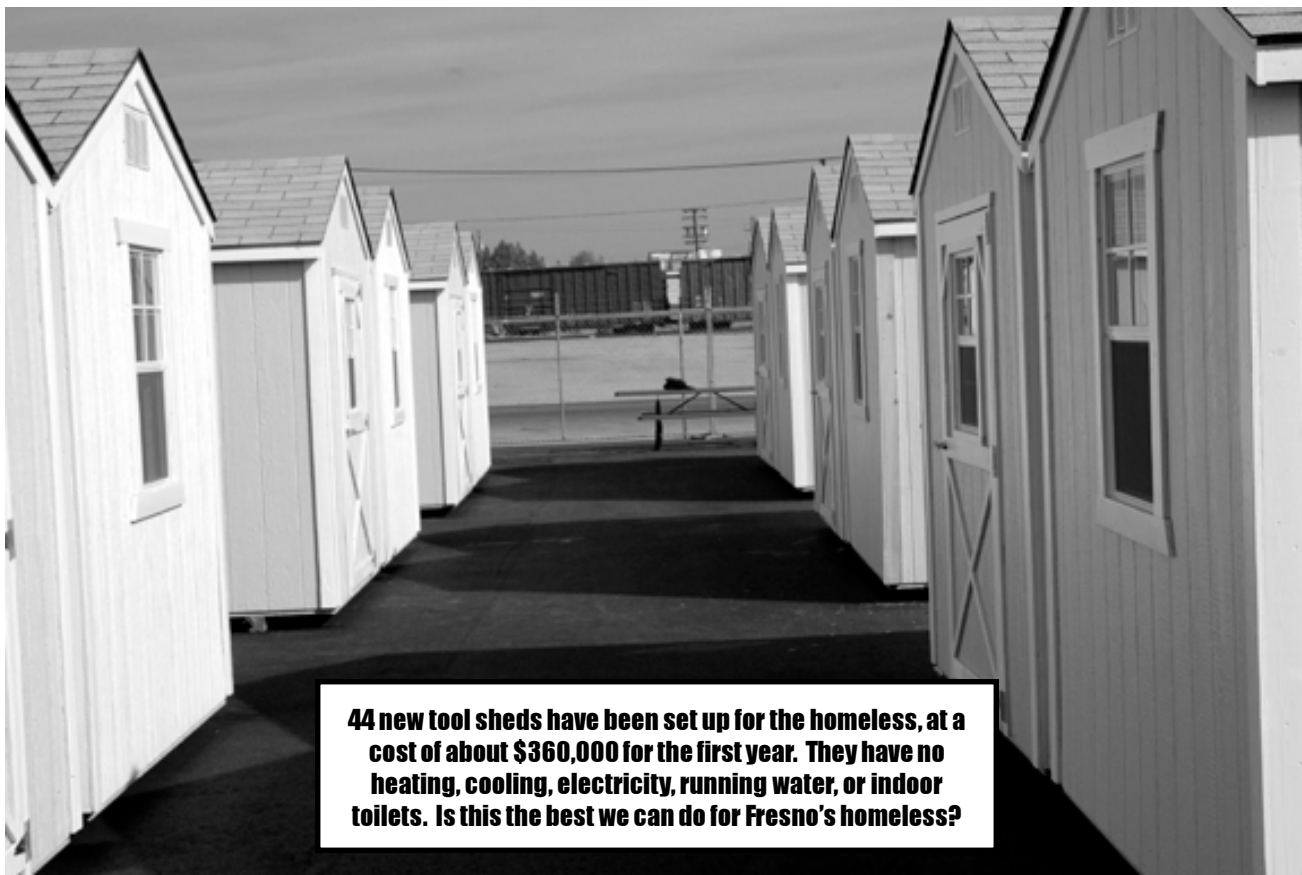
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559-435-7360

**Next meeting: Saturday, December 8, 2007, 3:30-5:00 PM at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence.**

**Speaker: Tom Boyajian, candidate for Mayor of Fresno and former two-term member of the Fresno City Council.**

**This is a great opportunity to hear what he would do as Mayor of Fresno and to ask him questions about issues important to you. CVPPAC's monthly meetings are free and open to the public.**



**44 new tool sheds have been set up for the homeless, at a cost of about \$360,000 for the first year. They have no heating, cooling, electricity, running water, or indoor toilets. Is this the best we can do for Fresno's homeless?**

## Is Mayor Autry Above the Law?

By Mike Rhodes

Just before Thanksgiving, Fresno mayor Alan Autry announced the opening of a new Tool Shed City for the homeless. The tool sheds are at the Poverello House, a social service agency for the homeless that operates in downtown Fresno. The mayor said the sheds will provide safe, clean sleeping quarters and access to essential resources for our homeless residents, but homeless advocates are concerned that the facilities do not have heating, cooling, running water, electricity, or indoor toilets.

I asked the mayor about the legality of the tool sheds at the press conference. I said "if I had one of these tool sheds in my backyard and put my mother in law in it, I would probably get a citation and fine." I might even get arrested for elder abuse. I mentioned that I know of an instance where a man was providing shelter for a homeless person in his back yard - the trailer had heating, cooling, running water, and a toilet, but the city's code enforcement team forced him to evict the person living in the trailer. That person is now homeless and living on the streets of Fresno. How can the city set up tool sheds that are not as good as that person's trailer and be in compliance with city building codes? Isn't this a double standard? The mayor said "if we look at this with all this paralysis of analysis through these cross comparisons of this or that and the theater of the absurd, we're not going to get anyone out from under the overpass (homeless people living in New Jack City)." He never answered the question, which was whether the mayor and City of Fresno was above the law.

Cynthia Greene, who filmed the press conference for the Community Alliance newspaper, asked the mayor "are the homeless people that don't want to move into Tool Sheds going to be forced to move into them?" Greene is homeless and lives on The Hill, which is a homeless encampment that the City Manager's office has identified as the first target of a "clean up" after the Tool Shed City is established. Autry said "nobody is going to be forced to do anything except obey the law."

Autry was asked about the Camping Ordinance the City Manager's office has proposed which would make it illegal for homeless people to sleep outdoors at night. The mayor said "we will address homelessness in a very compassionate and effective way." He did not rule out his support for a camping ordinance that could be used to force homeless people into the tool sheds. See: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/10/02/>

18451441.php for background on the city's strategy to use the tool sheds to force the homeless out of other encampments.

Speaking in support of the tool sheds, Big Sue who is homeless, said "I'm number one on the list to be in the sheds." At the press conference she said "I want to be a part of Fresno coming together . . . we need a solution to deal with the homeless problem." Big Sue is not the only person in the homeless community that supports the tool sheds. Randy Johnson, one of the named plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the City of Fresno (see <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/11/23/18332519.php>), is currently living in a tool shed in the Village of Hope, which is also located at the Poverello House. Johnson says the tool shed provides him with a better place to live than when he was at New Jack City.

Arnold Sanchez is also hoping to get into the tool sheds. Sanchez was caught up in a city "clean up" last week and was forced to move. He was living in a tent in front of the Poverello House. A notice, posted about 10 days before the clean up, said the city had "received complaints concerning individuals who are loitering near or residing in temporary shelters that have been constructed in the vicinity of Santa Clara and E street." Sanchez said he talked to the neighbors and they did not have a problem with him living there. "I think they forced us out because Mr. Autry thinks we are an eyesore." But Sanchez is not sure if he will be allowed into one of the tool sheds because he has had a run in with one of the Poverello House employees. Sanchez says he thinks he has "rubbed this person the wrong way. If I don't get a place that will be why."

Paul Stack, Operations Director for the Poverello

House, told me that all people have to do to get into a tool shed is agree to follow the rules. Stack said "any person that agrees to follow the rules will be given a place to stay." Jim Connell, Executive Director of the Poverello House said there will be two people per shed. He said the rules will be minimal, "we will not allow alcohol or drug use inside the compound, we will be opening in the evening at about 4:30 PM for you to come in, you can stay all night, and then we will be securing peoples property at around 8 AM. You will be able to store your property in the shed." Residents of tool shed city will be locked out from 8 AM - 4:30 PM.

Asked about long term solutions for the homeless in Fresno, mayor Autry was vague. He said "we are looking at the root causes of homelessness and how to get people well. We believe that concentrating on the percentage that can be productive, those that maybe have some mental health issues and could be treated with medication - I don't believe and experts don't believe that medication is getting to the homeless in the atmosphere and circumstances that will allow them to get well. We need to address that. The ones that are the tougher cases, the ones that require food and shelter and the basics like we want to provide, we will do that for as long as it takes. We have a responsibility to look out for those who can't help themselves."

I asked "is there a long term plan that goes beyond the tool sheds?" The mayor said "absolutely, we are looking for long term housing solutions that are not only good for addressing the homeless situation, but also can co-exist with the realities of developing our downtown."

Autry said that he was not happy with the situation. "Am I happy that I'm in my seventh year and we are just doing this short term relief? No. I have failed in that regard. So, I'm not going to give you a bunch of political double speak. We are all learning about this and we have to realize that the measure of the city, to a great degree, is how you treat your most vulnerable."



**Big Sue endorsed the mayor's plan and said she will live in one of the tool sheds.**

Will legal challenges be made because the tool sheds are in violation of city building codes? Homeless activists have researched the Municipal Code (see: <http://www.municode.com/Resources/gateway.asp?pid=14478&sid=5>) and tell me the tool sheds are in clear violation of the

law. Advocates for the disabled tell me the tool sheds do not comply with the Americans with Disability Act and could be shut down for those violations.

While there is no clear answer about whether a legal challenge will arise or not, everyone does seem to agree that the tool sheds are not a long term solution. If the City of Fresno moves in the direction of renovating some of the abandoned buildings into affordable and adequate housing for the homeless, that would be one thing. But, if these tool sheds become a permanent fixture, if more are built, and if homeless people are forced into them, my sources tell me litigation is likely. If that happens, the question of whether the mayor and City of Fresno is required to comply with the same laws (building codes, ADA, etc) as city residents will probably be put to the test in a court of law.

For a list of articles and documents about the struggle for civil liberties for homeless people in Fresno, see: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/homelessness.htm>

### Partnerships in Understanding

Consultations with Richard Stone, M.A. concerning life values and mental health

First meeting at no cost  
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# Underground in Fresno

By Mike Rhodes

People who are homeless in Fresno build some interesting and creative shelters. Last month I visited Bruce Tracy who has dug ten feet into the ground, creating a multi room shelter that keeps him cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Tracy's home reminded me of the Forestiere Underground Gardens, located on Shaw avenue in north Fresno. Unlike the Forestiere Gardens, which is a local, state, and national historical landmark, the Fresno Police have told Tracy they plan to bulldoze his home.

Tracy said he has built a lot of these underground homes. "I have been doing this since I was fourteen," Tracy said. He credited his interest in underground living to a visit to the Forestiere gardens when he was a kid. Sitting in his home, on this rainy November day, Tracy said it took him about three months to dig out this home. "I dug it all out with a shovel and an axe."

About a week before this interview, the Fresno Police Department found Tracy's home, which is on public land (Caltrans) about a mile north of Roeding Park. Tracy said the police came in with guns drawn, searched the place, and forced him out in his underwear. He was forced to stand outside in his boxer shorts for 2 1/2 hours while the police interrogated him. "They came back a couple of days ago and said I had to leave. They said they were going to bulldoze the place," Tracy said.

The City of Fresno is in the process of building more tool sheds to put homeless people into. 44 new sheds are being installed at the Poverello House, which is a homeless service center in downtown Fresno. See the article on page 4.

The destruction of Tracy's home follows a pattern by the city to eliminate homeless encampments and force people into what some people call concentration camps. John Everett called me about a week before I talked to Tracy and told me his story. He said that he owns property near Roeding Park, had set up a couple of trailers on his land, and rented them out at very reasonable rates to people who were homeless. It gave people a reasonably nice place to stay, at a price they could afford and that everyone was happy with the arrangement. Everett said "code enforcement came in and shut me down. Everyone had to move back onto the streets."

The trailers Everett rented had heating, cooling, electricity, running water, and a toilet. The tool sheds the city are building don't have heating or cooling, running water, and everyone shares a portable toilet. Everett said people could come and go as they pleased at his place but at the tool shed city at the Poverello House everyone is kicked out by 8 AM in the morning and can't return until 4:30 PM. The tool sheds are costing the city \$360,000 for the first year. Everett's operation cost the taxpayers nothing. Tracy's underground home cost the taxpayers nothing. Why is the City of Fresno destroying homeless encampments and forcing them to move into housing that violates building codes, is not as nice as what they had, and is costing taxpayers a significant amount of money?

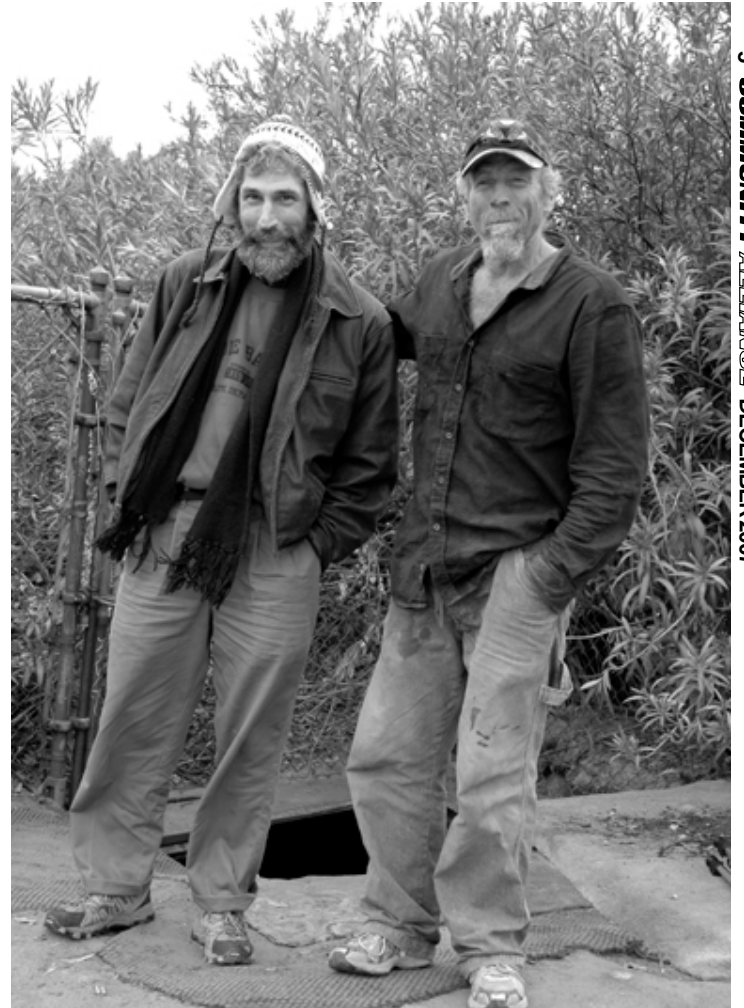
I asked Bruce and his friend Thomas what they thought was behind the City of Fresno's plan to move homeless people into tool sheds. "It's all about control," Thomas said. "I got pulled over 45 times in 30 days" added Bruce. Bruce says homeless people are constantly harassed, "they just want to eliminate the homeless" by making life so hard that they move.

Bruce, who works as a car-

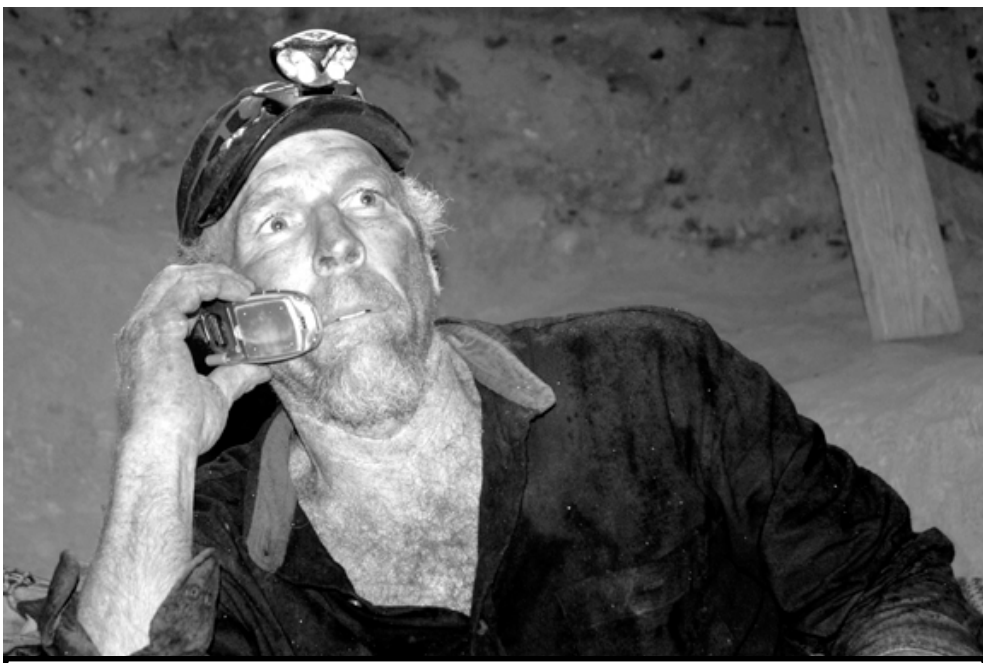
penter and mechanic, said he does not want to spend his money on rent and live the consumer oriented lifestyle that most people take for granted. He takes no money from the government and would like to be left alone to live in peace. "I'm self sustaining, self sufficient, and don't get in trouble with the law. . . as much as I can."

Most homeless people live a much more communal life than most Fresno residents who live in suburbs or apartments. They know their neighbors and take time to talk with them everyday. While we were visiting Bruce, a friend came by to make sure he was alright. He had seen our car parked nearby. After Bruce assured his friend that everything was OK, he told me that the friend said he would keep an eye on our car to make sure nobody disturbed it. That is what neighbors should do. They should look after each other, not bulldoze their homes.

For a list of articles and documents about the struggle for civil liberties for homeless people in Fresno, see: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/homelessness.htm>



Thomas and Bruce Outside the Underground Home



Bruce talks (live) to Pirate Radio <http://www.freakradio.org/> in Santa Cruz about his underground home.

## Guest Editorial continued from page 2

hours when they stay "home," because they have to be in and out at prescribed times. And it's not a real neighborhood, but a fenced-in compound patrolled by Povarello-House security. This will be something close to what some activists call "a low intensity prison."

The other thing Fresno doesn't get for its money is an honest approach to homelessness. The new tool shed beds will house only a tiny fraction of Fresno's homeless population. By some estimates, as little as one percent. And on top of that, we don't even know the outcomes for the existing tool shed residents when they "graduate." It's as if the city is answering the question, "What's the closest thing to nothing we can get away with?" Yes, let's hope that somebody is helped by the new beds, but as a city, Fresno shouldn't deceive itself that the new beds do much more than give Mayor Autry a license to posture.

Then I would begin a massive program of restoring housing. It's said that municipal, state and Federal authorities already have enough unused, run-down and abandoned housing in their inventories to house all the homeless without even building anything new, though there's nothing wrong

with investing in new housing as well, according to whatever mix works best. In tandem with these building projects, I would begin moving the minimum wage to a true living wage. Some people say that that would cause problems, and it might, but they always talk as if we're allowed to do only one thing, like we're surgeons who are allowed to remove a burst appendix, but not to sew the incision back up. Whatever problems raising the minimum wage might cause we could fix, especially by taking the health care burden off of businesses.

*What I want to know is, if we can't sit back and watch people die under bridges that have collapsed, how can we sit back and watch people die under bridges that are still standing?*

Also, the biggest problem with government spending in America is that we don't see any results for it. What do we get for the war in Iraq besides misery? A program such as I am describing would immediately re-

I believe, with real leadership, the American people would go for this. In the first place, there's much more sympathy for the poor than is officially acknowledged. The middle class may still exist as an economic reality but it has ceased to exist as a psychological reality. People with good incomes are stretched and scared of falling into poverty. They know how hard it has become to make it in America, and they identify more with the poor than many people think.

duce crime and "clean up" inner cities while pumping billions of dollars into the real economy lived by poor and working class Americans. They would be ecstatic. Think what you want of Hugo Chavez, and many questions about him might legitimately be asked, but he survived a coup because the poor people turned out en masse to support him. It does make a difference where the money is spent, and I think a real investment in America would be welcomed by the majority of Americans.

Houses are great, and we need a lot more of them, but no, I don't think we have to build one for every homeless person. Single-room occupancy buildings, would serve well for many people and be cheap to construct. Similarly, a relatively inexpensive network of youth hostels would be equally good for young travelers looking to find themselves or young refugees from domestic abuse with no other alternative but the streets. Australia and Canada and now some places in the U.S., too, have used something called "Granny Flats" where they put a trailer in the back yard of someone with an elderly relative so they can have assisted living from their family, which is much cheaper than an institution, and then when the elderly person dies, the trailer is moved somewhere else. There's all kinds of creative, cost effective solutions, besides just building housing projects, but the point is that leaving the homelessness wound to fester so that people have no housing and no hope and then kicking them like dogs when they're down is no solution at all.

Jeremy Alderson is eager to hear from Fresnoans who can help with the next Homelessness Marathon. He says that web and telephone skills are especially prized, but he'll take somebody who's not good for anything but bringing in money. He can be reached at [radio@lightlink.com](mailto:radio@lightlink.com)

# Who's Going to Be Our next Mayor?

By: Howard K. Watkins

Progressives have a great opportunity next year to make some real changes in our government. California's February 5<sup>th</sup> presidential primary could very well determine the nominees of both major parties. The June 3<sup>rd</sup> primary will determine who is in the run-off for Mayor of Fresno and will likely decide most of the Fresno City Council and Board of Supervisor races. Information on the presidential candidates is readily available, so here is an early overview on Fresno's race for Mayor. Next month, I will write about the other local races.

## THE CANDIDATES

Due to term limits, there will be significant changes at City Hall as a result of the 2008 elections. Mayor Alan Autry and Council Members Brian Calhoun, Jerry Duncan, and Henry T. Perea are all termed out. This is a major reason why the three Council Members (and others) are running for new offices.

Current candidates for Mayor include, in alphabetical order: Tom Boyajian, Mike Dages, Jerry Duncan, Henry T. Perea, and Ashley Swearingin. A potential candidate is current Deputy City Manager Jeff Eben. Other potential candidates, all registered Republicans, include Mike Der Manouel, Jr., Gary Bredefield, and Jim Patterson. Chief of Police Jerry Dyer announced he will not be a candidate for Mayor. Here is a brief overview of the announced candidates.

**Tom Boyajian:** attorney and former two-term District 1 (west-central Fresno) member of the City Council; well liked by the voters in District 1 with a solid progressive voting record. On the Council, he opposed leapfrog development, supported higher developer fees (which the City Council finally approved this year), and he supports creation of an Independent Police Auditor (IPA).

**Mike Dages:** currently represents District 5 (SE Fresno) on the City Council. Liked in his district, mixed bag on progressive issues, opposes an Independent Police Auditor, and was a key vote to reduce funding for the Human Relations Commission.

**Jerry Duncan:** currently represents District 6 (NE Fresno) on the City Council. He opposes most issues or recommendations supported by the progressive community. He is the most politically conservative of the candidates and is remembered for wishing he had a dirty bomb so he could get rid of all of the progressives that were attending a City Council meeting.

**Henry T. Perea** currently represents District 7 (east-central Fresno) on the City Council where he is finishing the year as Council President. Strong proponent for solar power and for achieving healthy air quality faster than the 17 years approved by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Board. Supports most progressive issues, but not an IPA.

**Ashley Swearingin:** Director, Office of Community & Economic Development at CSU Fresno and head of the Fresno Regional Jobs Initiative. She has a Masters in Business Administration and significant experience in working to create jobs in the Valley. Jobs and economic development will be a big part of her campaign. She needs to get up to speed on numerous local issues, but has the skill to do so. She has close ties to the Fresno Business Council, which should be of help as this is her first go as a candidate for political office.

## ANALYSIS

Many of the candidates view Fresno as being at a major turning point. Fresno can become the quality city many talk of having, or continue on a downward spiral of sprawl, air pollution, and a city of haves and have-nots. Unions and the Chamber of Commerce are usually major endorsers in local races. The Central Labor Council has many friends among these candidates and has done an open endorsement, which allows individual unions to endorse as they choose. The Chamber of Commerce likely does not have a clear first choice among the candidates. It will be interesting to see what they do.

While Boyajian and Perea would both bring experience in City issues and a progressive agenda to the Mayor's office, Boyajian would be stronger on progressive issues, but I expect that Perea would bring in a broader coalition of support. Perea and his father, Fresno County Supervisor Henry Perea, already have a significant contingent of campaign supporters and fundraising appeal, while Boyajian has to resurrect his. Both support PEG Access Chan-

nels, in-fill and downtown development, crime prevention programs, prevailing wage, funding for the arts, and other progressive issues.

Swearingin is running because she wants to make Fresno a better community and agrees that now is the time to do it. She does not have aspirations for higher office and she would likely be oriented more to good government policies than political concerns. How well this would work in Fresno is unclear, but refreshing.

How well Dages and Duncan will do outside their current Council districts is unknown. Swearingin will likely pick up votes that would have gone to either of them. Perea will likely pick up many votes in Dages' Council district. The breadth and caliber of endorsements will influence the choice for many voters. The key issue for voters is to decide which candidate has the best vision for Fresno's future and the ability to implement that vision. Remember—only registered voters can vote next year. If you are not registered, others will decide Fresno's future for you.

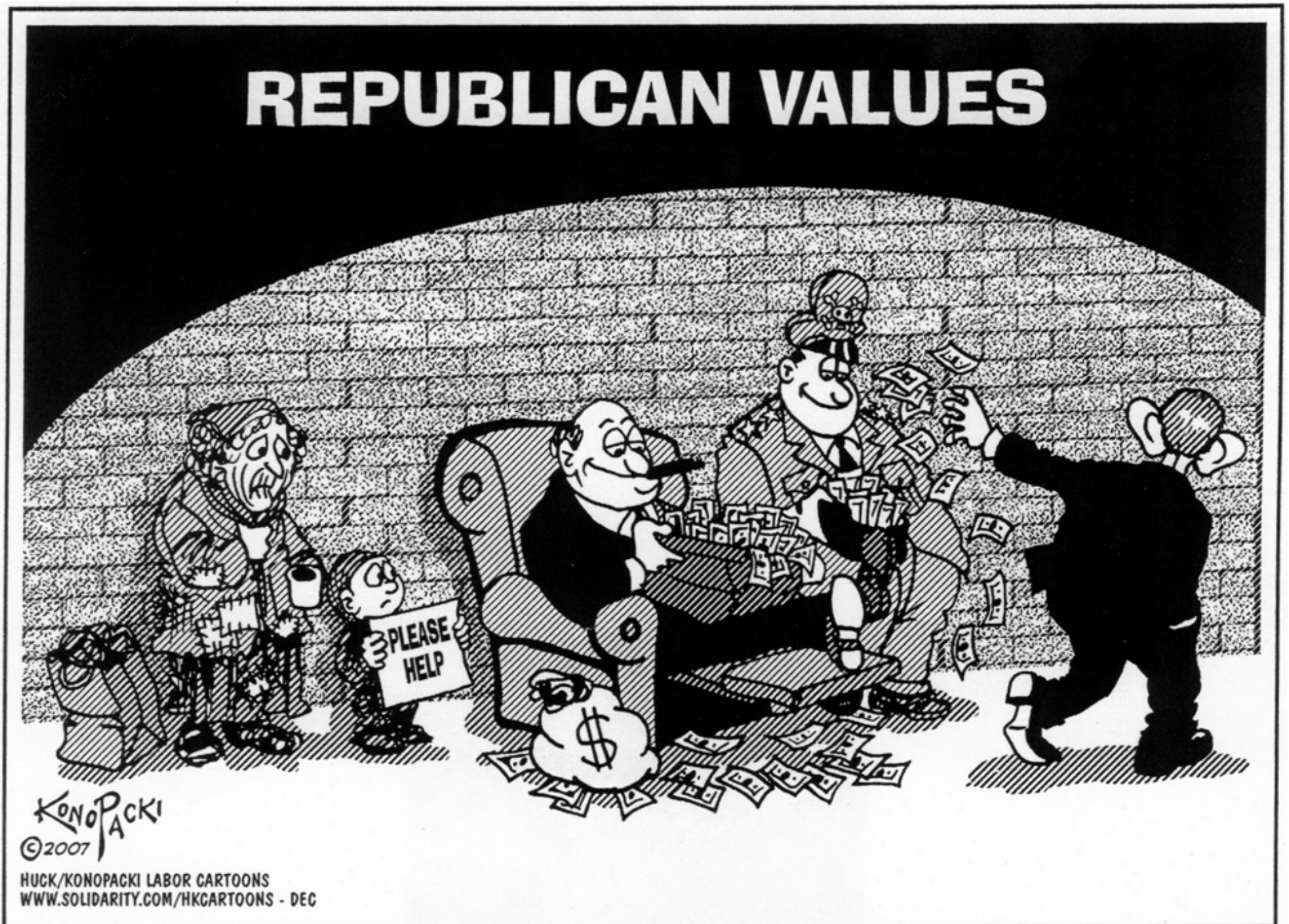
## PREDICTING THE OUTCOME

While much will happen before the June 3<sup>rd</sup> primary and the deadline to file for the Mayor's race is still months away, right now I would predict that Perea, with his high energy and broad appeal will end up in a run-off with Swearingin. If I am right, you read it here first. If I am wrong, well, there's another prediction to forget.

Given the importance of this race, readers are urged to meet the candidates and attend forums to hear their views on the many important issues facing Fresno. The Central Valley Progressive PAC's candidate forums will be next March and open to the general public. As a concluding point, it is unfortunate that the City does not have Instant Run-off Voting where voters rank their choice of candidates. This would allow voters to prioritize their votes and save the time and expense of a run-off election.

###

Howard K. Watkins is a recently retired attorney and current Chair of the Central Valley Progressive PAC. This article represents his views and not necessarily those of the CVPPAC or its members.

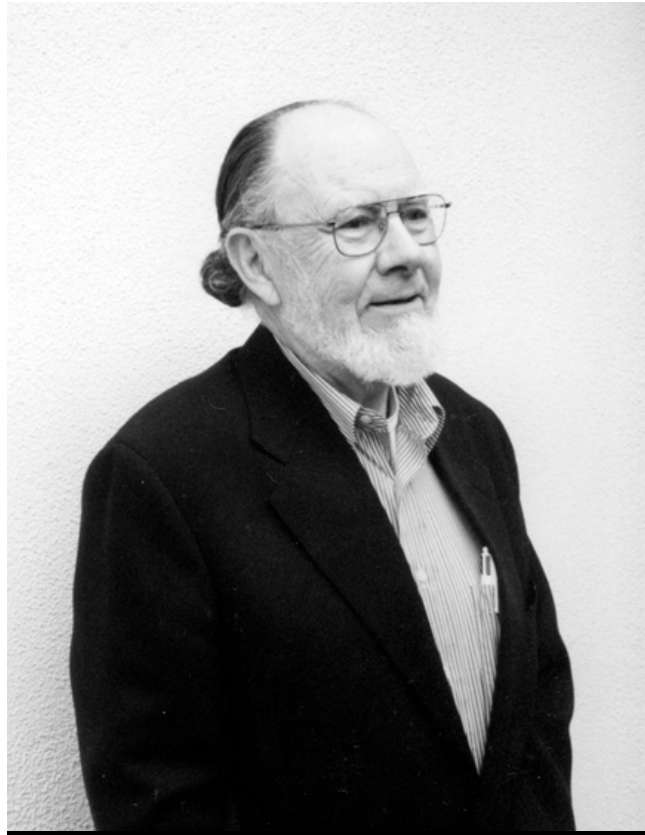


# Credo

By Richard Stone

What is the credo of one who finds belief to be suspect? Determining this is my paradoxical task as I interview Bill Young, founder of The Society of Evangelical Agnostics (SEA) and a chief organizer of Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley.

Bill has long left behind his strong Christian upbringing and his confidence in the existence of a divine creator. As such a one, his moral compass is often questioned. So right off let me testify: Bill is



Bill Young is the founder of the Society of Evangelical Agnostics

one of the more thoughtful and compassionate people in my acquaintance, and he has very strong ethical principles that guide his actions. What he professes not to have is certainty. Or, as stated in the SEA leaflet he gave me:

"One should accept living without final answers; one should be open-minded in seeking solutions to one's questions and concerns; one should feel that it is wrong to advocate conclusions without adequate evidence."

This is a spare, rational doctrine demanding equilibrium and personal discipline if one is to follow it humbly and humanely. And I have heard "rationalists" be as arrogant as "believers" as they state their faith in scientific rigor as the only way to obtain viable answers to life's questions. So I was delighted to find in Bill someone accepting of befuddlement and the mysteries, saying, in effect, "I don't know...and I doubt that you can know either," with a twinkling eye rather than a supercilious air.

It is with just this humorous touch that Bill speaks of his transition from youthful religiosity to agnosticism as an "unconversion experience," a blinding insight (not unlike St. Paul's in manner, though opposite in content) while on the road in the mountains of Colorado. "Suddenly incidents and thoughts that had stood in isolation in confusing contradiction to my beliefs came together, and in a moment of brilliance I understood there was no need for religion, that in fact I had to find my own way."

During our conversation, I became aware that although I, with no formal religious belief, share much of Bill's approach to living, we are in some respects very different. I have had experiences that lead me to a different understanding of what our lives are part of and where our guidance comes from. But Bill's charm was evident in his response to my comment to that effect. "I understand you have had

experiences that I haven't, and that our individual sense of truth comes from how we experience and interpret what we live. So I have no need to interfere with your understanding, or to impose mine on you. My goal is, in the time of our meeting, to make our lives more satisfying." To that I can only say, "Amen."

In preparation for our interview, I had asked Bill to think about teachers and writers that influenced him. Some writers he mentioned were "classic" humanists Thomas Henry Huxley, Robert Green Ingersoll and Bertrand Russell. He also speaks highly of contemporary writer Lloyd Geering, author of *Christianity Without God*. As a personal influence he speaks about Rev. Bob Moon, a Methodist minister he met in Fresno, as someone with "a prophetic voice regarding social and political issues who I admire tremendously." As a brief quotation that epitomizes his credo, Bill chose the following by Ingersoll:

"Happiness is the only good.  
The place to be happy is here.  
The time to be happy is now.  
The way to be happy is to make others so."

A final note: Bill is working on a book, *The Memoirs of a Religious Maverick*, which he hopes to complete next year by his 80th birthday. In our interview Bill related some of the autobiographical narrative that serves as source for his understanding. I am not able to include that material here, but it will be found in the book. His is a rich and unconventional life well worth learning about. We'll let our readers know when the book becomes available.

(Information about Humanism and the Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley can be found at [www.fresno.humanists.net](http://www.fresno.humanists.net); and also in Bill's short article in the September '07 *Community Alliance*. Bill can be contacted directly at [whyoung@netptc.net](mailto:whyoung@netptc.net).)

## The New Politics of America

By John Crockford

In many states, grass roots political movements are taking place that could ultimately change the face of politics in America. Efforts to place independent candidates on the ballot through an organization called Unity08 have received widespread notice. And efforts by the Greens, Libertarians, and the Constitution Party (of which California's American Independent Party is a part) to get on the ballot in every state are making great progress. For the many socialist parties throughout the country - including California's Peace and Freedom Party - discussions are underway to form affiliations that could ultimately lead to a unified socialist party within the U.S.

In Louisiana, the establishment of the Reconstruction Party ( see <http://neworleans.indymedia.org/news/2007/09/11040.php> ) by New Orleans city council candidate Malcolm Suber may best symbolize the new politics of America. In an interview, Mr. Suber said "If we want real justice and equity, we'll have to do it ourselves. The Democratic politicians, the same old folks, won't do it. The two big capitalist parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, make empty promises to the people, while awarding the politically connected."

Malcolm Suber's assessment of the situation - enlight-

There are six political parties in the State of California. We have the Republican Party and Democratic Party and four 'other' parties - the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, the American Independent Party, and the Peace and Freedom Party.

For voters affiliated with California's four lesser known political parties and for the fast growing population of voters who choose to remain unaffiliated with any political party and consider themselves 'independents', 2008 is generating a lot of excitement and interest.

ening as it may be to some - is not new. But it does reflect the political awareness and resolve of a new generation of oppressed peoples to throw off the yoke of capitalism.

In 1966, in a speech given in Frogmore, South Carolina, the Reverend Martin Luther King said, "You can't talk about solving the economic problem of the Negro without talking about billions of dollars. You can't talk about ending the slums without first saying profit must be taken out of slums .... we are treading in difficult water, because it really means that we are saying that something is wrong .... with capitalism .... There must be a

better distribution of wealth and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism."

Reverend King's astute observation of the need to move toward socialism did not come without scrupulous observation and study. Both he and Rosa Parks were trained at the Highlander Folk School, a labor organizing and training center with socialist underpinnings located in Tennessee.

Likewise, the Black Panther Party - known for its community programs to alleviate poverty - matured politically through the study and adoption of socialism and socialist ideas.

In the San Joaquin Valley, in the African-American community, in the Immigrant community, among the poor, the wage earners, and in our youth, we see an awakening to the oppressive and discriminatory nature of capitalism. More and more people are choosing to identify themselves and finding political solidarity as "anti-capitalists."

Indeed, among the voters (and those who can not legally vote) who are looking beyond the capitalist parties and beyond the politicians that currently control our government there is - more than anything else - hope.

John Crockford is a political activist who resides in Clovis, California. He can be reached by email at [john@crockford.org](mailto:john@crockford.org)

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# Equality Matters and the Struggle for Title IX at CSUF

By Kathryn Forbes

In the summer of 2005, the University of Iowa was in the midst of a year-long self-study of its athletic department as required by the NCAA recertification process. One requirement of this process was that the university hold two public forums in which community members were invited to voice any concerns about the athletic program. Erin Buzuvis, a visiting law professor, decided to use her scholarly knowledge of sport, gender, and Title IX to craft a two minute statement questioning the university's decision to paint its locker room for visiting football teams pink. Her brief comments about the sexist and homophobic nature of the color choice set off a firestorm of negative responses including media coverage on ABC World News and ESPN. Shortly after she made her comments, thousands of Iowa football fans sported pink t-shirts at a home football game that brandished statements such as "Don't Give in to Stupid" and "Give that Academia Nut her Pink Slip."

Erin has used these events as the basis for a scholarly analysis (soon to be published in the William and Mary Journal of Women and the Law) of masculinity and homophobia in collegiate athletics in an era of Title IX backlash. Her commitment to understanding the cultural significance of opposition to and support for Title IX led the Women's Studies Program at California State University, Fresno to bring her to campus on November 15, 2007. Her lecture, "From the Pink Locker Room to the Fresno State Verdict: Title IX as Cultural Resistance," provided our community with an opportunity to think more expansively about the recent and on-going Title IX litigation at Fresno State.

As Erin explained, the University of Iowa's pink locker room plan was part of its \$87 million dollar football stadium renovation. Some university officials argued that by decorating the locker room entirely in pink, including installing imported pink urinals, the university would honor the legendary football coach Hayden Frey who, in 1979, had begun the decorating tradition. Although Frey originally had noted that pink was "the color of sissies and little girls' bedrooms," university officials contended that painting the locker room pink wasn't intended to insult the masculinity of the visiting team. Instead, they argued, "it is an undisputed and basic truism of psychology that pink has a calming effect—in particular, a calming effect that is gender neutral and separate from any theoretical emasculating effect the color might convey." Most sci-

entific evidence does not support the notion that pink soothes those enveloped in the color, and some studies of behavior and color suggest that pink actually encourages alertness and happiness. Other public commentators warned that yielding to Erin's objections about the pink locker room would usher in "color-related political correctness," and still others contended that Erin was a "media whore" who was attempting to forward her own career by capitalizing on an issue Iowans deemed trivial.

Erin suggested that the steadfast public denial of the weighty symbolic messages sent through the pink locker room, coupled with the (ongoing) "vilification" of her in Iowan sports media, proves just how important sports are to maintaining gender hierarchy in our society. She explained that sporting practices in the United States have been developed to valorize aggression, dominance, and violence—those attributes associated with masculinity and denied in concepts of femininity. While women can enter the masculine terrain of sports today on men's terms, men's sports retain "hierarchical advantage."

Men's sports and men's sports performance remain in "exalted position(s)" as evidenced in the institutional support men's collegiate athletic teams continue to enjoy at the expense of women's teams. The association of sport with masculinity gives rise to the policing and disciplining of men and boys who do not adhere to the dominant form of masculinity: one need only go to a school playground to witness less athletic boys being called "sissies" or, for that matter, travel to Iowa to see how an athletic department might call into question the masculinity of entire men's teams through the symbolism of the pink locker room. Fear of the sissy label leads men and boys to adhere to normative masculinity and participate in what sports scholar Michael Messner calls "dominance bonding" in which men and boys solidify their relationships with one another and their dominance by simultaneously denigrating and conquering that which is labeled feminine.

Sports, then, usher in a form of dominance bonding that is relentlessly masculine and heterosexual in nature. It is no wonder, Erin argued, that sports is a central symbol of patriarchal ideology and that Title IX may be interpreted as an attack on this ideological system if not "disruptive to the existing social order." While the pink locker room does not violate specific aspects of Title IX—the federal law that prohibits gender discrimination in federally funded educational institutions—it does run counter to the spirit that Title IX attempts to invoke. As Erin argued, "Title IX poses

a uniquely powerful threat to the stability of the social order by (symbolically as well as legally) threatening to make opportunities in sport available on equal terms, blurring and maybe eventually erasing many perceived differences between the sexes."

The re-working of the gender order that Title IX invokes is precisely what makes the Fresno State athletic department litigation so compelling and worthy of continued analysis. The Women's Studies Program believes that the litigation has ignited a very public community discussion about Title IX compliance and workplace discrimination, but has not gone far enough in identifying the cultural beliefs that are at the root of the resistance to and affirmation of gender equity in sport. This gap is not surprising: what is on trial in sex discrimination cases are the actions of individuals within specific institutions, not long histories of gendered meanings and ideologies that have informed men and women's actions and relations to one another for decades, if not centuries.

Women and men fighting for Title IX compliance in athletics are cracking the culture of male dominance by straight forwardly insisting that men and women be treated equitably. It is up to us to see their fight as more than a scramble for institutional resources and as more than disagreements about supposed aberrant behavior of wayward employees. Even as our community may tire of hearing about disagreements over the treatment of male and female coaches, what constitutes appropriate professional attire, and disparities in the funding of men and women's sports programs, we urge our community not to tire of discussing the origins of these conflicts. Much more is at stake: the fight for Title IX compliance is reflective of a social movement for gender equity which challenges the very gender order that relegates women to subordinate positions in the family, in the workplace, and in the political arena. We just need to find a way to translate these very specific Title IX disputes into further political and socially progressive action. As Erin suggests, examining the gendered symbolism is a good place to begin.



Erin Buzuvis

###

Kathryn Forbes is an associate professor in the Women's Studies Program at California State University, Fresno. Her current research examines the effects of Title IX on the cultural climate educational institutions, especially athletic departments. She is also a sports fan and a really bad marathon runner.

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

IT'S TIME TO CHECK IN ON PARALLEL EARTH--WHERE, DUE TO A SERIES OF EVENTS MUCH TOO COMPLICATED TO RECOUNT HERE, AN ACTUAL NEANDERTHAL HAS JOINED THE RACE FOR THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION!

UGG MIGHTY HUNTER!

UGG SMASH ENEMIES!

VOTE UGG!

HE'S QUICKLY BECOME THE RUNAWAY FAVORITE OF THE PARTY'S BASE!

MR. UGG, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE APPARENT SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE?

BAH! BIG WORDS MAKE UGG'S HEAD HURT! MAN STOP--OR UGG SMASH MAN WITH BIG ROCK!

HA HA! YOU TELL HIM, UGG!

HE'S BEEN THE CLEAR WINNER AT RECENT DEBATES!

--AND I WILL KEEP AMERICA SAFE FROM THE TERRORISTS--

HA HA HA HA! ENEMIES NO FEAR SKINNY BALD MAN! HIM LOOK TOO WEAK TO SMASH ENEMIES WITH BIG ROCKS!

(PARALLEL RUDY OULIANI?)

PARALLEL REPUBLICANS APPLAUD HIS NO-NONSENSE VIEWS ON SOCIAL POLICY!

UGG SAYS HE WILL LEAVE THE SICK AND ELDERLY OUTSIDE THE CAVE--FOR BEARS AND TIGERS TO EAT!

AT LAST--A CANDIDATE WHO DOESN'T PANDER TO THE SPECIAL INTERESTS!

THEY EVEN SEEM WILLING TO ACCEPT HIS UNUSUAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS!

UGG MAKE GIFT TO GREAT FIRE GOD IN SKY! THEN FIRE GOD SMILE ON UGG'S CAMPAIGN!

WELL--THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT HE'S A MAN OF FAITH!

OF COURSE, LIKE ANY CANDIDATE, HE HAS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES...

SIR, WE DON'T SEEM TO BE POLLING WELL AMONG FEMALE VOTERS--

BAH! TELL FEMALES UGG MIGHTY MAN-- GIVE THEM MANY BABIES!

UH--OKAY-- WE CAN WORK WITH THAT...

CHOMP!

COMING SOON: THE PARALLEL ELECTION! HILLARY HAS RELEASED A DETAILED HEALTH CARE PLAN!

YES--BUT UGG WILL SMASH OUR ENEMIES!



# Sexual Orientation An Issue in CSU Fresno Athletic Department

by Dan Waterhouse

The rancor that eventually led to three lawsuits alleging gender or sexual orientation discrimination, and retaliation for supporting Title IX compliance in the Fresno State University intercollegiate sports program was planted 13 years ago after the school was found out of compliance by the federal Department of Education.

The lawsuits were filed by Diane Milutinovich, former associate athletic director who was moved out of the athletic department in 2002; former women's volleyball coach Lindy Vivas, whose contract was not renewed in 2004 after 14 years at the university; and former women's basketball coach Stacy Johnson-Klein, who was fired in March 2005.

The university settled Milutinovich's case in early October for \$3.5 million. A jury awarded Vivas \$5.85 million this summer; a judge later reduced the award to \$4.52 million. Johnson-Klein's lawsuit is currently being heard by a Fresno superior court jury.

According to Milutinovich, who was the senior women's administrator before being reassigned to the student union, the Office of Civil Rights decided to do Title IX compliance reviews in 1992 at four California State University campuses and at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Milutinovich said Fresno was one of the campuses selected.

After the sports program was found out of compliance in April 1994, the athletic department became a battleground. Some community observers felt the university had made a conscious decision to ignore the law. The then-athletic director believed protecting the athletic program financially trumped the law. And many male coaches resented the women.

The pot boiled over when local right-wing shock-jock Ray Appleton aired what some regarded as a "rant" against Milutinovich, Vivas and softball coach Margie Wright in October 1995. In that two-hour show, Appleton accused Milutinovich, Vivas and Wright of trying to "bring down" the university because of the Title IX deficiencies and said they were engaged in a quest for power and greed. Appleton claimed the three drove former athletic director Gary Cunningham from his job. Appleton also accused the women of taking public funds for their personal gain, and told listeners he had "dirty little secrets" about the two.

Milutinovich said Appleton was hinting that she, Vivas and Wright were lesbians. Appleton later denied that. Milutinovich and Wright sued Appleton and KMJ 580 Radio for slander. It turned out the "research" Appleton did prior to his broadcast was listening to the complaints of several disgruntled Fresno State coaches. The coaches didn't provide any corroborating evidence of their claims, and Appleton didn't contact anyone from the university, including Milutinovich, Vivas or Wright prior to airtime. Appleton and the radio station settled the case out of court the following year.

Milutinovich said that before the 1995 Appleton radio show, no one talked about being gay or lesbian in the Fresno State athletic program. "No one brought it up at all," she said. "It wasn't an issue. Most people didn't

care. You have to understand that any single woman was assumed to be a lesbian. No one talked about it because it could be used negatively in recruiting by other schools. It just stayed in the closet so to speak."

While being gay or lesbian wasn't a visible issue around the athletic department offices in North Gym, sexual orientation roiled the campus from the mid 1980s onward. Fear of AIDS led to the brief closing of a men's restroom on campus in September 1987. A closeted faculty member was arrested in August 1987 and later convicted of the dismemberment killing of a teenaged male prostitute who was blackmailing him; local police dug up his property thinking he was another John Gacy. The campus gay and lesbian student group reformed after a seven-year absence in early November



Diane Milutinovich speaking at the Title IX Forum at the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fresno on October 26, 2007. Photo credit: Howard Watkins.

1987. After several anti-gay rallies, the student group's booth was vandalized and then burned down later that month. The local KKK tried to invade campus to disrupt a gay, lesbian and bisexual student conference and attack its keynote speaker in mid February 1989; campus police kept Klan members off campus. The student group's booth has been damaged or destroyed by vandals several times since 1987, and local religious conservatives have targeted the campus LGBT community with what has been called "hate speech" over the years.

Milutinovich said sexual orientation became much more of an issue inside the athletic department after Appleton's broadcast. She added that it became an obsession for some people. She said the department eventually split into two camps—the "family values" faction and everyone else.

Johnson-Klein claimed in testimony during the Vivas trial that she was hired in 2002 "as a straight female to clean up the program." She said then-athletic director Scott Johnson "wanted more straight females here to clean up the program. That was his intention. I brought a family atmosphere here to Fresno. He wanted to sell that."

According to OutSports.com, the university appeared to flaunt Johnson-Klein's heterosexuality by placing her wedding photo album on the school's official athletics website. The wedding had taken place at the university president's official residence. She was also featured in "cheesecake photos" on the covers of HIS and Fresno Magazines and on billboards around Fresno, along with making countless public appearances.

Johnson-Klein also testified that Johnson had a long-standing plan to get rid of lesbians in the athletic department once he became athletic director.

Johnson-Klein described the "home team" and the "other team" in her testimony. According to her, the "other team" was made up of lesbian coaches and athletes. She said Milutinovich, Vivas and Wright were part of the "other team." She said Johnson told her she needed "to be on the home team and not the other team." She added she was told "not to harbor or foster any relationship with any women athletes who were considered lesbians or complained of Title IX violations." She said Johnson referred to Vivas and Wright as "lesbians, dykes and atheists."

When called as a witness during the Vivas trial, Johnson denied Johnson-Klein's testimony. He claimed he had never described anyone as a lesbian or said anything about anyone's sexual orientation, marital status, or gender. He also denied having a "hit list" of "lesbian" coaches and administrators he wanted to fire. However, Pat Ogle, the executive director of the Bulldog Foundation since 1982, testified during the Johnson-Klein trial that Johnson "did not always tell the truth."

During the Vivas trial, the university's legal team tried to paint Johnson-Klein as the anti-queer in the athletic department. Milutinovich said that wasn't true. "Johnson-Klein said in a magazine interview long before she was fired that she was very supportive of gays."

Johnson suddenly retired from the athletic director's job in February 2005. At the time he left, the men's basketball program was on NCAA probation for a series of rules violations, the most notable being academic fraud, occurring while Jerry Tarkanian was head coach. Just before Johnson announced his retirement, Ray Lopes (the men's basketball coach) resigned under pressure after it was discovered he had made over 400 phone calls to potential recruits in violation of NCAA rules. The program's probation was later extended by the NCAA. The community was stunned when a men's hoops player, Terry Pettis, was arrested and later convicted of first-degree murder during a botched drug rip-off near the Fresno State campus. Pettis' video disposition describing how he failed numerous drug tests and was knowingly allowed to continue playing may be introduced in the Johnson-Klein trial. Johnson was later hired by Fresno mayor Alan Autry as the city's economic development director.

A lawyer for the California State University system said a judge's "gag order" in the Johnson-Klein case barred any discussion by any of the parties.

###

Dan Waterhouse writes the monthly Queer Eye column for the Community Alliance newspaper.



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For more information contact:  
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# QUEER EYE

## “Hidden Sexual Brokenness Ministry”

by Dan Waterhouse

A ministry that claims to treat “sexual brokenness” is hidden in a nondescript building on the grounds of St. James Anglican Cathedral in eastern central Fresno, next to a quiet Fresno residential neighborhood.

While New Creations Ministries’ primary focus is on turning queers into “ex-queers,” their website says the ministry “treats” many other forms of the “disorder” of “sexual brokenness,” which, according to Canada’s Christianity.ca website, includes pedophilia.

The Fresno group is headed up by Russell Willingham and is affiliated with the national “ex-gay” ministry Exodus International. Willingham spoke about pornography at the Veritas Forum at Fresno State this past April. A former client who wasn’t “cured” of his queerness sat down with me and filled me in about his involvement with New Creations.

The ex-client, Brandon Galbreath, said he got involved in New Creations Ministries in 2001 while searching for spirituality. He said that, in an on-line chat room, he met a ministry member who invited him to join. He said that at the time he was fed up

with the bar scene and was “so over” with the community that he wanted to change.

Galbreath says New Creations has links to Peoples Church and Valley Christian Center, as well as St. James Cathedral. Galbreath said New Creations was given the land where its building is located by St. James authorities early in 2002. He commented that the ministry held an event at Peoples to raise money to construct the new building.

Bishop John-David Schofield of the San Joaquin diocese has endorsed New Creations: “New Creations holds out hope for a whole and restored life to those who have wrongfully believed that they would live twisted lives....” Bishop Schofield has split from the American Episcopal Church over what he considers its wrongful stance on women and gays in ministry.

“I had always wanted to know more about God, or some kind of god,” Galbreath said. He said the two women he first met at New Creations were “very nice” to him and provided him with all sorts of information. He said he saw one of the counselors on a weekly basis.

He said he also started worshipping at the Valley

Christian Center. “People from Valley Christian Center would go down to the Tower District and ‘witness’ people on the street. One of the girls from the church saw ‘demons’ in the Tower.”

In talking about the counseling he received, Galbreath described it as totally Christ based. He said there was also a meeting weekly of a support group where the members spoke about whatever was going on. He said the counseling addressed all sexual issues but focused on homosexuality.

“I had to break off contact with people I knew and get rid of anything that was ‘gay,’” he said. “I was told that if it (people or stuff) gets between you and a relationship with God, it has to go.”

He told me that the ministry charged money for everything they did. He didn’t have the money, so he cleaned the ministry’s building.

Eventually, his counselor wanted him to develop male friendships, for male bonding, he said. “The whole experience was becoming weird to me. This place wanted everyone to assume straight-acting roles. That was something I could not do because I was gay.”

“We were forbidden to watch ‘Queer As Folk,’” Galbreath commented. He said he watched an episode of the hit Showtime cable series one weekend night, went over to the Monterey Peninsula with a friend to think things through, then came back home and quit New Creations in mid 2002. “One of the ‘ex-lesbians’ — who was very sexually active yet she was preaching—told me I’d definitely go to Hell because I hadn’t given God a chance.”

It’s now more than five years later. Galbreath says he’s very happy; that it’s okay to be gay. And, he hasn’t wound up in Hell.

## San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Conference

By Laura Fultz

Over 100 Valley leaders and community members interested in building consensus positions on reducing oil consumption and cutting Greenhouse gas emissions are planning to attend the first San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Conference. This event is the product of a San Joaquin Valley campaign to end oil addiction, and is intended to both help identify an immediate agenda and the regional leadership to collaboratively make it happen. This project was made possible by generous grants from the Wallace Global Fund and the Stephen and Michelle Kirsch Foundation to the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club is partnering with a variety of key players in the Valley, including a key partner, The San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization. The SJVCEO is a newly formed non-profit. Its membership includes generators, utilities, farmers, universities, local government officials, and business leaders. The purpose is to promote clean and renewable energy sources in the Valley to both address climate change and stimulate economic development. Many of the members are not used to working together with the environmental sector. The crisis of climate change will take everyone’s participation to successfully solve. This is one way to help build the bridges the environmentalist will need to accomplish its goals. An agenda for immediate action will be one product of the conference, which will feature experts in a range of stakeholder groups. As a special treat, Rep. Jerry McNerney has planned to personally attend the conference. Congress will still be in session, so his appearance will help signal the importance of this effort.

The conference will be held December 3, 2007 from 8:30 - 5:30 pm Fresno Convention Center, New Exhibit Hall. Space is limited, so register online now. Also consider becoming an event sponsor, those slots are going quickly. For more information contact Laura Fultz at [lauraFultz@valleycleanenergyconference.org](mailto:lauraFultz@valleycleanenergyconference.org) or (559) 493-1034

<http://valleycleanenergyconference.org>



## Fresno Gay Men’s Chorus to Perform

By Pete Espinoza

Parents & Friends of Lesbians/gays (PFLAG) is sponsoring a Christmas Party, to which all are invited, on Sunday, December 16, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room at Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E. Barstow Ave., Fresno. Finger food, dessert and soft drinks will be provided.”

The Fresno Gay Men’s Chorus will be special guests. The chorus will perform Christmas tunes to share their Christmas cheer. Please help the chorus by participating in a good will offering. It costs the chorus money to perform their wonderful music and we want to help keep this great resource alive.

The chorus is in their 2nd year and has performed at The Den, Déjà vu, The Red Lantern and a successful debut of National Coming Out Day at the Tower Theatre featuring Jason and deMarco.

The chorus is made up of 11 members with Richard Adamson as their music director. The chorus is accompanied by Nancy Dvorak. The chorus is always looking for new talent to join them. They rehearse Mondays at 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at First Congregational Church. (Big Red)

The chorus is pleased to announce their up coming Christmas show “A Merry Little Christmas Program” Tuesday December 18 at the Second Space Theatre, 928 East Olive Avenue. For tickets call 559-275-9038.

###

Pete Espinoza is the current President of The Fresno Gay Men’s Chorus. He can be contacted at [Pete2007@comcast.net](mailto:Pete2007@comcast.net). For bookings he can be reached at 559-275-9038

# Gandhi on Hinduism, God and Religious Harmony

By Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor, Emeritus Professor

Mahatma Gandhi is vastly known as a great political leader and innovator. His brilliant leadership and political genius guided the freedom struggle for India's political independence through nonviolent means from the British rule, which finally ended on August 15, 1947.

Though Gandhi Ji was deeply immersed in politics, he was also deeply interested and concerned with religion. He was a devout Hindu. His early upbringing in a traditional Hindu home deepened his faith and love for Hindu religion later. Gita and Tulsi Ramayan were two of his favorite religious books. His understanding and practice of religion provide a fascinating insight into the role of religion in our daily life. How religion can be a positive, unifying and healing force and how divisive and destructive it could become otherwise are some of the questions that we all face today.

In Gandhi Ji we find some answers and solace. In him we find hope for what Gandhi called *Universal Brotherhood*—our common destiny of living together on this planet as brothers and sisters regardless of our different religious beliefs and traditions. He used to refer to religion like a mother. Gandhi's message of mutual respect for each other's religion is the call of our times for religious harmony and pluralism. Maybe that is why Lewis Mumford, a great philosopher and historian described Gandhi as "the most important religious figure of our time." Rabindranth Tagore, the great poet of India, bestowed upon him the title of Mahatma, "The Great Soul," an immense force for human progress and salvation of India.

In view of the space limitation, I have collected some insightful, brief but relevant statements below from the writings of Gandhi Ji for the interest of our readers. These statements primarily pertain to Gandhi Ji's views on Hinduism, religion, God and spirituality and appear below in his own words.

## Gandhi on Hinduism

For me Hinduism is all-sufficing, all-embracing. Every variety of belief finds protection under its ample folk.

I can no more describe my feelings for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults; I dare say she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indescribable bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations.

Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for the worship of all the prophets in the world. It is not a missionary religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It has no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary, imperceptible character. Hinduism tells every one to worship God according to his own faith or Dharma and so it lives at peace with all religions.

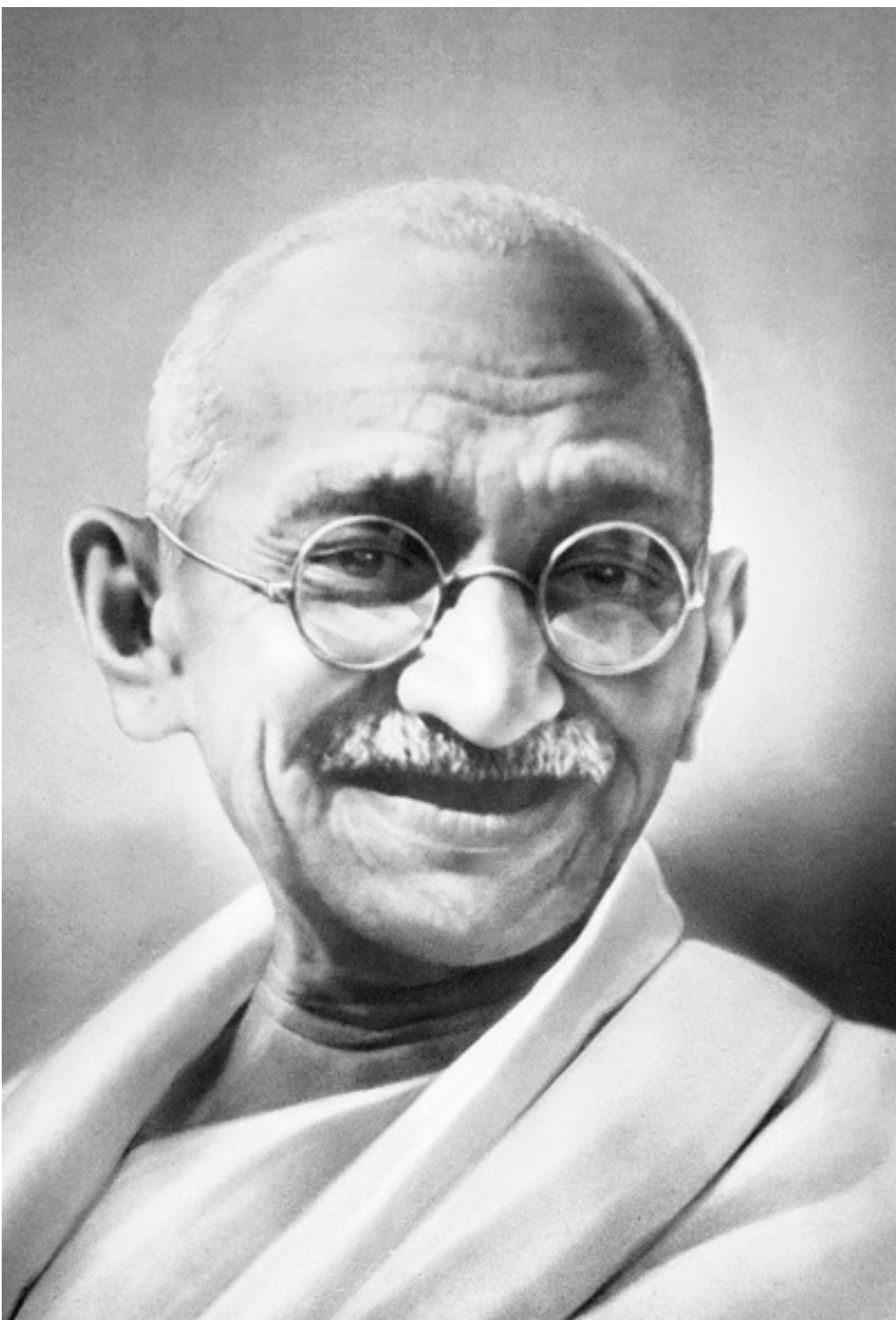
My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be the best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism ..... Truth is my religion and Ahimsa is the only way of its realization. I have rejected once and for all the doc-

trine of the sword. Hinduism with its message of Ahimsa (Nonviolence) is to me the most glorious religion in the world.

## Gandhi on Religion

By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that which underlies all religions which brings us face to face with our Maker.

Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.



## Gandhi on God

I have not seen Him, neither have I known Him. I have made the world's faith in God my own, and as my faith is ineffaceable, I regard that faith as amounting to experience. However, as it may be said that to describe faith as experience is to tamper with truth, it may perhaps be more correct to say that I have no word for characterizing my belief in God.

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent.

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that hold together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing Power of Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

And is this Power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme God.

Some notable quotes and insights derived from Gandhi's writings pertaining to religion, Hinduism and religious harmony.

1. All religions are True and proceed from the same God.
2. All religions have some error in them. All are imperfect human instrumentality.
3. All religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith.
4. I do maintain that mutual respect for one another's religions is inherent in a peaceful society.
5. I do not share the belief that there can or will be on earth one religion. I am striving therefore to find a common factor and to induce mutual tolerance and respect.
6. It is a travesty of true religion to consider one's own religion as superior and other's as inferior. All religions enjoin worship of the One God who is all-pervasive.
7. God is only one, though he has countless names.
8. Religions are meant to tame our savage nature, not to let it loose.
9. For me, the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree.
10. Spirituality is not a matter of knowing scriptures and engaging in philosophical discussion. It is a matter of heart Culture, of unmeasurable strength. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality and morality.
11. Hinduism has reached the highest limit of self-restraint. It is undoubtedly a religion of renunciation of the flesh so that the spirit may be set free.
12. I believe implicitly in the Hindu aphorism that no one truly knows the scriptures who has not attained perfection in Innocence (Ahimsa), Truth (Satya) and Self-Control (Brahmacharya) and who has not renounced all acquisitions or possessions of wealth.

"I am a Hindu. I am a Jew. I am a Christian. I am a Muslim." - Gandhi

"The Supreme Consideration is Man" - Gandhi



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# Reclaim Your Campus

By Mike Rhodes

Students at Fresno City College (FCC) distributed flyers, displayed artwork, and held banners near a campus water fountain last month. All of these activities were done without the permission of the campus administration and therefore were in violation of FCC rules that regulate free speech. According to Sarah Reuter, one of the event organizers, the rules regulating free speech at FCC are arbitrary and sometimes based on the moral and religious beliefs of school administrators. Reuter said that a group was allowed to pass out bibles at FCC, and yet an AIDS prevention group was refused permission to hand out condoms earlier this year. She said the administrator told them (the AIDS prevention group) that they objected to the condoms because they promote promiscuity and they (the administration) preferred the students to use abstinence.

Reuter and Crescencia Cruz are both members of the Free Speech Collective that want to change FCC's rules. Cruz said their group is "seriously concerned with the free speech policy at FCC. Many of the rules and regulations as outlined for student organizations are unfair and at times unconstitutionally restrictive." Reuter said, "There are four main regulations we have a serious problem with. One is the practice of approval stamps on campus. These are used to regulate free speech and to censor ideas. You need to get an approval stamp to put any kind of a flyer on the kiosks." Reuter said, "The stamp is denied on the basis of content if the administration deems that the content is inappropriate for the campus."

Reuter said that leafleting is not allowed on campus. She said, "The reason given for this is that it could end up as litter, but there are inconsistencies with this because students are not allowed to hand out flyers or condoms, but they are allowed to hand out bibles and candy; so it is the content that is being regulated."

The Free Speech Collective also takes issue with the FCC policy of requiring groups to wait 10 days while the administration considers the approval of flyers. Reuter said, "We don't believe it should take 10 days and 3 signatures for an event to be approved. Also, all events should be approved."

"There is a free speech area on campus, but we feel that the very nature of having a limited free speech area is unconstitutional," Reuter said. The area where their event took place, at the water fountain on the south side of campus, is more the center of campus than the free speech area location. Reuter said the booths near the water fountain are rented out to banks and other businesses but that students are not allowed to host independent events at that location.

The student event at the fountain did attract a large number of students who listened to the music, browsed the free literature, and looked at the artwork on display. There were also a couple of spirited political debates taking place at the anarchist free literature display.

In a flyer handed out at last month event, the Free Speech Collective asks students if they think they have freedom of speech. They write: "What about last year when the killer Coke campaign was going on and flyers were not approved for posting because the word 'killer' might incite violence. Even though within its context the very meaning of it was to end the violence the Coca-Cola Company had inflicted. As if the word 'killer' was really going to make some student go out and bang a Coca-Cola vendor machine to death. . . come on, get real! The reality was that



Students dusted off their "Don't Attack Iraq" anti-war signs for a protest held at CSU Fresno last month. In big red paint they wrote over the "q" in Iraq and in its place put an "n." The Iranian Culture & Arts Club and Campus Peace organized the demonstration to stop a U.S. attack on Iran. The event was held at Shaw and Cedar (the southwest corner of the campus). Following the demonstration, students and their allies marched to the Peters Auditorium to hear Dr. Kazem Alamdari (professor from CSULA).



Students Gather to Celebrate Free Speech



Sarah Reuter and Crescencia Cruz, both members of the Free Speech Collective, held a press conference to call for free speech at Fresno City College. Both photos by Mike Rhodes

Coca-Cola at the time was our vendor and posting something anti Coca-Cola would be so darn disrespectful. But should our freedom of speech be restricted through corporate fear?

"A corporate owned state is a fascist state. A corporate owned school is a fascist school!"

"Now, what about condoms? This is a college institution in which many students are indeed sexually active and we need to face the fact that sexually transmitted diseases are increasing. For instance, the Central Valley has the highest rate of Chlamydia and teen pregnancies in all of California. Why is it that handing out condoms has in the past been prohibited with countless bogus excuses varying from the weather to college students using them as water balloons. Okay, what does the weather have to do with condoms???"

Free Speech Collective members passed out condoms at last month's event. Reuter and Cruz said that the collective, in addition to holding free speech events, was also taking the fight to the FCC Academic Senate in an effort to change the college's policy. The group has a comprehensive proposal for changing the current policy and bringing the FCC campus free speech policy in compliance with the first amendment of the US constitution.

# High School students shout "Don't mortgage our future"

By Scott Key

On a warm, sunny Wednesday afternoon, a group of students from Edison High School marched from school to Representative Jim Costa's office. Their message was simple but eloquent: "Don't mortgage our future." Organized by Peace Edison, a student led peace club at Edison High, the march demonstrated young people understand that the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has cost too much. "We are going to Representative Costa's office to tell him firsthand that this war is wrong," explained Carolyn Hudson, president of Peace Edison.

As the official death toll in Iraq reaches 4,000 Americans (there have been more than 450 American deaths in Afghanistan) and the cost approaches \$1 trillion, enough is enough. "I don't want to be paying taxes for this war for years to come," shared Gabe Cardona. The students wanted Costa to hear from those who are being asked to pay with their lives and will be paying for war long after those who voted for it are dead.

Carefully choosing an early dismissal day, the students gathered outside Edison's campus to rally and to march to Costa's office. Supported by members of Peace Fresno and other community members, these brave students weaved their way through the streets of southwest Fresno towards downtown. As they made their way with signs held high, the group engaged in call and responses such as "What do we want?" Good credit!" "When do we want it? Now!" The students and their supporters shouted "Buy books, not bombs," "School funds NOT war" and "No blood for oil."

Curious residents poked their heads out of doors. Passing motorists honked horns. Other pedestrians shouted things like "Thank-you!" This support encouraged the students as they neared Costa's office. The marchers reached the tall, imposing office tower with an air of nervous excitement. Shouting "School funds NOT war," the students prepared to enter the corridors of power and deliver their message to Costa.

The students entered carrying signs but walking quietly. As they rode the elevator, the students silently prepared their comments to be shared with Chris Rosander, Costa's District Director. However, upon entering Costa's office, the students were confronted by building security and told that the building was private property and were instructed to leave. As the students emerged after only a couple of minutes, their supporters asked what happened.



Stunned, the supporters suggested the students send a smaller delegation with no signs. The smaller group of 5 students along with Scott Key, president of Peace Fresno, returned to Costa's office. Once again, building security tried to tell the students to leave the office because "this is private property." Key stepped in saying "the building may be private property but this office is public space and the students are not leaving." The confrontation was brief and building security left with the parting shot "get a haircut."



The students were kept waiting for 25 minutes. They were told that Rosander was on the phone. Once Rosander came out, he told the reporters from the Fresno Bee and ABC Channel 30 that a press release was being prepared. The reporters left and the delegation had their meeting with Rosander. Elfie Ballis, who had been recording the march, tried to cover the meeting but was told by Rosander that the meeting would not occur if he recorded it. Ballis chose to leave and the meeting proceeded.

Rosander was very receptive and congratulated the students for "participating in the democratic process." Carolyn Hudson presented a petition with the signatures of dozens of Edison High School students. The petition called on Costa to vote NO on the supplemental appropriations bill.

With petition delivered, students had an opportunity to convey their reasons for participating in this action. Olav Tabatabai explained that "I don't believe you should be spending this much money . . . it could be spent on education." Fellow student, Michael Yebisu, suggested the funding for the war was "like people in a casino. You lose money but keep gambling hoping to win it back." Samantha Spears summed things up saying "this war was founded on lies and is using money that future generations will need to pay back."

As the meeting came to a close, Rosander promised to send the petition and the students comments to Costa who was in Washington, D.C. Emerging from the meeting, the students found their classmates laying on the sidewalk with signs on top of them. While the delegation was upstairs, the other students had staged a die-in to symbolize Iraqi deaths and draw attention to their cause. Many who walked past stopped to offer their support or engage in conversations.

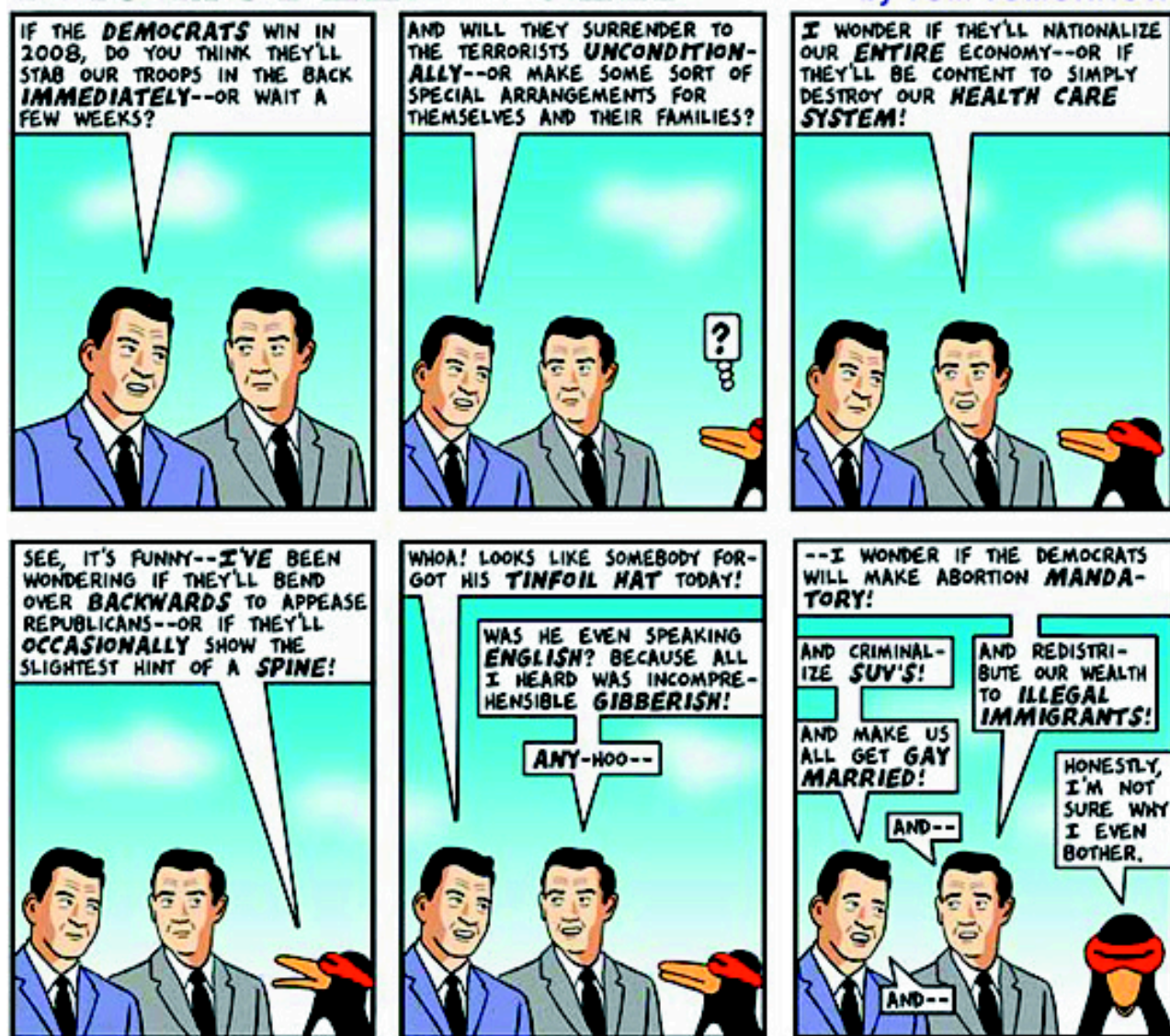
United again, the students celebrated their action, which was the first action for 8 of 10 students. Carolyn Hudson summed things up "I am saying this war is wrong. I don't want to pay for it. I don't want to fight this war."

Later in the afternoon, Costa issued a statement from his Washington, D.C. office saying that he will be "mindful of the students' request, as he is mindful of the requests of all his constituents." We can only hope that more students will join the cause for peace.

###  
Scott Key is the president of Peace Fresno. He was a participant and supporter of this Peace Edison action. He can be contacted at [president@peacefresno.org](mailto:president@peacefresno.org) or 487-2515.

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



# Fresno Center for Nonviolence



1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93728 - Open M-F 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. - (559) 23-PEACE - www.centerfornonviolence.org - info@centerfornonviolence.org

dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through  
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## PURSuing NONVIOLENCE ONE GROUP AT A TIME, by Richard Stone

Bill Simon and the social action group at The Newman Center invited me to talk with them about our Center. It is no easy task because, while "what the Center does" is represented simply on a one-page handout we have, why we do those things and why they are worth giving priority to is less easy to articulate. This is especially true since the shape the Center has taken is as much a product of its specific history and the interests/capacities of its particular members as on ideological grounds. So, on such occasions, I wind up speaking in large part about what the Center has meant to me.

One central part of that discussion is this: the Center is the place where I've best learned the value of small group process for fostering peace and human evolution. I've found that in dedicated groups, you can learn to speak your mind and heart accurately; to understand deeply the similarities and differences among us; to embrace and support each other in our imperfections so as to become stronger, more complete, truer together; to formulate collaborative projects more interesting and effective than anything we could have done individually.

The Center has afforded me this exposure to small-group process in several different guises. As a member of our Board of Directors, where we respectfully and consensually deal with a host of issues and problems. As participant and leader of Metro Ministry's Cross-Cultural Cluster Groups. As a part of a "Sunday Circle" of weekly fellowship that persisted for about 5 years. In the Black/White Dialogue Group, that was planned to meet three times but continued for 3 1/2 years, ultimately calling itself Black/White Friends. With our "Challenge Dialogue" program, linking two people across a boundary of insecurity (age, religion, ethnicity, etc.) And most recently with the Circle of Light convened by James Fletcher, where three of us, meeting weekly, have looked deeply into questions of our personal understanding of justice and social evolution, and our best hopes for sanity.

In November, Native American activist/philosopher John Trudell spoke at City College (an interview with him can be heard on our 2nd Wednesday "Stir It Up" show on KFCF, 88.1 FM, at 3 p.m., on Dec. 12th). He reiterated the need for understanding your own motives and thoughts and feelings, learning to say and do precisely what you mean, participating in the the evolution of human consciousness. Through my 15-year association with the Center, I've discovered how it is possible--and life-affirming--to undertake these adventures with small groups of Others committed to self-examination in the name of a larger truth. I recommend it highly.

### The FCNV is a Host Organization

to many non-profit groups in the Fresno community. We provide a safe meeting place and media resources to the groups using our facility, including:

- Youth Link
- Project: Male
- CVAAS
- CVPPAC
- Teatro Immigrante
- Peace Fresno
- WILPF
- CVCRC
- CCCJC
- Community Alliance

## peace bear



Local artist Margaret Hudson through her Earth Arts Studio designed a special Peace Bear just for the Center. You can take this bear home for the holidays by placing an order through the Center by Wednesday, December 12. The large bear is \$55.00 and the medium bear is \$35.00. Call us at 237-3223.

## Stir it Up

Michael Blackbull will be interviewing Native American activist/philosopher John Trudell.

Wednesday, December 12th- 3 p.m.

KFCF 88.1 FM.

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday Video Series

## Out of Balance

"Out of Balance: ExxonMobil's Impact on Climate Change" shows the influence that the largest company in the world has on governments, the media and citizens and what can be done about global warming. While the Earth's climate is pushed further out of balance by increasing use of fossil fuels, ExxonMobil continues to assert undue influence around the world— making record profits while ignoring climate science for which there has been overwhelming consensus for over ten years.

"Out of Balance" does not just critique ExxonMobil, it also offers challenging, large-scale ideas for the global social changes that must take place if there's any chance of having a livable planet for future generations.

Wednesday, December 12th

Noon & 7 pm @ the FCNV

(1584 N. Van Ness, SE Corner of McKinley and Van Ness)

Potluck @ 6:30

Discussion to follow evening showing

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR LIBRARY

- **The Witness:** In the award-winning documentary THE WITNESS, Eddie Lama explains how he feared and avoided animals for most of his life, until the love of a kitten opened his heart, inspiring him to rescue abandoned animals and bring his message of compassion to the streets of New York.
- **The Future of Food:** Provides an overview of the key questions raised by consumers as they become aware of genetically modified foods.

## Fair Trade coffees and chocolate for sale

Help support farmer co-ops in Latin America, Africa, and Asia with a purchase of Fair Trade coffees or chocolate.

New item: Organic Dried Cranberries!

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Details: 23-PEACE



# WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

## WILPF Join Peace Fresno to Distribute Flyers

November 23, 2007, the day after Thanksgiving, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom distributed flyers titled, Don't put World War III Under Your Christmas Tree. This took place in front of Toys R Us giving people alternatives to toys with violent themes. People took flyers and seemed to appreciate our efforts.

## Plans with Counter- Recruitment Coalition

Plans are being formulated to visit The Recruitment Office on West Shaw to Give gifts of peace to the military recruiters. This will take place on December 18 or 19 From 11:30 a. m. to 1 p.m. for an update contact us at: fresnowilpf@lists.riseup.net

## Peace Craft Faire

December 1, 2007 the Annual Peace Craft Faire would have taken Place. Presently everyone is working to See that it comes off as well as always. Jean Hays plans to write a formal thank you that will come out in January's Community Alliance to everyone who has contributed to making this event successful.

## Regina Birchem Represents WILPF in Rome

President of International WILPF was in Rome to attend the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of November. Key issues they discussed included Gender Development Plan of Actions; Climate Change, Bio-energy, Diseases, Globalization, Agrarian Reform and Urban Development.

## Raging Grannies Wow them at the Democratic Convention.

November 10, 2007 the Grannies performed new lyrics created by Nancy Waitdlow and Nancy Marsh that wowed the audience at the Democratic Convention held



Photo by Howard Watkins

in Fresno. A whole gaggle grannies showed up and sang the new renditions of their songs. They in their bright hats aprons, wooden spoons, and rolling pins enjoyed themselves as their audience.

## Raging Grannies Perform for Annual Peace Craft Faire

This is the third year that the grannies performed at the Peace Craft Faire. Their premier performance was in 2005 and they were honestly a little scared. As their confidence grows they seem to enjoy more each progressive performance. Their new rendition of songs were a great hit and well received by the crowd attending the Craft Faire and now both the audience and Grannies' look forward anticipating each new performance.

## MEETINGS:

### Women in Black

CSUF Campus - With finals and the end of the term there will be no Women in Black for December.

Courthouse - Between noon and 1:00 p.m. The first Wednesday of the month Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>.


### Raging Grannies

Will meet Dec. 10, 2007  
At Ellie's home.

### WILPF

No meeting in December

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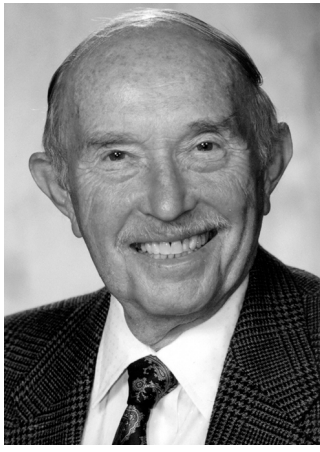
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## From the Greenhouse

by Franz Weinschenk

Nobody likes to hear bad news, but new satellite photos reveal that up at the North Pole, warmer temperatures are melting the Arctic ice cap much faster than expected. Last year this ice cap was calculated at 1.5 million square miles; this year, it's shrunk to a million square miles! 500,000 square miles of ice melted into water! G.W. is doing what for many centuries all those explorers that we read about in junior high school couldn't achieve—Cabot, Cartier, and Hudson—finding a "Northwest Passage" from Europe to Asia. And now, the European Space Agency reports that it's very possible that in the not too distant future there may well be an ice-free passage from Greenland, along northern Canada and through the Bearing Straits making it possible to ship Toyotas from Yokohama to New York without having to go through the Panama Canal thus saving thousands of miles for freighters and thousands of dollars for shippers.



The down side is that all that melting snow and ice will serve to accelerate the rise of ocean levels as well as ocean temperatures, both of which are already on the ascent. What scientists are concerned about is what those enlarging oceans may do to low lying land masses. Remember, 13 of the 20 largest cities in the world are located right at sea level, and after seeing what happened to New Orleans, it's no wonder people are getting edgy. NASA's Earth Observatory reports that from 1993 to 2005, sea levels have risen by one tenth of an inch every year while ocean temperatures have increased by one full degree Fahrenheit since 1970, a condition which enhances the strength of typhoons and hurricanes.

And, as if all of that wasn't bad enough, there's another process scientists call the "feedback loop" that's going to be a nasty nut to crack. Here's how that works: Normally, white polar ice is so reflective, it bounces back about 90% of the energy it receives. When the ice is gone, open ocean water does just the opposite, it absorbs an equal amount of energy, and thus accelerates both the melting of more ice and the heating of more water. The whole scenario becomes a vortex of ever rising oceans with warmer water in them—a worrisome harbinger of serious climate change.

But on the brighter side, let's hear it for Al Gore who's been totally vindicated and deservedly won the Nobel Peace Prize for all he's done and is doing. Continuously besmirched, ridiculed and mocked by such bully chicken hawks as Rush Limbaugh, (who, by the way, never served a day in the military while the former Vice President volunteered!) Al Gore never retaliated in kind—even when President Bush, the elder, called him a wild "ozone man." Like nobody else I can think of, Al Gore has brought to the world's attention the awesome and multi-faceted problems of global warming and climate change. Sure, nobody likes to hear that the Snows of Mt. Kilimanjaro are practically gone, that a hunk of ice the size of Manhattan broke off the north-eastern coast of Canada, that the polar bears are becoming an endangered species, and now, that the North Pole is melting, but disregarding the truth does not provide protection from its consequences. We're uncomfortable knowing that some of the things that we do actually damage the good earth the Creator has given us. It's really pathetic to hear the folks on the right scorn and deride anyone who tells us the truth—which is that with roughly 5% of the world's population, we here in the US emit 25% of the world's greenhouse gases. Question: shouldn't it be our responsibility to correct such a lopsided imbalance before we start pointing our fingers at other nations? When Al Gore's movie came to Fresno, my wife and I saw it, and at its conclusion, amazingly, that Fresno audience applauded. Maybe that's because Fresnoans are starting to realize that for the sake of our children and grand children, for once, it's a good thing to have someone give you the real facts as they exist—so that you can take some action to counter them. Not only has the former Vice President told us what's wrong, he's pointed out ways of fixing the problem and given us hope and courage to make a real attempt at doing so. For the first time in a long time, here is a prominent American we can actually be proud of. Mr. Vice President, your service to America and the world is incalculable! Keep it up!

## Conservation Before it Is Too Late

By Ruth Gadebusch

Well into our expected wet season, we find ourselves already under the norm for rainfall, a continuing trend of recent years. The political world keeps talking about conserving our water supply but it doesn't seem to get much beyond talk. At least here in California, we do have some experience with preserving the water from the wet period for use in the always dry summer.



The southeastern part of our country is experiencing the worst drought in recorded history. Because they could always count on regular rainfall, most in the cities do not have irrigation systems for their landscaping. Extensive irrigation as we know it for western farms is unknown there, and generally unneeded. My memories of Georgia farming, with crops as likely destroyed by too much as too little rain, recognize they are much more at the mercy of nature than we have been in the west with our rather defined wet and dry seasons.

Alas, a blind eye was turned to the developing crisis in that part of our nation until there was absolutely no denying the situation. As here, a growing population and the preservation of endangered species play a serious role. Each responsible agency looks for another to blame, claiming that the law gives them no choice. It is time for common sense. All one need do is to look at the pictures of Lake Lanier, Atlanta's source of water, to ask what does it take for action to preserve, at a minimum, what little is left. Endangered species are important but humans are more so. Current weather predictions do not indicate that the area will be saved by nature any time soon.

Knowing that any solution takes time, there is a lesson for us in California to stop talking and take action. Is it to be water storage in a new dam at Temperance Flat, or is underground storage in Madera County more feasible, or some other entirely different proposal? Both farmers and an increasing population need water, to say nothing of that great megalopolis known as Southern California, where we had best understand the political clout lies.

There is ample evidence that areas with water meters use less water. When will we accept the inevitable by moving post haste to install them, instead of continuing our delaying tactics? Perhaps they would stop the gallons and gallons of water that have run down our curbs — and elsewhere — for seemingly weeks. The lowering of water pressure is supposed to make us use less, but it seems to me that I simply have to let it run longer to accomplish the task.

As for recycling, are we really accomplishing the desired results? The water required to clean foil and glass for recycling may well defeat the purpose. Likewise, I wonder if the need for three different trucks to pick up recyclables and garbage doesn't defeat the purpose because of the amount of fuel required to run them and the pollution released into the air. If not recycling, what do we do with all that excess packaging required to stop theft and to make us think we are getting more for our money?

Most thinking people no longer question the path we are on in abusing our environment. We can, and must, take steps to achieve a balance between the needs of community and the facts of nature. Elected officials must think big; but we ordinary citizens must take our own small steps by assuring no dripping faucets, no water running unnecessarily while we do our tasks, drought tolerant landscaping, etc.

Note, I have not addressed water for recreational use, which also has serious impact on the economy, as well as lifestyle. We are accustomed to pictures of drought-stricken areas of Africa and other far-off

places, but this is much closer to home. We ignore it at our own peril.

Yes, by all means, let's conserve and preserve our natural resources. It is later than we think. Long-term solutions are costly but delay is more so. It is a matter of economy, but even more so it is a matter of protecting our planet, our very survival.

###

Ruth Gadebusch is a former naval officer, 13 years as a Fresno Unified School District Trustee, Vice-President of the Center for Civic Education, Community Activist.

## Clean Air Laws Mangled Once Again

By Alvin Valeriano

Four months ago, I read a dire commentary that stated: "The efforts of environmental advocates are technically well-informed, but based on previous results, they will just sadly be confronted time and time again by the attitudes of government bureaucracy, which have always protected business stakeholders." This observation really hit home with me during the second week of November, as I participated in efforts to avoid delaying the attainment of clean air for the entire San Joaquin Valley. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) decided to move ahead with an ozone plan supported by business and agriculture interests and opposed by environmental advocates.



The ARB staff presentation was a classic case of intellectual dishonesty, as slide after slide showed selective use of data that justified their recommendations. The ARB governing board, which consists of law, academic, and legislative professionals, did not bother to dig deeper into the veracity of the staff report. After nearly six months of deliberations by an ARB-convened Task Force made up of activists, air quality professionals, and business lobbyists, no additional pollution reduction from stationary sources was put forward by the air agencies. It was all "process" work, with zero tangible results.

Clean air in the San Joaquin Valley now depends on the acquisition of monies raised through bond measures, increased motor vehicle fees, and federal programs. Regulatory mechanisms which put the burden of cleaning the air on those business activities that produce the pollution will be very limited. Most of the money to clean the air will come from you and me. Sounds familiar?

In the next three to four months, this familiar scenario will once again be in our faces, as planning for the control of a very deadly pollutant called PM2.5 is undertaken by the air agencies. Once again, environmental advocates will present the technical basis of expedited attainment of air standards. As always, the objective of clean air advocates will be to avoid delays. The objective of business lobbyists will be to avoid what they perceive as "bad for business" regulations. And the air agencies? What do you think they'll do, once again?

Sounds insane, doesn't it? Insane or not, environmental advocates will do battle again and again. Will you be there with us?

###

Alvin Valeriano, an agricultural engineering graduate of the University of the Philippines, worked in the planning section of the air district for 4 1/2 years and co-founded Fresno's Food Not Bombs in 1996. He can be reached at alvin.valeriano@sbcglobal.net.



# Suicide City

By Sara Olson



Right after 4:30 p.m. count on Halloween, there was the sound of a scuffle in D Hall. An alarm brought guards running from all parts of the yard. An ambulance pulled up to the back door of the hall in which we live. The attendant pulled open the back door, got back into the ambulance and backed the rear of the vehicle up to the

door. Next thing we knew, a phalanx of guards came hot-footing down our hall toward the ambulance, three of them surrounding a tall, slim woman with her wrists cuffed behind her back, hair flying everywhere and a wild, terrified look in her eyes. She'd threatened to cut her wrists.

Later, we were locked down at 7:00 p.m. for the rest of the night. Even though several industrious inmates had worked hard to put on a Halloween party for the housing unit, with homemade decorations and cleverly-designed games and snacks, the guards squelched the fun and locked us down. They had to do "paperwork" on the cutter. Both are becoming more and more common, lock-downs and suicides. If it's the weekend—lock-down. If it's a holiday—lock-down. People are locked down and they become even more depressed, over and above the general pall produced by simply doing prison time. Bam! Another suicide attempt . . . or worse, a success!

It's suicide city at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF). One prisoner said to me, "I've never seen so many people trying to kill themselves as I have in the last year. Sure, people die of natural causes . . . well, 'natural' prison causes like years of poor diet, no medical care, ever-present tension, but this suicide stuff." As one of my roommates said, "It's a madhouse."

The warden was compelled by the rising rate of suicide attempts to issue a memorandum in August. In it, she assured the overcrowded, crammed-in-for-life masses that she is, "committed to insuring that you all have access to any level of mental health services you might need to address any mental health issues you may be experiencing." Huh? More like, each attempt is a crazed reaction to emotional isolation in the midst of teeming predation. It is in prison that a human being comes to know that she really is, no matter what spiritual myths she may embrace to get her through each day, all alone in the universe.

Recently the CCCMS program was reevaluated. There are increasing numbers of CCCMS women in prison or it sure seems that way. CCCMS is pronounced Triple C-M-S. It means Correctional Clinical Case Management System. It is a designation for prisoners who are prescribed psychotropic drugs for behavioral management. CCCMS is enshrined in Title XV, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) bible of rules and regulations, that spells out the direct supervision of California's more than 173,000 prisoners in its prison industry. They may have been taking prescribed drugs on the street. Sometimes an inmate is given a medication to lower the incidence of anger and violence stemming from previous life experiences of abuse, whether personal, systemic, or both. Sometimes an inmate is medicated because of the way we are housed, woefully overcrowded, in dorm rooms, day rooms and the gym. Sacramento instructed mental health professionals to reduce the number of women prisoners at CCWF on behavior modification drugs because there are too many using them. "Get rid of the Topomax and Wellbutrin!" Often, pills are "cheeked" at the "hot med" window and sold . . . that is, bartered . . . for tobacco and food. Those pills were money in the bank—"were" because many women have already been precipitously de-scheduled from their meds.

Part of the reason to control the medication rolls was the plan to merge 600 women prisoners into the state's three women's prisons from California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) which, until Spring 2007, had been a co-ed facility. A few went to Community Correctional Facilities but most were sent to "ugly beds" (halls, gym, floors) at California Institute for Women (CIW), Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW) and CCWF.

The impact of the CRC transfers had a dire impact on medical care. The prison industry's health care is in federal receivership, no longer under supervision of CDCR. The receiver, Dr. Robert Sillen, got an email from a colleague, dated May 24, 2007:

". . . I got a call from (sic) Dawn Martin at VSPW this am and they are being overwhelmed with the influx of inmates and custody has closed down some of the off site transportation which is now causing a delay in care. She stated that they were at 200% of capacity and that there were inmates on the floors. She does not know how she is going to deliver care to these inmates." This is the result of prison transport chaos on medical care. The mental health care that our warden assures us will be provided is similarly impacted. Sillen, in his supplemental Report Re Overcrowding in Spring 2007 wrote that CRC had 299 CCCMS inmates who would add to already-inflated CCCMS numbers at the other women's prisons. He stated:

"Each of these receiving prisons is already overcrowded with CCCMS patients. As of May 25, 2007, for example, (i) CCWF was operating at 132% of its CCCMS capacity, its Reception Center was operating at 145% of its CCCMS capacity and its administrative Segregation Unit housed 24 CCCMS patients;(ii) CIW was operating at 101% of its CCCMS capacity, its Reception Center was operating at 75% capacity, its Administrative Segregation Unit housed 89 CCCMS; and, (iii) VSPW was operating at 154% of its CCCMS capacity, its Reception Center was operating at 129% of its CCCMS capacity, its Administrative Segregation Unit held 15 CCCMS inmates and its Security Housing Unit housed another 32. In light of the existing overcrowding at these facilities, the influx of still more prisoners to these facilities may strain the system to the breaking point."

The "hot med line", which operates at breakfast and at the evening meal and where prisoners pick up their psychotropic drugs, grew to an insupportable number last summer. The line took two-and-a-half hours to process. Of course not all "hot med" prisoners were getting psychotropics. Some get pain-killers and there is a large number of diabetics who get insulin that's now being dispensed in their housing unit. But a large part of the "hot med line" did get them and something had to be done.

Prison psychologists have a huge caseload that they can't handle with any efficiency. There isn't time for proper evaluation on A yard, the receiving yard, of incoming inmates mental health conditions. Some scam the system. "Oh yeah, I was on such and such on the street. Yup!" All this prescribing of head meds got out of hand, so Sacramento stepped in.

From now on, lifers will be a non-priority. They're not going anywhere anyway. More and more women, no matter what their needs, will be pulled off meds and taken off CCCMS status. Many now get drugs such as lithium that they consider less effective and which can have undesirable side effects. One reason lifer and long-term needs can be degraded is that these inmates have acclimated and they don't appear to cry out for help. However, taking people off CCCMS without a real diagnosis could lead to emotional explosions. One prisoner remarked, "I think they would want to cause explosions. I scares the outsiders. If a higher safety risk can be created in women's prisons, Sacramento can show that women are as violent as men."

CCWF and VSPW, our sister prison sited across the county road, together the largest mass of imprisoned women in one place in the world, were built per a dorm housing plan because women aren't considered dangerous to staff and to each other. Originally the two prisons were designed for four women per room but that was in the last century. I was transported to CCWF in 2002. Since I've been here, there have always been eight women in every room. A couple of years ago, we wrote letters to legislators to beat back an attempt to cram another woman in for a total of nine per room.

CIW, built in the 1950's with its two-person cells, is spoken of at CCWF in the hushed tones one uses

to describe some kind of prison heaven. "Wow! Two! Only two people to a cell!" On the other hand, CIW's dayrooms have been housing women in bunks since the 1980's so, as common space, they've been off limits for a couple of decades.

With eight people in a room, women tend to achieve a natural ethnic balance. It makes it more difficult to cultivate the racially-based antagonisms that the "old CDC" (prior to the addition of Rehabilitation to the departments name and the U.S. Supreme Court ruling against racial separation in California's prisons) has done so successfully among the state's male prisoners.

However, as with the men, the ethos of violence, AKA "handling your business," permeates women's prisons. If a woman tries to kill herself, she'd better do a good job because, even if she has one, DNR's are not routinely honored. Also, if a woman fails at her suicide attempt, she may get jumped for her ineptitude because she didn't "handle her business" well.

There is no transfer from a room for a woman who feels or who is actually threatened until the inmate has tried, at least once, to "handle her business." It's all a bizarre situation. In the end, a transfer to another room with seven different women is no guarantee of safety anyway. Eight women living over and under each other in a small room, many for life, leads to patterns of behavior that would challenge brain surgeons or rocket scientists or ordinary Americans who never give a thought to how they'd manage to survive such an environment. We're all dumped together. There's no regard for an individual's social or cultural history. Background other than crime history, is wiped out. Previous medical or mental health history, all of it, counts for nothing. The most deranged person runs the room because she terrorizes the others. She may be genuinely crazy or a run-or-the-mill bully. Short-termers can be subject to the whims of people who don't have release dates. Lifers, who must face a parole board that grants no release dates, must deal with a short-term nut who threatens to beat everyone up for a spoonful of Folger's coffee.

Cruelty and disdain are the way, ladled out by staff and inmates alike. Fights occur in broad daylight, resulting in fifteen guards descending on two women with cans of Orange Crush pepper spray drawn like six-guns. Perhaps a fight might be completely ignored if staff don't feel like doing "paperwork". Women walk around sporting black eyes like merit badges.

Write-ups abound, on the other hand, often for minor infractions. Short-termers get longer short terms and long-timers . . . oh, well . . . stay longer and longer, perhaps with a dollop of extra time in Ad Seg which can end up seeming like a vacation from the pandemonium of dorm housing. In Ad Seg, cells house only two people, a real plus. A prison thrives on chaos, moment-to-moment instability, and imminent threat. The rule is "never get comfortable." The minute you do, everything changes. The atmosphere of eternal conflict prevents all solidarity among prisoners and keeps everyone fearful of and fighting with one another. It makes it easy for the staff to play people off against each other. Add mental illness to the list of ingredients and there's a perfect combat stew bubbling away twenty-four/seven.

Nov 11, 2007

Sara Olson, W94197; 506-10-04 Low; CCWF, P.O. Box 1508, Chowchilla CA 93610-1508

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# PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Saturday, December 1 • 10 AM - 4 PM

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom HOLIDAY CRAFTS FAIRE will be held at the First Congregational Church, 2131 N Van Ness.

## Monday, December 3 • 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM

San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy & Fuels Conference at the new Exhibit Hall at the Fresno Convention Center. For more information see: <http://www.valleycleanenergyconference.org/>

## Thursday, December 6 • 5 - 9 PM

Art Hop reception at the C.A.F.E. Infoshop featuring Docu-poems by George (Elfie) Ballis and photos by Dallas Blanchard.

### Elfie's Dance:

Organized in cities and fields across 5 decades. Produced organizing docu-poems films-videos across the ethnic landscape of America. Taught community organizing across the Southwest. Elfie's camera still moves shoulder to shoulder with people in our struggles, telling our stories, with our words, with our music.

### Dallas Blanchard:

24 years of activism for social justice and the Photos to Prove it.

The Collective for Arts Freedom and Ecology (C.A.F.E.) Infoshop is located at 935 F st. in Fresno's historic chinatown in Downtown Fresno. [www.Cafefresno.org](http://www.Cafefresno.org) or [www.myspace.com/cafefresno.org](http://www.myspace.com/cafefresno.org)

## Thursday, December 6 • 6:30 PM

The annual Metro Ministry Banquet will be held at Hope Lutheran Church at Barstow and Fresno Street in Fresno. Among the people being honored is Rev. Walt Perry, the Executive Director of Metro Ministry, who is retiring. Tickets for the banquet are \$35.

## Friday, December 7 • 4:30 - 6:30 PM

Peace Fresno monthly demonstration at Peace Corner. You are invited to join them as they ask motorists to call Congress to stop war funding and not to authorize an attack on Iran. Corner of Blackstone and Shaw in Fresno.

## Friday, December 7 • 5 - 8:30 PM

Wounded Spirits, an art show by Cynthia Manuszak honoring homeless women will be held at Margaret Hudson's studio at 1946 E Swift.

This will be a wonderful event to benefit homelessness among women and children. Margaret Hudson's Gallery is located at 1936 E. Swift Ave near Ashlan and 41. Coming off 41 take the Ashlan exit going west and your first right on Effie. Than make another right on Swift Ave.

Local artists will be displaying and selling art for this cause bringing the art to the backyard where hot refreshments will be served. Live art and a vigil for Pamela Kincaid will also be present. Margaret will have a beautiful display in her gallery and studio. There will be live entertainment (Tanjora Tribal Belly Dance and songs by local musicians). Dessert will also be served in the pottery studio. Contact information: Cynthia 559 709 2263

## Friday, December 7 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Larry Dunn member of the faculty of the School of Humanities, Religion and Social Science, Director of Undergraduate Programs for the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific University. Topic: Colombia: The Tears and the Hope.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at [dfriesen0@gmail.com](mailto:dfriesen0@gmail.com)

## Saturday, December 8 • 3:30-5:00 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC will meet at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno). Speaker: Tom Boyajian, candidate for Mayor of Fresno and former two-term member of the Fresno City Council. This is a great opportunity to hear what he would do as Mayor of Fresno and to ask him questions about issues important to you. CVPPAC monthly meetings are free and open to the public.

## Saturday December 8 • 7 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents "Building a Movement" FSU Environmental Awareness Club Fund Raiser Musi-

cian Showcase Featuring, Jamie Logan, Anita Coats, & Kevin Rees. \$5 cover 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 [www.fullcirclebrewing.com](http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com)

## Monday, December 10 • 6 PM

"Ghosts of Abu Ghraib" is a powerful documentary film which will be shown Visalia Friends Meeting Center, 17208 Ave. 296, Visalia. December 10th, for those of you who don't know, is International Human Rights Day, the day the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. To find out more, go here: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

RSVP to: Graciela Martinez, 733-4844 or [gmartinez@afsc.org](mailto:gmartinez@afsc.org). For a preview of the film, you can go here: <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070305/enzinna>

## Monday, December 10 • 6 - 7:30 PM

The Know magazine will be holding a youth forum in Fresno's downtown City Hall, Council Chambers. You'll hear from young members of The Know about their ideas for what kinds of support young people need in Fresno, ways they are eager to give back to the community and how they are setting and meeting their own personal goals. We hope to have a lively discussion that involves youth, parents and policy makers in the audience.

At the forum, you'll be able to pick up copies of the newest issue of The Know magazine, fresh off the press! We're proud of this second issue, and the stories it contains, such as dealing with violent drama in the schools, to breaking down racial and cultural stereotypes, to hip hop music, and more.

Join us as we work to promote the views, thoughts, stories, participation, and lives of young people in our community! Please contact and/or RSVP to Mai Der Vang should you have questions, 559-709-4455, [mvang@newamericamedia.org](mailto:mvang@newamericamedia.org)

## Tuesday, December 11 • 6 PM

A Public Mourning for those who have died and been wounded in the war will be held at Radio Park (E Clinton Avenue and N First Street). Turn off your TV & share your grief with fellow human beings. Please leave signs, politics & organizations at home. There will be no speakers, no podium & no soapbox, just people sharing their grief.

## Wednesday, December 12 • 12 Noon and 7:00 PM (Potluck at 6:30)

At the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N, Van Ness - Monthly Every Second Wednesday Video Presentation - "Out of Balance," an expose of the largest, most powerful company in the world. Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" was a call to arms concerning the consequences of impending global warming. "Out of Balance" goes one step further. While acknowledging the need for drastic change, director Tom Jackson clearly points the finger at ExxonMobil for using its immense power to block efforts to wean us from our addiction to oil. A group of scientists, business executives and environmentalists are determined to battle and overcome this greedy Goliath. This film lends hope by giving solutions which will not only save the ecosystem, but ensure future generations have a livable planet. ["Out of Balance" is included in the Sierra Club's Energy Film Festival, which will screen in over 80 locations around the country]. 60 Minutes. For info call 237-3223 Monday - Friday, 11 AM to 3 PM.

Evening: Potluck at 6:30, movie @ 7 PM, discussion after evening showing only. - All are welcome - FREE

## Friday, December 14 • 5 and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "Four Minutes" at the Tower Theatre. This hailed film tells the story of an elderly piano teacher and a young woman in prison who is learning through music. In German, with English subtitles. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., WineStyles in Fig Garden Village, and at the door, for \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. Tickets can also be purchased online through PayPal at [fresnofilmworks.org](http://fresnofilmworks.org). For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to [www.fresnofilmworks.org](http://www.fresnofilmworks.org)

## Friday, December 14 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Jessica Mast, student at Fresno Pacific University, will share her up-close-and-personal lesson on the effect of globalization in Durban, South Africa. Jessica is one of the main forces behind the Peace Club on the FPU campus.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be

held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at [dfriesen0@gmail.com](mailto:dfriesen0@gmail.com)

## December 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the January, 2008 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to [AllianceEditor@Comcast.net](mailto:AllianceEditor@Comcast.net)

## Sunday, December 16 • 1 - 3 PM

Parents & Friends of Lesbians/gays (PFLAG) is sponsoring a Christmas Party, to which all are invited, in the Fireside Room at Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E. Barstow Ave., Fresno. Finger food, dessert and soft drinks will be provided."

The Fresno Gay Men's Chorus will be special guests. The chorus will perform Christmas tunes to share their Christmas cheer. Please help the chorus by participating in a good will offering. It costs the chorus money to perform their wonderful music and we want to help keep this great resource alive.

The chorus is in their 2nd year and has performed at The Den, Déjà vu, The Red Lantern and a successful debut of National Coming Out Day at the Tower Theatre featuring Jason and deMarco.

The chorus is made up of 11 members with Richard Adamson as their music director. The chorus is accompanied by Nancy Dvorak. The chorus is always looking for new talent to join them. They rehearse Mondays at 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at First Congregational Church. (Big Red)

## Wednesday, December 19 • 11:30 AM

Peace Fresno with join with the Central Valley Counter Recruiting Coalition and other groups to march, demonstrate and share a gift of peace with military recruiters. The action will take place at the main recruitment station at 4470 W. Shaw. More details will follow. For more information, please contact Dan Yaseen at 251-3361 or [danyaseen@comcast.net](mailto:danyaseen@comcast.net).

## Friday, December 21

Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. See: <http://www.nhchc.org/memorialday.html>

## Friday, December 21 • 5 - 6 PM

Candlelight Peace Vigil on the corner of Reed and Manning under the Reedley College Marquee. There will be no regular meeting on this evening.



## Tuesday, December 25 • 12 Noon - 1:30 PM

Annual Santas for Peace. Join Peace Fresno at the corner of Blackstone and Shaw to celebrate the season and share a message of peace. Go to [www.peacefresno.org](http://www.peacefresno.org) for more information.

## Saturday, December 29

7th Annual Winter Solstice Concert featuring Lyquid Amber and Cerro Negro to be held at the new Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Hans York, Evo Bluestein, Eva Scow, Kevin Hill, Dusty Brough, Frank Giordano, John Martin III. online and other ticket outlets tba. For more information contact Evo Bluestein at <http://evobluestein.com> (559) 297-8966.

# PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

### Every Sunday • 3 - 4 PM

Sunday Food Not Bombs serves free food at Courthouse Park to anyone who is hungry. They start cooking at 1 PM and serve the food at 3 PM (meet at the Tulare side of the park). For more information see: <http://cafefresno.org/>

### Every Tuesday • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Fresno River Zen group meets at the Unitarian Universalist Church. This group welcomes all who wish to seek clarity, compassion, and harmony with oneself and the world through mindful meditation. Emphasis is on bringing peaceful actions from personal experience in meditation to healing the world. Teaching and practice in the spirit of the Suzuki Roshi Lineage is led by Grace Schireson, an ordained Zen priest. For more information, call Grace at (559) 877-2400 or email her at [grace@emptynestzendo.org](mailto:grace@emptynestzendo.org)

### Every Monday and Tuesday • 7-9:30 PM

The St. Benedict Catholic Worker serves a meal to the homeless, working poor, and visitors and released inmates in front of Fresno County Jail (corner of Fresno and M streets). Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the meals. For more information contact Liza Apper at (559) 229-6410 or [Lizaosb@aol.com](mailto:Lizaosb@aol.com) or visit their Web site: [www.sbcw.org](http://www.sbcw.org)

### Every Tuesday • 7 PM

Peace Fresno meets at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. If you want to help stop Bush's endless war against the world, come to this meeting!

For an up-to-the-minute listing of all peace actions in the Fresno area, call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at (559) 23PEACE (237-3223). For more information about Peace Fresno, call 487-2515 or visit their Web site at [www.peacefresno.org](http://www.peacefresno.org)

### Every Wednesday • 7:30 AM

David Bacon's Labor Journal on KFCF 88.1 FM. David Bacon's experience as a union organizer and his worldwide contacts in the Labor community makes him uniquely qualified as a journalist specializing in issues and concerns of working people. He covers a broad range of labor news and issues locally, nationally and globally. See David's web site at <http://dbacon.igc.org>

### Every Friday • 7 PM

Reedley Peace Center holds its weekly peace meeting at the Fellowship Hall at Reedley's First Mennonite Church, 1208 L Street, Reedley. Programs vary, but the focus is always on peace issues: local, state, national, international. The contact is Carol Krehbiel: (559) 637-9098 or [ckrehbiel@earthlink.net](mailto:ckrehbiel@earthlink.net). The meeting is free, open to the public, and accessible to the handicapped.

### Every Saturday • 1-2 PM

Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. If you would like to help us prepare our meal, we meet every Saturday at Wesley United Methodist Church (1343 E. Barstow) at 10am. For more information see: <http://myspace.com/fresnofnb> For more information on Food Not Bombs you can contact us at [fresnofnb@hotmail.com](mailto:fresnofnb@hotmail.com) or visit the official FNB website [www.foodnotbombs.net](http://www.foodnotbombs.net)

### Every Saturday • 1 PM until the last patient is served

Medical clinic for the homeless, actively injecting drug users, and prostitutes. You can find them near Hughes and Olive Ave. Staffed by Dr. Marc Lasher and volunteers. Accepting financial donations. Contact: 266-0444.

### Every Saturday • 1-3 PM

Fresno Free Bicycle Repair Clinic. Most Saturdays. Donations of bicycle parts, inner tubes, and blinky lights welcome. Volunteers needed to help with minor repairs. The bicycle clinic is near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park, beside Food Not Bombs. For more info and to arrange donations, e-mail [fresnofreebikeclinic@yahoo.com](mailto:fresnofreebikeclinic@yahoo.com)

tion followed by discussion and light refreshments. Call Veena Kapoor, (559) 435-2212, for more information.

### 3rd Sunday of every month • 12 PM

Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meets at the Conference Room at the UU Church, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave. Clovis. They welcomes guests and inquirers. Information at their Web site at [www.fresno.humanists.net](http://www.fresno.humanists.net)

### 1st Monday of every month • 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Central Valley Café Scientifique. Scientists and those curious will meet in an informal setting where non-scientists can engage in stimulating (and friendly) conversation about current scientific topics with local researchers and scientists. Café Scientifique is a growing movement, having started in the United Kingdom. There are several Café Scientifique meetings in the Bay Area. Website: <http://www.valleycafesci.org/>

### 4th Monday of every month • 7 PM

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting, 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information contact JEAN HAYS [skyhorse3593@sbcglobal.net](mailto:skyhorse3593@sbcglobal.net)

### 3rd Tuesday of every month • 7 PM

The Fresno Free College Foundation (owner and operator of KFCF 88.1 FM) Board of Directors meet Machinist's Union Hall at 544 W. Olive Ave, across from the DMV. The public is invited. For more information call (559) 233-2221, e-mail [kfcf@kfcf.org](mailto:kfcf@kfcf.org) or visit [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org)

### 1st Wednesday of every month • 12 Noon-1 PM

Women in Black- Silent Vigil at the Fresno County Courthouse entrance. Show your support for PEACE and for negotiated settlements of US current military actions! Meet downtown at the Fresno courthouse, and stand silently, advocating for PEACE. For more info, call 278-7140 or 225-2850.

### 1st Wednesday of every month • 7 PM

The Fresno County Democratic Central Committee meetings are held in the State Building Assembly Room. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave. Call Steve Haze, Chair - 855-8844 [stevehaze@psnw.com](mailto:stevehaze@psnw.com) or Jay Hubbell, Secretary - 292-4905 / [jayhubbell@comcast.net](mailto:jayhubbell@comcast.net) for more information.

### 2nd Wednesday of every month • 6 PM for dinner and 7 PM for call to order

The Fresno Stonewall Democrats are reorganizing. New Location: Carrow's Restaurant 4280 N. Blackstone Avenue, Fresno (On the east side of Blackstone just north of Ashlan). Stonewall Democrats represent the interests of the LGBT community through the Democratic Party. Phone: Chuck Krugman for more information: (559) 266-9237 E-mail Chuck at: [ckrugman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ckrugman@sbcglobal.net) <http://www.mangen.com/stonewall/>

### 3rd Wednesday of every month • 6:30 PM

Central California Criminal Justice Committee is meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1564 North Van Ness (Southeast corner of McKinley and Van Ness).

### 3rd Wednesday of every month • 7 PM

General meeting of the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club at the University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave. The general public is invited to attend these meetings featuring presentations and slide shows on diverse topics. Meetings not held in July and August.

### 1st Thursday of every month

ART HOP. For more information see <http://www.fresnoarthop.org/>, contact Maria Franco at [mfranco@fresnoarts.org](mailto:mfranco@fresnoarts.org), or call (559) 237- 9734.

### 2nd Thursday of every month • 6:30 PM

Health Care for All Central California meets at the California School Employees Association, 2501 W Shaw #107 (SW corner of Shaw and Hughes, between Marks and West).

### 2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM

Fresno LGBTQ Social Group <http://www.gayfresno.com/social/>

### Carrow's Fresno

1484 E. Shaw Ave  
(one block south of Fashion Fair)  
Get together and hang out

### 2nd Thursday of every month • 7 PM

Monthly meeting of the Fresno County Green Party,

County Council, at the California State Building in downtown Fresno. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave., and is located between O and P streets and Fresno and Tulare. Enter through the main door along the pedestrian mall just off P Street. Call (559) 265-3647 or go to [www.cagreens.org/fresno](http://www.cagreens.org/fresno) for more information.

### 3rd Thursday of every month

FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meeting. For more information call (559) 227-6134.

### 3rd Thursday of every month • 6-8 PM

Fresno County Bicycle Coalition, monthly meetings to provide a forum for bicyclists to organize, discuss common concerns, and influence public policy. If you are interested in helping Fresno County become more bike-friendly, you are invited to join this group. Please call (559) 444-2065 for more information.

### 1st Friday of every month • 4:30-6:30 PM

Peace Fresno is at Shaw and Blackstone Avenues to protest the occupation of Iraq and other harmful domestic and foreign policies of the Bush administration. Peace Fresno advocates alternatives to war and social and environmental justice. For more information go to [www.peacefresno.org](http://www.peacefresno.org)

### 1st and 3rd Friday of every Month • 6:30 PM

California Prison Moratorium Project members, volunteers, walk ins welcomed at both meetings. We meet at 6pm at 1055 N Van Ness, Suite C. The 1st Friday of the month is dedicated to our local jail and prison "No New Cages" expansion plans. On the 3rd Friday we have a "Talking Circle" an indigenous style of community dialogue, join us. Both meetings begin at 6 until we are though or when you need to leave "Uncaging the Valley" is a mobilizing effort to unite the our communities about the runaway costs of incarceration. An anti prison conference is planned for the fall and we need your help planning. Your ideas and support are needed and welcomed. This is an effort of an exclusive valley wide coalition focused on this project. Potluck is encouraged but not required. Upcoming, speakers from the anti prison movement are being scheduled. Call Debbie Reyes at 559-266-5901 for more info.

### 1st Friday of every month • 7-9 PM

Dances of Universal Peace. Sacred Circle Dances from Around the World at the First Congregational Church, Van Ness and Yale.

### 4th Friday of every month • 5 - 6 PM

Street Heat on KFCF, 88.1 FM in Fresno. This is the Community Alliance radio show.

### 1st Saturday of every month • 9 AM (breakfast) 9:30 AM (business meeting) 10 AM (program)

Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley meets at Denny's Restaurant at Abby and Divisidero. Call (559) 360-4309 for more information.

### 1st Saturday of every month • 3-5 PM

Women of Spirit—a gathering of women rediscovering their own spirituality and enabling others to do the same. You are invited to join the circle of women the first Saturday of each month, at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Beginning and closing meditation, discussion and activity, light refreshments after closing. The event is free. Both men and women are welcome. Contact: Veena Kapoor, (559) 435-2212.

### 2nd Saturday of every month • 9:30 AM

Fresno Center for Nonviolence monthly meeting at 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see their Web site [www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org) or call 559-23PEACE (237-3223).

### 2nd Saturday of every month • 10 AM

The Black Political Council meets at King of Kings on Martin Luther King Blvd.

### 4th Saturday of Every Month • 8-10 AM

Tower Beautification Cleanup. Meet at the Olive/Wishon corner of the Chicken Pie Shop. Bring hat, gloves, broom or rakes and weed hoes, water. We supply orange vests, pick up bags, grabbers and extra tools. Why do we do this? To beautify our community and build empowerment through responsibility for our quality of life. Questions? Call Coordinator, Gay Amend, at 237-6716 Sponsored by the Tower Trust, Council Districts 1 and 3 and the City of Fresno Sanitation Department which provides supplies and insurance.

## ONGOING MONTHLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

### 1st Sunday of every month • 1 - 3 PM

The South Valley Peace Center holds a demonstration for peace at Mooney and Walnut in Visalia.

### 3rd Sunday of every month • 3 - 5 PM

World Meditation Day is observed to promote peace within oneself and harmony in the world. Held at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Program includes guided medita-

# Word on the Street

By Wendy Russell

Since the sun and I awoke, I have been standing in the bathroom of our cabina watching two dogs forage on the shiny wet sand laid bare for the pickings by the low tide, where the sea mixes waters with the estuary running into the bay of Golfo Dulce. My travel buddy, Maria, was still asleep and the town was quiet. For two hours it had been just the two dogs intently searching for edibles left behind by high tide until they had been joined by two other dogs. Apparently well-fed, the newcomers wanted to play on the beach. One kept running circles around the two food-hunting dogs, while the other newcomer sniffed behinds and postured for play. Now I watch the four dogs cavort on the morning-lit sand. Jumping, running round, nose-touching and pawing the ground with butt up in air and head down; all saying "Playtime!" loud and clear in dog language.

I'm lost in their happy play and smiling at their joyful abandon when I hear "Yip!" from my immediate right somewhere. It seems a neighboring dog had been watching the fun too and finally, full of uncontained excitement, lets out a call, "Yip! Yip!"

Next I hear a few barks coming from other nearby house dogs that can't leave their owners' confines, then a mighty howl lets loose - first, from the houses edging the small bay, "Yee-oowwwwoooo!" Then the dogs on the next street over pick up the howling chorus, after that the next blocks' dogs join in - and for two or three minutes all the dogs everywhere were howling their wild social calls.

"Yee-oowwwwoooo!" I hadn't heard dogs howling since I was a young girl, I realized - and then wow: it's yet another reason to move to Costa Rica; because, if even the howl has been trained out of the dogs in the USA - what does that say about the humans' training? I remember that time I saw on my Fresno television screen - just for a second or two - before the local news started, the words "imagine" and in the next flash "deforestation" and I knew that, YES, it IS happening! Do the others here see what I see? Why are the other foreigners - all walking so proud and confident through Costa Rica's towns, rain forests, tropical mountains and sea shores - here? It's not that easy to live here, we do have to carve out our own life from a vibrant, raw and wild earth bursting with growing, living things eager to overrun everything. It's always a challenging edge we walk on, to survive in this strange and beautiful New World. Why are other foreigners here? Are they running from brainwashing? From street violence? From poverty? Or are we running to something?

It hits me then; this month's Question should be: Why did you move to Costa Rica?

Over the next two weeks, as I take care of some things on our new property and help Maria find a farm to buy, I'm also asking the few foreigners that I could find in San Vito our Question. Our first answer comes during an Italian lunch, from the president of the San Vito Bird Club, ALISON OLIVIERI:

"We moved to Costa Rica in order to not spend the last 30% of our lives doing the same things we had done for the first 70%!!"

She says many people have asked her that same Question but that her answer has stayed the same ever since she first arrived. Alison and her husband had vacationed in Costa Rica before, but by midnight 1999 (remember the Millennium scares of destruction?) they had believed in that hype and had hunkered down here for good, safe in a beautiful home built on their own forested hill. Civilization did not crash as feared when 1999 rolled into the New Year of 2000, but their new life flourishes in this Italian enclave of Costa Rica, just kilometers from Panama.

Next up; Alison's friend and another American expatri-



ALISON OLIVIERI

ate, LYDIA VOGT, a retired school principal that had just moved here with her also-retired attorney husband, writes down her answer to our Question while we all eat, laugh and talk: Why did you move to Costa Rica?

"Una Lista: Traffic. Beauty. Birds. Peace. Governments. Time. Value. Weather."

We were enjoying a delightful lunch. The four of us were all happy; I had just bought a 1992 Toyota Hi-Lux pickup, a dark-green work truck with high wooden sides and two seats that Maria had negotiated on, saving Mark and I \$2000.. Also today Maria had found her farm - across the valley from Tres Aguas (our place), where I had that day traded my coffee crop for the maintenance work necessary on each coffee plant after harvest. Lydia and Alison were happy too; Alison had just returned from visiting the States (where - although loving visiting family and friends - she just couldn't wait until she "could come back to clean, unpolluted Costa Rica!"). Lydia was enjoying her new house and - I think - I hope - they were both charmed to meet new neighbors, (vecinas), such as ourselves!

There are not many gringos in this frontier region. Few enough so that when we saw what might be foreigners we would run to catch them in the streets to ask, 'Es



LYDIA VOGT

tourist? Es extranjero (foreign)?" That is how I found the young couple that I interrupted in the coffee cafe to ask: Why did you move to Costa Rica?

ADRI VAN DER ZON and URSULA DONKERS were sitting at one of the tiny tables, each writing letters about why they want to gain residency in Costa Rica, but they still took the time to give their answer:

"We were looking for a place ever since we traveled from Brazil to South Africa for a year in 1995. We were both working in an office and we love nature so we said to each other 'Why not go work and live in a country where there is nature, and where it is politically and socially steady?'"

They described their farm. I showed them pictures of our new farm and we discovered we were only ten minutes apart; more new vecinas!

Adri continues, "In the Netherlands it is very crowded with 16 million people in a country that is smaller than Costa Rica (with four million), so there is little place for nature. When we visited Costa Rica in 1995 we fell in love with the people, who are very open and friendly to strangers - and of course there is the diversity of the landscape and nature. We did not want to live in the area of San Jose {the capital} where it is crowded as well, and for the crime there. We found a finca {farm} in the south of Costa Rica where it is still very friendly and relaxed. Because we want to live and work as Ticos {what Costa Ricans call themselves}, we bought a finca with coffee, pasture and woodlands on which we work the coffee."

Adri and Ursula had been farming on their own land for two and one half years, "living like campesinos" Adri joked; in a small house, raising rabbits to eat, growing a garden and picking their own coffee beans with the help of their caretaker.

They both looked so healthy and happy, I thought as they went back to their paperwork and I went back to my tall, chilled coffee-flavored shake topped with whipped cream. Maria and I like this coffee cafe because it has seats in its wide-open windows facing the lively street life and because of the bakery next door where I get my favorite sweet; a heavy, cake-like bread pudding, (called 'pooh-deen' all over Costa Rica), every morning.

Maria and I are usually up and walking the steep hills of downtown San Vito by six a.m., sometimes even earlier, heading to coffee and 'pooh-deen'. It's just how it is in the wilds. You go to sleep soon after dark and rise with first light. It takes about a week until you are on 'wild time.' We are both happy and fulfilled, each having accomplished much here - and on our own! - for ourselves and for our mates back in the States. We relished what they would think when they saw what we had achieved ... you know, carving out a grand destiny, something like that. To me, it looked like Maria already had a good life set-up; she lived half the year in Mexico and half the year in California's mountains - but now she was going to sell everything and move to Costa Rica. Por Qué? (why?).

So near the end of our trip I asked her our Question: Why are you moving to Costa Rica?

"Why am I moving to Costa Rica.  
 Clouds on the mountains.  
 Rain drips through my hand.  
 A smell so fragrant, it permeates the land.  
 And I wonder, I wa wa wa wander, why?  
 Costa Rica is like a song.  
 A beautiful melody that lingers ...  
 A sigh ... a remembrance of Soul.  
 Walking down a corridor where trees intertwine.  
 Listening to Howler monkeys,  
 as the hair on the back of my neck climbs.  
 Primordial visions;  
 Adventure each step of the way,  
 Costa Rica is a lifetime,  
 wrapped up in every beautiful day."

David E. Roy, Ph.D.  
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 pmpvalle@sbcglobal.net  
 www.prisonactivist.org  
 http://calipmp.org

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**URSULA DONKERS and ADRI VAN DER ZON**

I'm thinking of Maria's answer the next day as I walk alone through the 18 acres of pasture, bosque, (forests), tangled undergrowth, coffee plants, flowered bushes, fruited trees, green lawns and impenetrable sugar cane thatches that is our land. Up there on the hill I could see the main house. I could even see small bats flying out of the hole under the eaves of the roof which needs replacing. My rubber boots slosh and make suction noises with each footstep as I go through what is called a river, a 'rio' - even though it seems only a trickle of a brook. It takes effort to go up the hill and as I hike I muse upon my own answer to our Question: Why are you moving to Costa Rica?



**MARIA**

"Mark can retire now. So we thought of what we'd like to do and then factored in what we could afford to do and it adds up to Costa Rica; the 'Switzerland of South America,' a land with free medical care and no army, where we can drink the water and eat plentiful papaya! We want to make some new memories, hear other stories and explore a new life.

Old friends already living here showed us the way life could be, while new friends here became as family, helping me make my way to this property; this new home for myself and my husband, our family - and sure, for friends too!

In reggae terms we could say that I am running away from the vampires! The USA is getting scary to me - I've seen election majorities lose the presidency, our rights erode, lies begin wars while greed keeps 'em going. I've seen too many sleazy deals, broken promises and various rapes of mother earth. I've seen too many lies and slime trails ooze from our government, from our social, religious and business sectors - and well, I just do not see how anything I can do can make it better. So I'm going to where we can live a healthy and unpolluted life. Where 44% of the children DO NOT have asthma. Where I can have some direction over my life, with some power; a direct 'action-reaction' reality-of-living that keeps me sharp. And the infinite cosmic synchronicities of powerful happenstance here in Costa Rica - gads, I can't even begin to give you the examples in this small space left!"

You see? I can answer this month's Question myself because when one writes a column like this, one has a bit of power to do as she - one - pleases. Which leads to my final words of my final Word On The Street column. Have you thought about taking over this column? By the time you read this I will no longer be available to walk the streets of Fresno looking for words - instead I will be walking in our mountain rain forest, replanting stripped pasture with new native hardwoods, fruit trees, flowering bushes that attract birds and indigenous medicinal plants. I will be walking with my friend of twelve years, Augustos, a Talamanca native from the Bri Bri, a Shaman - full of the far-reaching, cosmic knowledge inside every plant and tree, all animals and yes, even humans, a man who has agreed to be our resident 'nature' caretaker and forest restoration planner - oh, but that's another story - possibly for another day?

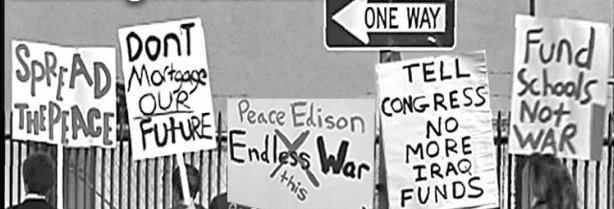
But first, who will step up to get the next Word on the Street? If it is you, look in the front of this Community Alliance and call Mike.



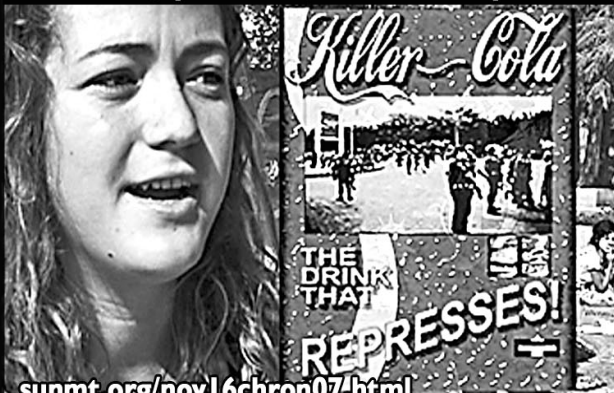
**WENDY**



[sunmt.org/nov20chron07.html](http://sunmt.org/nov20chron07.html)



**We Edison High School students march, petition, die-in for peace**



[sunmt.org/nov16chron07.html](http://sunmt.org/nov16chron07.html)

**Our "Reclaim your campus" free speech festival at Fresno City College**

**Dairy Pollution Law**

*Fresno supervisors deliver sour milk*

After 3 rewrites, final bill was weakest. 3 mile buffers cut - some to 1 mile others to zero [sunmt.org/nov6chron07.html](http://sunmt.org/nov6chron07.html)

**Yes: Case, Larson, Waterson  
No: Anderson, Perea**

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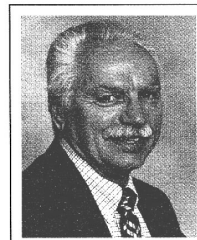


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## Agustin Lira - A National Treasure

Fresno resident Agustin Lira was awarded the 2007 National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) National Heritage Fellowship earlier this year. This award, which was given in Washington DC, is the highest honor given by the NEA in the folk and traditional arts.

Born in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, Lira emigrated with his family to California when he was seven. The Liras became farmworkers, and Augustin grew up following the crops up and down the San Joaquin Valley. In 1965, when he was 19, Lira co-founded El Teatro Campesino with Luis Valdez during the Delano Grape Strike headed by Cesar Chavez. The company created songs and plays, performed on picket lines at rallies and toured throughout the United States, giving voice to the farmworkers plight and demonstrating the power of artistic expression in uniting and inspiring the farmworker communities.

El Teatro Campesino won a New York Off Broadway Award (OBIE), the Los Angeles Drama Critic's Circle Award, appeared twice at the Newport Folk Festival and was the subject of feature articles in Time, Newsweek, and the Wall Street Journal. Lira's powerful singing and socially relevant lyrics were at the heart of El Teatro Campesino and established his role as the pre-eminent musical voice of the early Chicano movement. Lira blended Mexican song traditions such as ranchera, huapango, and bolero with Anglo folk and

popular musical forms to create a new kind of folk music that continues to evolve.

After leaving Teatro Campesino in 1969, Augustin continued to work in music and theater, forming several theater groups notably El Teatro de Tierra, which dramatized the urban Chicano experience. Lira also taught drama, music, and creative writing at universities, schools, and community organizations throughout California. In 1985 he formed the musical group Alma, which continues to perform nationally and internationally, focused on providing a voice for the poor of the entire world.



Agustin Lira awarded 2007 National Endowment of the Arts National Heritage Fellowship. Photo credit: Stephen Gamboa

Agustin Lira has appeared on numerous recordings over the years and was recently featured prominently on the Smithsonian Folkways retrospective *Rolas de Aztlan; Songs of the Chicano Movement*. He has written numerous songs that have been featured in theatrical productions and film and has himself been the subject of two award-winning NPR and Latino USA radio documentaries by journalist Jon Beaupre. Previous recognition of Lira's work includes the Latino Legends of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Award from the Central Valley Mexican American Association and the Local Hero Award from Valley Public Television.

Hugo Morales, founder of Radio Bilingue in Fresno, a Harvard Law School graduate and MacArthur Fellow, says of Lira and his friend Cesar Chavez, "As a young student they inspired me to study, do my homework and do well academically so that, as the only farmworker in my class who was on a college track, I could later help my farmworker brothers and sisters."

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# Hot and Smoggy

By Mike Rhodes

Air Quality activists recently released a report linking global warming and dirty air. Jason Barbose, author of the Environment California, Research & Policy Center report, said "global warming adds up to more than melting glaciers and rising sea levels, it is also about the quality of our air and the quality of our lives. At a press conference held at Fresno City Hall, Barbose pointed to a chart showing how air quality decreases as the temperatures rise. Key findings in the report show:

- In Fresno, ozone levels exceeded the state 8-hr health standard for ozone 84% of the days that the daily high was at least 100°F.
- In Fresno, ozone levels exceed the state 1-hr health standard for ozone 75% of the days that the daily high was at least 100°F.
- In Fresno, ozone levels exceeded 1-hr health standard for ozone 43% of the days that the daily high was between 95 and 99°F, and 18% of the days that the daily high was between 90 and 94°F.

Carolina Simunovic, with Fresno Metro Ministries, said "the link between global warming and air pollution is clear. Hotter days make for dirtier air." Simunovic, who also spoke at the press conference, said this link "makes achieving clean air in the Valley especially difficult, and those with health problems will face the double burden of heat and air pollution related illnesses if we don't do something to stop it."

The report, *Hot and Smoggy, The Ozone - Hot Weather Connection in Eight California Cities* is available on line at the Environment California, Research & Policy Center website. In addition to warning readers about the effect of global warming and the adverse affect it will have on air quality in the Central Valley, the report does say there is something we can do to improve air quality. The report concludes:

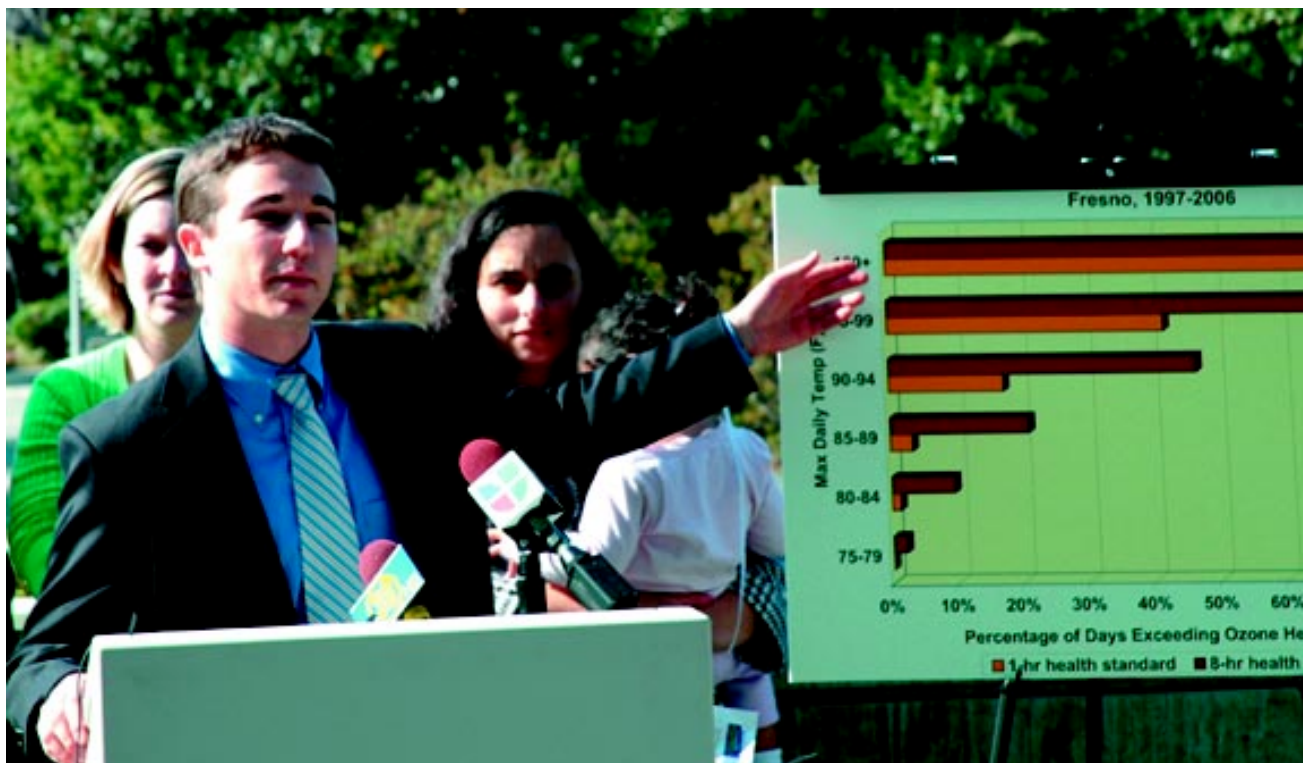
Given California's existing air pollution problems and the expectation that global warming will increase ozone formation that leads to smog, state policy-makers and environmental agencies should work to significantly reduce ozone-forming pollutants while simultaneously reducing global warming emissions to levels that scientists have concluded are necessary to prevent a dramatic increase in temperature.

To reduce smog pollution state policy-makers and agencies should prioritize a variety of policy measures, including measures outlined in California's State Implementation Plan for federal ambient air quality standards. Measures to prioritize include:

- Passenger vehicles – Increase the sale and use of zero-emission and low-polluting passenger cars and light-duty trucks, accelerate vehicle retirement, and strengthen the state smog check program;
- Trucks and off-road equipment – Reduce emissions from medium- and heavy-duty diesel trucks and off-road equipment by strengthening emissions standards,



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At a press conference held at Fresno City Hall, Barbose pointed to a chart showing how air quality decreases as the temperatures rise.

increasing retrofits, and accelerating replacement with cleaner technologies;

- Ports & goods movement – Require cleaner marine engines and fuels, increase the number of ships with the ability to use shore-side power ("cold ironing"), increase retrofits, and accelerate the introduction of cleaner port trucks, harbor craft and locomotives;
- Agriculture – Accelerate the replacement of agricultural equipment through regulation and incentives; and
- Strong enforcement of existing pollution control rules– Enforce tough standards for cleaner construction equipment, airport ground support, and other off-road vehicles.

To reduce global warming emissions state policy-makers and agencies should prioritize successful implementation of the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32), which commits California to reducing global warming emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

For more information see: <http://www.environmentcalifornia.org/>

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