

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

FEBRUARY
2 0 0 4

THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IS CELEBRATED IN FRESNO



Each year numerous events honoring the life of Martin Luther King Jr. are held in Fresno. Many of these activities are sponsored by the City of Fresno Human Relations Commission. They bring honor to MLK and the principles he stood for - Nonviolence, peace, social and economic justice. By sponsoring these events, the HRC encourages us all to **LIVE THE DREAM.**
(more pictures on page 7)

Cover photo by Howard Watkins

In This Issue:

REGIME CHANGE BEGINS AT HOME	PAGE 3
CITY OF FRESNO GIVES FREE REPUBLIC \$60,000	PAGE 4
QUEER EYE	PAGE 6
OCCUPIED TERRITORY CONFERENCE	PAGE 16

The *Community Alliance* is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly magazine 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.

Editor: Mike Rhodes

Editorial Board: Carol Bequette, The Rev. Floyd Harris, Rey Leon, Diane Scott, Janet Slagter, Richard Stone, Pam Whalen

Layout/Design & Printing: Hume Printing & Lithograph

Circulation and Advertising Director: Vickie Fouts

Copy Editor: Barbara Price

Proofreader: Carol Bequette

To subscribe send \$35 (regular) or \$10 (low income) to:

**Community Alliance Magazine
PO Box 5077
Fresno, CA 93755
(559) 226-0477 (voice)
(559) 226-3962 (fax)
email: AllianceEditor@Comcast.net
website: www.fresnoalliance.com/home**

Photo Credits:

Cover: Howard Watkins

Page 7: Mike Rhodes, Howard Watkins, Vanessa Rhodes, and Simone Whalen-Rhodes



FROM THE EDITOR

By Mike Rhodes

A locally produced radio show about abortion rights, which aired on KFCF 88.1 FM, was very controversial. What happened is that the show's host had guests who were both pro-choice and anti-choice. The problem was that there were a lot more anti-choice guests on the air than pro-choice. Many listeners felt that the show was biased and the representative

from Planned Parenthood was not given a fair opportunity to present her case.

The controversy found its way to the *Community Alliance* editorial board when a proposal was made to present the issue of abortion rights in the next edition of the magazine. The proposal was to give both sides space in the magazine to present the case for and against abortion. One of the primary arguments against abortion on the KFCF show was that abortion was being used as a tool of genocide against the African American community. Planned Parenthood was portrayed as a racist, baby-killing operation, targeting the African American community. This magazine's editorial board agreed that that was an unfair characterization of Planned Parenthood and that they deserved an opportunity to respond. We agreed to give them the

space to state their case.

Everyone on the editorial board wants this publication to be a voice for building a progressive movement. We also agree that Planned Parenthood is an effective and needed organization that provides family planning counseling, and necessary access to birth control and abortion services. But the proposal called for giving both sides an equal opportunity to present their case. Does that mean that we will offer the local "right to life" representative space to argue why women should not have a right to choose? Will our pages include attacks against Planned Parenthood using the allegations made from the radio show? How committed to free speech is the *Community Alliance* magazine?

It was pointed out that it is not likely that this magazine would accept a diatribe by someone justifying gay bashing. We have never had an article that supported the invasion of Iraq or one that attacked immigrants. Then why would we consider running an article attacking a woman's right to choose an abortion? A woman's right to choose is a fundamental and non-negotiable bedrock issue in the progressive community. It is troubling that an issue that is this important to women would be considered an exception and something to debate. Is this because women's issues are of secondary importance to activists in the progressive movement?

Another issue is how to address the serious allegation of targeting the African American community with racial genocide without giving the subject a forum for discussion? How do we engage the African American community in a discussion about important issues when we won't discuss issues like this? Well, I don't think that we have completely resolved this problem but what we did decide is that there are probably better issues to build unity around than abortion rights. The progressive community can better build a working relationship with the African American community around the issues of a living wage, health care for all, support for the Martin Luther King Day events, and so on. Why pick the one divisive issue and focus on that? The other part of the equation is that these allegations are primarily coming from a small number of African American men who do not speak for the entire community.

The editorial board decided that we were not going to run articles for and against abortion. We believe that, while the incident on KFCF might merit a factual article, it is not the role of the magazine to present both sides of every issue. Besides the fact that we don't have the resources and space to print both sides of every issue, it is not the mission of the magazine to print both sides. Here is our mission statement:

The Community Alliance is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly magazine 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.

This publication is biased in favor of poor and working people and makes no apologies for its style of advocacy journalism. We give a voice to the voiceless and allow activists to say, in their own words, what their work is about. We do not filter and format the words you read here to conform to a rigid journalistic standard. You will see the words of real activists who are engaged in the struggle for peace, social, and economic justice.

The process that we used to come to a decision on the abortion-rights articles was as significant as the decision itself. The editorial board is a collective. Important decisions are made by the entire group, which participates in principled discussion and lively debate. The decisions we make are not always perfect but they are a lot better than any one individual could do by her/himself.

REGIME CHANGE BEGINS AT HOME

We asked our readers, regarding the upcoming primary election, what candidates they were excited about and why. Here are some answers, grouped by candidate.

YEA HOWARD

From Ray Ensher, member Democratic Central Committee: Mr. Dean is a dynamic, energetic individual and has demonstrated he is proud to be a Democrat. He is outspoken on what the Democratic Party stands for. On Iraq he believes the UN should have had a chance and that the Bush administration should have built a coalition prior to invading Iraq.

From Phil Erro: I'll vote for Howard Dean because: 1) he can energize the Democrats; 2) among the Democratic presidential aspirants he attacks Bush the most effectively; 3) he knows how to raise money; 4) he's right on the issues.

YEA DENNIS

From Diane Scott: A president should be someone who cares about people, who knows what it feels like to go hungry and live in a car; who understands the harm done by corporations by taking away jobs, paying less to those who still have jobs, taking away health insurance. . . . I want someone to stop the war in Iraq . . . restore our civil rights . . . respect and abide by the Constitution. . . . My vote goes to Dennis Kucinich.

From Chip Ashley: Unlike the top-tier candidates, Dennis owes nothing to today's corporatism. Dennis offers the opportunity to wrest our democracy back from the fat cats who now use the so-called "war on terror" to enrich themselves and their cronies. . . . Dennis offers peace, which is not only good per se, but easier on taxpayers and better for the economy. Dennis offers real hope for ordinary people.

From Jay Hubbell: In contrast to Dean, Kucinich has the best pro-labor voting record of any member of Congress. Kucinich has never faltered in support of social justice issues like gay equality, living wages, and cutting back the purse strings of the military-industrial complex. . . . [Kucinich is the founder and co-chair of] the House Progressive Caucus that rallied House Democrats by a 2/3 majority to oppose the Gephardt/Bush resolution for authorization to wage war in Iraq. . . . He dares to march with workers on strike and peace activists opposing war and anti-globalists opposing the WTO and World Bank.

From Lydia Flores: The only candidate that speaks to me with clarity and honesty is Dennis Kucinich. . . . He answers questions fully. There is no blasting anyone else. He is clear that we must get our forces out of Iraq, that we must not support the Free Trade Agreements. . . . He will reduce the military budget in order to aid the social programs which are in need of help. . . . Above all he would ask that corporations pay their fair share of taxes. . . .

From Maria Telesco: He's for what I'm for, and against what I'm against—and that includes being against the death penalty. . . . In my opinion he's the only guy who can save us from the totalitarian right.

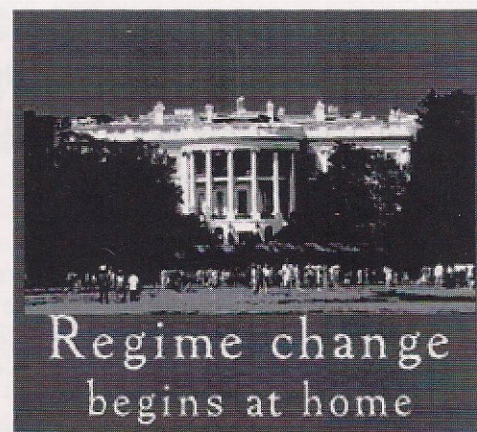
From Bill Simon: He seems the only candidate interested in the ordinary people. He has 56 carefully thought-out positions on his website which means he can't waffle back and forth—what he says is in print. . . . When you listen to him on any issue he is extremely reasonable. He is inspirational when you see him in person. Dennis inspires hope when others appeal to fear.

YEA CAROL

From Ruth Gadebusch: The only woman candidate in the Democratic primary for President, Carol Mosely Braun has a long record of public service. [She] has been elected to public office 14 times. . . . She has long supported . . . equity for women and minorities, environmental concerns, and abolition of the death penalty. Upon leaving the Illinois Legislature, her colleagues declared her the "conscience of the House." . . . She has been endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Organization for Women. [Editor's note: In the interim, Ms. Braun has withdrawn from the race.]

YEA GREENS

From Jeff Eisinger, Green Party County Council Member: The Green presidential candidates are Peter Camejo, David Cobb, Kent Mesplay, and Lorna Salzman. At present, my intention is to vote for David Cobb. Mr. Cobb has clearly stated his intention to run a safe-states strategy, whereby he will concentrate his effort in those states where there is not likely to be a close contest between Democrats and Republicans. He has also stated that he would bow out of the race altogether if Dennis Kucinich wins the Democratic nomination. . . . I have found him to be a compelling speaker and his commitment to the 10 Key Values is quite evident.



Proposition 56: Vote on State Budget

(An excerpt from Easy Voter Guide, California Primary Election, March 2, 2004)

The way it is now: The California Legislature passes a bill each year that lays out what the state budget will pay for. This budget is sent to the governor to be approved. The State Constitution requires the State Assembly and State Senate to have a two-thirds (67%) vote to pass the budget bill and any tax increases. Most years, the state budget sets aside a reserve to help pay for unexpected costs. There is no set amount for the reserve.

The State Constitution has a June 15th deadline for the legislature to send a budget to the governor for the coming year (July to June).

What Proposition 56 would do:

Change the State Constitution to lower the vote required to pass the state budget and budget-related tax increases from 67% to 55%. It also requires that 25% of any extra state income go into a reserve.

The State Legislature has to stay in session until the budget is passed. The legislators and governor lose their pay for each day the budget is late.

Effect on State Budget:

Prop 56 could change the state budget in different ways:

- It would be easier to pass the budget and any budget-related taxes
- The required reserve could make state spending more stable from year to year
- Passing budgets on time could improve the state's credit rating, leading to lower interest costs.

Argument for:

- Prop 56 makes it easier to pass the state budget but the 55% rate is still higher than for 47 other states.
- On-time budgets will help state programs and workers and can also improve the state's credit rating.

Arguments against:

- Prop 56 makes it easier for the legislature to raise our taxes. It is like giving them a blank check to spend more.
- It is good to get the budget passed on time, but not a budget with more taxes.

JEEPERS FREEPERS! - CITY OF FRESNO SETTLES LAWSUIT, GIVES FREE REPUBLIC \$60,000

By Mike Rhodes
January 11, 2004

In September 2003 Debbie Reyes, the chairperson of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) in Fresno, sent a press release to the media to warn the community about potential violence at a Free Republic (they call themselves Freepers) rally and picnic. The press release referred to the Freepers as a "hate group" and encouraged the public to stay away from the area.

When the media went to the site of the rally (Shaw and Blackstone) they found 5-10 flag-waving "patriots" saying that they were just there to support the president. Jim Robinson, the head of the Free Republic, played his role as a persecuted martyr very well and within two weeks went on the attack with a million-dollar lawsuit filed against the City of Fresno claiming that the group's reputation had been damaged.

The lawsuit opened a new front in an ongoing war against the HRC by conservatives in Fresno. The conservatives have attacked the HRC which is an effective force for promoting cultural diversity, they honor the role of leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., and they use conflict resolution techniques to resolve problems in the community. The mayor and several city council members have objected when the HRC supports workers struggling for a living wage, helps to organize activities honoring MLK Jr. and Cesar Chavez, or makes the connections between the war in Iraq and poverty in this city.

Fresno mayor Alan Autry appears to have used the lawsuit as an opportunity to further attack and weaken the HRC. In the last six months he has implemented a process to redefine the HRC's mission, cut funding to the agency, and now Chairperson Debbie Reyes has been forced to resign.

Why didn't the City of Fresno fight this lawsuit? Why are they funding the Free Republic, to the tune of \$60,000, with the taxpayers' money? If this case had gone to court, the issue would have been whether the press release defining the Free Republic as a "hate group" was accurate or not. Could the reason that this case

never went to court be because it was never about uncovering the truth or defending the chair of the HRC in the performance of her duties? This suit, which was filed on behalf of the Free Republic, gave Fresno mayor Alan Autry and conservative forces on the City Council leverage to weaken, destroy, and/or redefine the mission of the HRC.

The issue that brought about the Free Republic lawsuit was that the press release, sent by Debbie Reyes of the HRC, identified the Freepers as a hate group. How is a group determined to be a "hate group?" According to Debbie Reyes, "the FBI does not have a list of officially defined hate groups." She says, "The Southern Poverty Law Center is often cited as an authoritative source for defining who is or who is not a hate group." Does the Southern Poverty Law Center define the Free Republic as a hate group? "Not yet," says Reyes, "but according to Southern Poverty Law Center criteria they should be." This lawsuit and the subsequent court case could have clarified that issue.

For the record, Debbie Reyes says that she is resigning "due to a recent career opportunity that will require a great amount of my time and attention." Her new job is as an organizer for the Prison Moratorium Project, organizing to stop the construction of prisons in and around the Central Valley.

The *Fresno Bee* reported on Friday, January 9, that "Council President Brad Castillo said the city never assumed liability for Reyes' comments. He said Reyes' resignation was a gesture on her part to avoid any further litigation or accusations against the HRC or its members. He also said the city is sued often. 'It's cheaper to pay these guys \$20 and get rid of them than waste an attorney's time on them,' Castillo said."

It is difficult to determine what the progressive community has learned from this experience. Some people believe that if the Free Republic rally had just been ignored, none of this would have happened. Is the community better off when you allow groups to spew racist, religious, or homophobic hatred without a response? That might work some of the time but not always (think Germany in the 1930s). Did we learn anything about letting the City Attorney's office defend the legal and political interests of the progressive community? Has anyone questioned whether Councilmember Jerry Duncan's role in the settlement represents a conflict of interest? Could community groups have been more supportive of the HRC and prevented the latest attacks? What is the role of the HRC when confronted with a potentially violent situation? Should they send press releases warning the community about public safety issues? Maybe there are more questions than answers right now.

For background on the HRC issue, go to:

<http://sfbay.indymedia.org/news/2003/09/1646466.php>

<http://sfbay.indymedia.org/news/2003/06/1618902.php>

<http://www.indybay.org/news/2003/03/1591418.php>

<http://sfbay.indymedia.org/news/2003/08/1636056.php>



Free Republic leader Jim Robinson in wheelchair and City Council member Jerry Duncan in background at Freeper rally at Shaw and Blackstone



Does Jerry Duncan's presence at this Free Republic rally constitute a conflict of interest?

City Council Profiles

- Mike Dages

By Richard Stone

Mike Dages, council member from District 5, served eight years as assistant to previous council member Sal Quintero. Now, as he puts it, they have "exchanged offices." I met with Dages in the larger office reserved for the current council member.

Dages proved to be informal and frank in discussing the state of the city. His two overarching concerns are (1) once the special grants and federal money for public safety are expended, the cost of maintaining police and fire services will outrun the entire current budget; and (2) the "strong mayor form" has, so far, resulted in mayors who view themselves as empowered to set policy, rather than carry out policy promulgated by the city council. Dages believes that the city council frequently runs up against an implacable bureaucracy that, responding only to the mayor's direction, ignores the policies set by the council. He sees this state of affairs as creating major gaps in effective governance.

As an example, he cites the nine-month delay in the Development Department's processing of new proposals. He says that in Clovis, there's a six-week turn-around. Because the mayor's office has not agreed to address the problem, the council has been thwarted despite seeing reform as a priority issue.

Dages sees his Southeast district as distinctly disadvantaged in comparison with the more recently developed (and wealthier) northern parts of the city. His district's greatest needs are installing adequate infrastructure (e.g., streets and sidewalks) and addressing the myriad code enforcement violations that have accrued over the years. He drives the neighborhoods regularly to report violations, acting on the motto, "If you clean it they will come"; and in fact there are now 3000 new homes scheduled for construction in the area. He focuses the discretionary funds he controls toward community activities (especially for children) like a HarvestFest; support of local sports programs; and critical situations involving sanitation, tree-trimming, and the like.

While he feels called on to pay first heed to city-wide issues, he agreed with my proposed dictum that healthy cities grow out of healthy neighborhoods. He did not put forward a policy vision for increasing employment opportunities for constituents, but was more directed at providing a safe, decent environment with recreational amenities.

Because of his long prior real-estate experience and work at City Hall, he feels he was prepared for most aspects of the job. He was, though, surprised by the animosity and grudge-holding among council members. He sees some members as letting past events prevent them from objectively assessing new proposals brought by previous opponents.

Dages sees Fresno's cultural diversity as one of its greatest strengths, along with its climate and proximity to the coast, the Sierras, and both Los Angeles and San Francisco.

He says his most satisfying achievements as a council member are reconfiguring the much-reviled post-stadium downtown parking policy to make it more user-friendly; creating a regional park (now in planning) inside the race track at the Fairgrounds, which will involve neighborhood participation for ongoing maintenance; and creating an affordable baseball league for young teens.

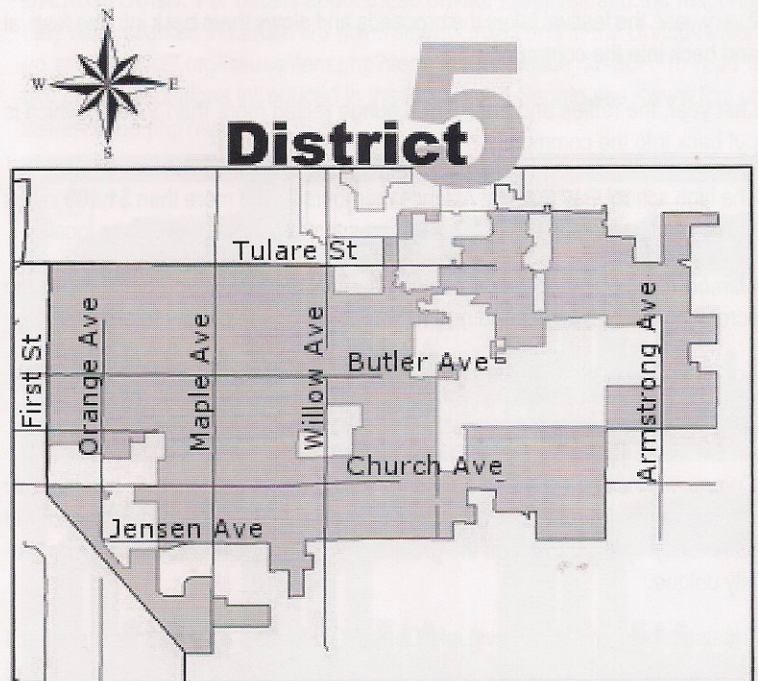


His advice for someone thinking to run for City Council ("as long as it's not against me") is to spend time in the community you want to represent: know the people, get known, become involved.

With city politics now a personal commitment, Dages says he definitely plans to run for mayor in the future.

POSITIONS ON ISSUES:

- water meters—now supports; has changed his stance because of federal penalties
- treatment of homeless—the poor need to be treated with respect; more houses should be provided
- downtown renewal—City needs to invest to create housing; Mall should be decorated for holidays such as Christmas
- independent police review—opposes, as duplication of services
- city living wage ordinance—supports
- use of CDBG funds—mainly for infrastructure, and as enhanced spending for impacted localities
- privatization of city services—emphatically opposed
- relationship to state and federal policy-makers—now no communication, but thinks it's a good idea
- racial relations—approves of work of HRC, does not see problem in his district



Queer Eye . . .

First "Night Out" Showing A Huge Success!

By Dan Waterhouse

REELPride's opening "Night Out" film screening was a monster hit.

Mambo Italiano brought a near-capacity crowd, gay and straight, to the Tower Theatre the night after Christmas.

REELPride director Dave Houck remarked before the film started that the festival was hoping for at least 300 people to come. Close to 700 came.

Over the years, one of the consistent comments in audience surveys has been, "We want more films!"

The REELPride organizers heard and created the "Night Out" series.

The series' kickoff was nearly derailed when the theatre's projector died of old age during the October Fresno Filmworks screening.

Attempts were made to repair the old projector, but the realization sank in that fixing it would cost nearly as much as buying a replacement. REELPride and Fresno Filmworks partnered to buy a new projector, so that the Tower could continue to host film showings.

REELPride began in a Fresno State classroom in 1990. It is now the sixth-largest gay and lesbian film festival in the country.

Every year, REELPride brings the best gay and lesbian films and filmmakers to the Valley.

Film premieres in recent years include *Circuit*, *Friends and Family*, *Latter Days* and *The Event*.

The next screenings will be on March 19 and on June 5, during Fresno Pride weekend.

The 15th annual REELPride film festival is set for September 15–19. There'll be five days of films again this year.

Every year, the festival takes the proceeds and plows them back into the festival and back into the community.

Last year, the raffles and the REEL Lounge raised more than \$7,000, which is put back into the community.

The high school Gay Straight Alliance members raised more than \$1,100 in tips at the concession stand. That money goes to support the GSA clubs locally.

Mambo Italiano is a hilarious comedy set in Montreal. If you didn't go to the screening, go out, find it, and rent it. You don't have to be gay to enjoy it!

For additional info on REELPride, please go online to <www.REELpride.com>.

How About this Column! Well, I'm not one of the Fab Five! Hi, I'm Dan.

Community Alliance magazine recently asked me to put together this monthly column about doings in the Fresno gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community. I plan to focus on the groups and events that make our, my, community unique.

I'm also a columnist for NewsLink, Central California's only glbt news source. I pen the *Waterhouse Report*, which is far-ranging, occasionally provocative, and highly opinionated (at times), every month.

If you want to find out what's happening in Fresno's glbt community, you can also go online at <www.communitylinkfresno.org> and click on the calendar button. NewsLink is also available for viewing there too.

PEACEfresno



Action for social justice and alternatives to war

P.O. Box 16133 • Fresno, CA 93755
www.PeaceFresno.org • (559) 487-2515

GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION -- IN FRESNO!

by Ken Hudson

On March 20, 2004, the first anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq will be met with a Global Day of Action, issued by the ANSWER coalition. People in cities around the world will join together to demand: "End the Occupation — Bring the Troops Home NOW!"

In Fresno: Saturday, March 20, 12 noon—March from the Federal Building at O Street & Mariposa to Courthouse Park at Van Ness & Tulare (one mile). At the end of the march a rally will be held in Courthouse Park at 1 PM.

The first planning meeting for the rally will be Tuesday, February 3, 7 PM at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness, south of Olive. Organizations and individuals are encouraged to participate. For more local information or to endorse: (559) 487-2515 or <www.PeaceFresno.org>. For more information on the Global Day of Action, visit <www.internationalANSWER.org>.

PEACE FRESNO WORKS TO GIVE STUDENTS AND PARENTS A CHOICE

We are continuing the campaign to inform parents and students of their right to have their contact information removed from lists that Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) provides to military recruiters. Disguised as "education reform," the federal No Child Left Behind Act threatens to withhold federal funds from school districts unless they release the names, addresses, and phone numbers of high school students upon request by military recruiters. On January 8, FUSD reported that they had received more than 800 notifications from parents and students to opt out, with more expected. This may be a small number compared with the District's student body, but it is 800 more than the District had received by its original deadline of December 3. At that time, Peace Fresno called for a delay in releasing the lists until parents and students had been adequately informed of their rights.

GET INVOLVED

Peace Fresno holds demonstrations on the first Friday of each month (February 6 this month), 4:30–6:30 PM at Blackstone & Shaw. The theme is "Bring the Troops Home NOW!" Meetings are held every Tuesday at 7 PM at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. The first and third Tuesdays of each month are for discussions and presentations; the second and fourth Tuesdays are for business and planning.



Martin Luther King Jr. annual march held January 19 in Fresno

Event organizer, James Lett says 1,500 people participated in this years march.



ORGANIZING IN FRESNO: WHO ARE PICO, ACORN, AND THE IAF?

By Mike Rhodes

In the last several years, Fresno and the Central Valley have experienced an increasing interest by national "community-based organizing projects." These organizations are setting up shop, building bases of support, and competing for influence in the area. Recently we have seen ACORN <<http://www.acorn.org/>>, PICO <<http://www.picocalifornia.org/index.html>>, and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) <<http://www.iafnw.com/portland.asp>> playing a role in the local organizing scene. Who are these organizations and what do they want? What impact will their presence have on this area's progressive community?

I became aware of the Relational Culture Institute's (RCI) work in this area in October 2001. Keith Bergthold, chief executive officer for the RCI approached me and wanted to know about Fresno-area community groups. During several meetings with Keith and his staff we discussed many of the dynamics of groups in the progressive movement in this area. They were interested in labor, religious, and grassroots community groups. The institute, it was explained, works with grassroots groups to empower their leaders through skills-training workshops and conferences. The RCI has sent organizers to skills-training conferences held by both the IAF and PICO.

According to the IAF website, that group was "organized in 1940 by Bishop Bernard Shiel of the Chicago Catholic Archdiocese, retailer Marshall Field, Kathryn Lewis (daughter of labor leader John L. Lewis), and Saul Alinsky. The 'modern' IAF emerged in the 1970s. In 2001, there are 62 affiliated organizations in the United States network, and organizations in Great Britain and South Africa." Saul Alinsky is an icon of a particular organizing style which has been used by numerous groups including the United Farm Workers. In fact, all three of these groups use the techniques of Saul Alinsky in their work. One thing that struck me about the Relational Culture Institute approach to this work was that it was content neutral. They had not come to Fresno to build a progressive movement for peace and social and economic justice. What they are doing is training grassroots and faith-based activists in organizing skills—empowering the disenfranchised. Not a bad goal. Again, quoting from the IAF website about its political purpose:

"IAF's work is building Broad-Based Organizations, which are large scale (city-wide or metropolitan), and based in Mediating Institutions of church, synagogue, mosque, union, school, strong civic, environmental, housing and health groups.

1. Developing deep Relational-Action-Reflection culture within the Civic Sector Mediating Institutions, in which members of those institutions come to know each others' stories and interests at profound levels.



2. Developing the capacity to negotiate with Government and Market Sector decision-makers, who sit at tables where strategic decisions are made that impact the lives of our people."

The Relational Culture Institute began in Fresno by working with churches, many small, mostly rural groups, and then began working to build a community-labor alliance with the Central Labor Council. Their vision was to build a safe relationship with organized labor that primarily consisted of connecting them with churches and more or less politically neutral community groups. Two years later, The Relational Culture Institute is an emerging power within the community that is well connected with organized labor, the religious sector, and an increasing number of community groups.

Fresno Area Congregations Together (FACT) has been active in Fresno for several years. Primarily active in West and Southeast Fresno, FACT is a strong advocate for the poor, working closely with churches, and has until recently been affiliated with PICO. FACT is the group that held the forum in West Fresno to demand that a junior high school be built. Most of the students in West Fresno were being bussed out of the area and the residents were not going to take it any more. With the help of FACT, parents, students, and neighbors came together and demanded that school board members pledge themselves to change the situation. After the forum the school board agreed to build a new junior high on the West Side and now the activists in FACT know what it is like to achieve a victory in their community. FACT has held other community meetings, such as the one that included hundreds of community members demanding that Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer change the culture of the department to be more respectful of area residents.

At the time of these community meetings, FACT was affiliated with PICO. Here is how PICO describes itself on its website:

"PICO's mission is to assist in the building of community organizations with the power to improve the quality of life of families and neighborhoods. PICO carries out its mission through leadership-training seminars; the recruitment of and development of professional community organizers; and ongoing consultation and technical assistance.

Through the PICO network, people learn to participate in and influence our political system and democratic institutions. Those who were previously ignored, excluded, or apathetic become involved. People's stake in our society is made real. Family life is strengthened. The once-torn fabric of neighborhoods and communities is rewoven. At the very heart of this mission is the process of helping people to help themselves.

Local organizing activities within the PICO Network are guided by the principles and concepts found in the Congregation-Community Model of Community Organization. Congregations of all denominations are the building blocks of the community organization. The members of a local congregation and those living in the neighborhood join together in a powerful expression of unity that transcends racial, ethnic, and income differences. PICO seeks to involve all elements of a community based on the following principles:

1. Respect for human dignity
2. Creation of a just society
3. Development of the whole person."

FACT, which is no longer affiliated with PICO, has shifted gears and is now working on a voter empowerment project with Southeast and Tower district voters. Manuel Toledo, project coordinator, says that he is "working to empower the emerging majority of Latino voters in this area so they have real political power" that matches their numbers in this community. This project is about focusing on

Continued on page 13

CA 8

VICTOR HANSON ON MEXIFORNIA: local pundit talks sense . . . but not dollars

By Richard Stone

CSUF professor Victor Hanson has become a national figure. Having local talent "make it big" feels good—the recognition of folks like Gary Soto and Philip Levine and Audra MacDonald brings a touch of pride. So too, it seems, for Hanson. His January 6 appearance at the downtown library drew a "floor-sitting room only" crowd.

What's more, it's easy to admire Hanson. He appears modest, knowledgeable, sincere, without racial prejudice. He wants the best for everyone. He speaks quietly and cogently, without KMJ-style snideness. He is unafraid to look clearly at situations "gone wrong" without regard for political correctness, liberal or conservative. So why did I come away feeling he is so mis-guided? A friend put it this way. "It's not what he says, it's what he leaves out."

Hanson's analysis rests on a few major premises: (1) America is where people come from around the world because we're the best. (2) There used to be a "Brutal Bargain" that immigrants would come, be shafted a generation or two, but know their descendents would succeed if they learned the language and embraced "American culture." Now they (especially Mexicans) come to get what they can, disregarding our laws and not wanting to assimilate. (3) The creation of a large, unassimilable population that cannot produce future "Americans" is a great threat to our security. (4) This dire situation is perpetuated by unscrupulous employers; the Mexican government; professional "race card" players who foster group politics rather than individual endeavor; and a newly sybaritic middle class that aspires to an aristocratic way of life complete with servants.

There seems to me to be a lot to concur with in this analysis, with blame fairly apportioned. But, as my mother used to say, the accent is on the wrong syl-LABLE. Mr. Hanson completely ignores some of the major factors that create the context for what he sees and dislikes.

(1) "It's the economy, stupid." It is unhelpful to talk about the deleterious actions of "employers" without noting that they are working within a system of corporate capitalism steeped in the values of exploitation. Capitalism's stated goal is to wring out (as Marx put it) "surplus value." That's what it's about—exploitation is no aberration. Slavery itself was aberrant only in its extremity, not in its economic motive. Mr. Hanson ably, and non-doctrinarily, rejects the "bracero solution" of importing temporary workers by contract and then shipping them home. He sees how historically that system was abused by those in control; and he finds it conceivable only within the purview of family farmers (with family values) not the now-regnant agri-businessmen. But he is not led to the conclusion that these "flaws" are precisely the stuff of corporate capitalism. The drive to maximize profit (as the highest value) is different from the drive for a better, more secure way of life. It is incompatible with decency and humaneness.

Additionally, immigration is being more overtly spurred now not so much by local conditions (pogroms in Eastern Europe, potato famine in Ireland) as by interna-

tional economic forces. As the epicenter of these forces, the US is causing—not just being victimized by—the flight of refugees. It is a much more complex tale than the one Hanson tells.

Also the "Brutal Bargain" is not so clear anymore. For one thing, history has shown that the way to prosperity within a dominant culture is not inevitable—the road to assimilation can be blown to bits. Hitler's Final Solution, the Japanese internment here, the destruction of the Palestinian people in Israel: These are not mere roadblocks to assimilation. They are messages (like the Jews of Moses' time received) that radical change is needed in the way modern societies operate if they are to merit trust.

Secondly, there simply are not as many decent-paying jobs for second- or third-generation immigrants to get after they have been educated and assimilated. To prosper, they likely will not be able to settle down and become "part of the American fabric." They may well have to immigrate again, whether it be to another city or region of the country or even overseas . . . and in desperation, not for upward mobility as was typical in the recent past.

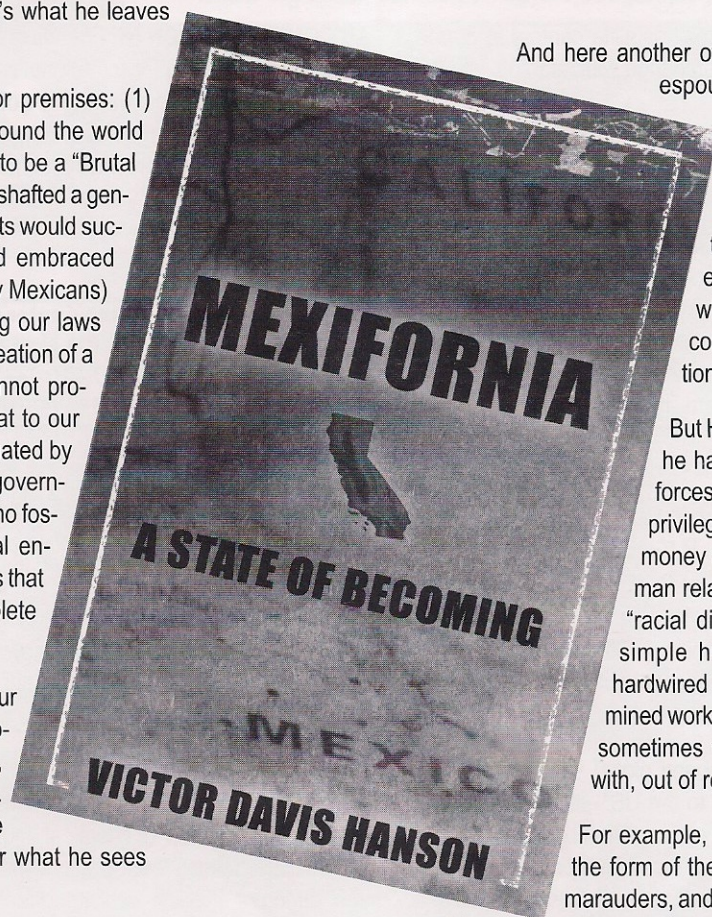
And here another of Hanson's blind spots comes into play: He espouses the commonsense dictum that Robert Frost expressed: "Good fences makes good neighbors." But that does not apply when your neighbor evicts you; or cuts off your water supply at the source; or destroys your traditional market for goods by shipping in government-subsidized products. It doesn't apply when capital has no borders, but workers are contained. It simply is an inadequate prescription for the situation.

But Hanson can stick with that formulation because he has no analysis of power relations or historical forces. He does not see the ongoing impact of "white privilege" and established connections; the power of money and influence to distort market forces and human relations. He shows no understanding that while "racial dislike" can be relatively easily overcome by simple human contact, an "us/them" mentality is hardwired into our mental processes and requires determined work to overcome. It is not enough to "just say no"—sometimes we have to say yes to what we don't agree with, out of respect for others' very different experience.

For example, Hanson is comfortable accepting "history" in the form of the conquest of indigenous peoples by various marauders, and specifically by European settlers in the Americas. He presumes the latter have been redeemed by the creation of this wonderful country. So now history should stop. Another group of invaders does not have the same "right" to just come in and take over because they "need to." Our laws, our status quo should be eternally pre-eminent.

This kind of thinking—however well-intentioned—has no moral or persuasive core (except with established "Americans".) It is little more than "might makes right" and can only be enforced militarily. We Americans are the new endangered indigenous people. But because this time we have the guns, who knows what the outcome will be. All I know is that history won't stop here.

Hanson spoke of the difference between the embattled Romans of 200 B.C. who heroically defended themselves, and the "all-powerful Romans" of 400 A.D. whose hold on the world disintegrated. He says (in paraphrase), "They lost their sense of values, they lost their identity. We can't let that happen to us." What he doesn't say, and what in my mind changes everything, is "That is the fruit of empire."



CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

CHANGE IN VENUE? As many of you know, our upstairs "neighbors" have created some difficulties for us. The uncertain viability of our current (and much-appreciated) home at 985 N. Van Ness has led us to contemplate alternative futures if worse comes to worst. At our recent retreat, our board spent a good bit of time looking at various options. They all involve some changes in how the Center positions itself in the community.

Something missing in our current mode of operation is accessibility to the general public. Some of the sister organizations we meet with at our annual Peace Centers Conference (see below) report on the value of being convenient to foot traffic and student populations. The idea of occupying a store front on, say, Olive Ave. or near City College or Fresno High is attractive.

We also can envision leasing (or even owning) a whole building—maybe even the one we're in—in coordination with several other nonprofit groups.

We also want to examine the feasibility of small satellite centers to create a presence in a locality we don't have much interchange with, starting with West Fresno.

Although our strong preference is to stay where we are, the thoughts occasioned by the possibility of moving have brought out ideas worth investigating even if we stay. Most of them require sharing space with others to cover the costs. We welcome suggestions (including of specific locations) and indications of interest in communal endeavor.

GOODBYE, MARGARET: Long-time and cherished board member Margaret Hudson has had to resign due to health concerns and overextensive commitments. She will remain on our Honorary Board, but we will miss her regular

presence at meetings, partly for the fresh fruit and veggies she always brings and but mostly for her impassioned contributions to our discussion. Thanks for all the goodness you've brought the Center these past several years.

FIRST CALL: The previously mentioned annual Peace Centers Meeting will be held the third weekend in March, in Santa Cruz. These gatherings are always invigorating and high-spirited. We welcome "fellow travelers" to join our contingent. Let us know in the next couple of weeks. (Cost is typically around \$20; free sleeping accommodations are available.)

OFFICERS 'R' US: For the record, our current slate of officials is as follows: President, Maria Telesco; Vice President, Dr. Jack Welch; Secretary, Fran Saunders; Treasurer, Ron Vineyard; Administrative Director, Richard Stone; Center Director, Gerry Bill; Development Director, Angela Price; Program Director, Vickie Fouts.

ACTION OF THE MONTH: Friends of Peace Pilgrim is a nonprofit organization devoted to spreading Peace Pilgrim's message. In the tradition of her pilgrimage, all materials on this website are offered free of charge. Anyone working for peace, spiritual development, and the growth of human awareness has our willing permission to reprint noncopyrighted materials in whole or part. Unpaid volunteer workers and many small donations make this possible. To learn more on how you can spread the word about Peace Pilgrim, see <www.peacepilgrim.org>.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence

985 N. Van Ness • Fresno, CA 93728

Ph. (559) 237-3223 • fcnv2@juno.com

<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence>

THE WELCH REPORT

January 12, 2004

Jack H. Welch, M.D.

The following article substantiates the strong opinion of the writer of this report that the present Iraq war was unnecessary, illegal, and immoral.

"Iraqi weapons programs threatened regional and global security in the long run, but they were not an immediate danger to the US"—the key reason the Bush administration gave for going to war, says a report publicized January 8, 2004. "The report also found no conclusive evidence to support administration claims that Saddam Hussein was cooperating with al-Qaida or would have transferred chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons to the terrorist group, another major justification for the war."

The 61-page study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a non-partisan research institution, faults the intelligence community for failing to make an accurate assessment of the status of Saddam's illicit weapons and missile programs. Further, the study criticizes President Bush and his top officials for systematically misrepresenting the threats posed by those programs, even beyond the evidence presented by faulty intelligence analyses.

Joseph Cirincione, a nonproliferation expert and an author of the six-month study, said, "This is the first comprehensive review of everything we knew or thought we knew about Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction. In doing that review, it becomes clear that many things we thought were working, like our intelligence assessment process, were not, and things that we thought were not working, like the UN inspection process, actually were."



"What has become clear from the study," said Cirincione, "is that this war was not necessary. We were already accomplishing what the president hoped to accomplish during the war; we had shut down these programs."

Among the report's other findings: The extent of Iraq's nuclear and chemical weapons programs was "largely knowable" before the war. "Operations Desert Storm in 1991 and Desert Fox in 1998, coupled with UN inspections and sanctions, had effectively destroyed Iraq's capabilities to produce these weapons on a mass scale."

"It is unlikely that Iraq could have hidden, destroyed, or sent out of the country the 'hundreds of tons' of chemical and biological weapons . . . that administration officials claimed were present without the US detecting signs of them before, during or after the war." Importantly, "Intelligence assessments after 2002 . . . suggest that the intelligence community began to be unduly influenced by policymakers' views sometime in 2002."

The report recommends that Congress create an independent, blue-ribbon panel to assess the quality and handling of intelligence on Iraq before the war. It suggests that Congress consider making the director of central intelligence a professional position rather than a political appointment. Further (and most important in my opinion), "The report also recommends that the Bush administration drop the doctrine of unilateral, pre-emptive war from its national strategy unless there is a clear and imminent threat from a potential rogue nation."

More than 1,200 investigators with the Iraq Survey Group have spent months scouring Iraq for evidence that Saddam continued his weapons programs in violation of 1991 UN sanctions, but they have failed to find evidence of such. (Source: The Fresno Bee, Jan. 8, 2004)



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Vickie M. Fouts, Guest Newsletter Editor, contact at 559.658.8260 or email at vmfout1@sti.net

WILPF DATES:

Wednesday, February 4, Noon: Women in Black, Fresno County Courthouse breezeway.

Monday, February 9, 7 PM: WILPF Board Meeting. 985 N Van Ness Ave. All are welcome to attend.

Wednesday, February 25, 3:30 PM: Stir It Up WILPF Style on KFCF 88.1, hosted by Gabrielle Kirkland.

Save the Date: Saturday, May 22: Northern California WILPF Cluster Meeting in San Jose. Details to follow soon.

Peace Camp: There will be a peace camp reunion on March 13, 1–3 PM at CSUF Education Building. Last year's campers, their families, and volunteers will get together to see a video made by Elfie Ballis at Camp Harmony, receive feedback from the last camp, give ideas for next one, play cooperative games, and just connect with each other. People interested in having their children attend the next peace camp are also welcome to attend. The 2004 Camp Harmony will be held June 14–18 at O'Neil Park, CSUF. We are already looking for future campers and volunteers. For more information contact Vickie Fouts at vmfout1@sti.net or 658–8260.

Blanche Nosworthy Memorial Fund: Fresno WILPF has received several donations in the memory of Blanche Nosworthy. So far we have received \$405 which will be used for scholarships for the next peace camp. If you wish to donate please send your donations to WILPF, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

Book Club: A book club is being organized between members of WILPF, Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) and VAZI, African American Association of Teachers. The goal is to teach white women about the struggles of African American women. We will all read the same book and then meet to discuss. We are hoping to meet around International Women's Day in March. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jean Kennedy at jeankennedy@acninc.net or 291–4948 as soon as possible.

Stir It Up: Gabrielle Kirkland, hostess of the WILPF Stir It Up radio show, is asking for suggestions for future shows. If you have any ideas, issues, or concerns you would like her to cover in future months, please contact her at tellgabby@yahoo.com or 875–0057.

Quote of the Month: "Trying to eliminate Saddam . . . would have incurred incalculable human and political costs. Apprehending him was probably impossible . . . We would have been forced to occupy Baghdad and in effect, rule Iraq . . . there was no viable "exit strategy" we could see, violating another of our principles. Furthermore, we had been self-consciously trying to set a pattern of handling aggression in the post-Cold War world. Going in and occupying Iraq, thus unilaterally exceeding the United Nations' mandate, would have destroyed the precedent of international response to aggression that we hoped to establish. Had we gone the invasion route, the United States could conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land."

—Quoted in *The Nation* from President George H. W. Bush's memoir, *A World*

Transformed, written by Brent Scowcroft. Bush was talking about why he did not overthrow Saddam Hussein at the end of the Gulf War. Don't we wish George W. read a book once in a while?

WILPF EYE ON CONGRESS: ADVANCING THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS: SR 276 and the identical HR 479 were introduced on November 25 and December 9, respectively. The resolutions call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders and President Bush to seize the opportunity presented by recent nonofficial initiatives by Israelis and Palestinians designed to restart movement toward a lasting peace in the region. The Senate resolution has six sponsors/co-sponsors (Senators Feinstein (CA), Chafee (RI), Leahy (VT), Lautenberg (NJ), Bill Nelson (FL) and Jeffords (VT)) and the House resolution has 34.

ACTION: If your senator or representative is one of the original sponsors/co-sponsors, please send a message of thanks for co-sponsoring the Capps/Houghton or Feinstein/Chafee resolution supporting Middle East peace. If your senators' or representative's names are not listed, please consider sending a message requesting support for and co-sponsoring of the relevant resolution.

Your request is important, for these resolutions have aroused considerable—and sometimes passionate—opposition among members of Congress from both parties to the unofficial initiatives mentioned in these resolutions. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has sent an article to all foreign policy legislative aides charging that the Israeli negotiators at Geneva had "signed on a document of surrender." What these initiatives really do is shift the spotlight from debates on and accusations about Palestinian violence (e.g., do Palestinian textbooks incite violence?) to the fundamental and most difficult issues such as refugees, Jerusalem, and settlements. Similarly, SR 276 and HR 479 are vehicles for a constructive shift in the debate within Congress on the way forward for the Middle East.

BACKGROUND: For details about these private initiatives and the responses they have sparked in certain US government circles and in the United Nations, go to www.fcni.org/issues/item.php?item_id=654&issue_id=36. To read the text of the resolutions introduced in the House and Senate see www.fcni.org/issues/issue.php?issue_id=36.



Tuesday February 3 • Reception 4 - 6 PM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Art Exhibit, Essay and Speech Winners
ADMISSION IS FREE Lyles Theater, 3rd Floor in the museum Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1515 Van Ness, Fresno. Artwork created and displayed by students from Fresno Unified, Clovis Unified and other Fresno County School Districts at the museum from February 3-21, 2004. Contact: Thomas Russell (559) 327-9353

Friday, February 6 • 3 - 4:30 PM

Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair co-editors of the award-winning investigative newsletter CounterPunch.com will be in Fresno on Friday February 6, 2004, speaking on US Foreign Policy in the Middle East and other current issues, Their presentations titled "Bush versus the Globe" and "The Politics of Anti-Semitism" are scheduled from 3-4:30 PM in the University Business Center, PB 191, on the Fresno State Campus. The lecture, sponsored by the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition and the Beth Ann Harnish Lectures Series, is open and free to the public and will be followed by a reception and book signing event.

Jeffrey St. Clair is the author of *Been Brown So Long It Looked Like Green to Me: the Politics of Nature*, recently published by Common Courage Press and the co-editor, with Cockburn, of *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, just out from AK Press. St. Clair's other books include: *Whiteout the CIA*, *Drugs and the Press*, *A Guide to Environmental Bad Guys* and *Five Days That Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond*. Scheduled to appear this spring is *Imperial Crusades: a Journal of Three Wars*, co-written with Cockburn. He lives in Oregon City, Oregon.

Alexander Cockburn is one of America's best-known radical journalists. He was born in Scotland and grew up in Ireland. An Oxford graduate, he was an editor at the *Times Literary Supplement*, and the *New Statesman*, before becoming a permanent resident of the United States in 1973. Cockburn wrote on the press and politics for the *Village Voice*, and, all through the 1980s, he was a regular columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*. He co-edits, with Jeffrey St. Clair, the lively Counterpunch newsletter, and is the author of over twenty five books, including *Corruptions of Empire* and, most recently, *AI Gore: A User's Manual*. His exclusive column appears fortnightly on Antiwar.com.

Friday, February 6 • 6:30 PM

Fresno RaNCor; The local group organizing to send activists to New York for the protests during the Republican National Convention, will meet at the Central City Cafe located at 5048 N Blackstone. For more information call 213-2042. e-mail email@rancor.info or check out our website at: http://www.rancor.info

Saturday, February 7 • 2:30 - 5:30 PM

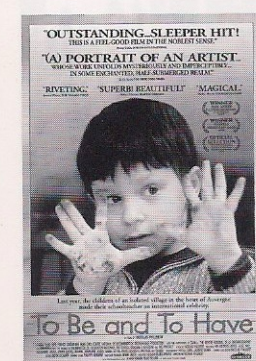
Living in the Central Valley we are so lucky to have the Sierra Nevada's in our backyard- places like the Kings River and Dinkey Creek provide us with unending recreational opportunities, stimulate local economies, protect clean drinking water and are the home to thousands of different wildlife species. Unfortunately these rivers are continually being threatened. Come find out how we can permanently protect the Dinkey Creek and Kings River with the California Wild Heritage Act at an open house Saturday, February 7, 2004, 2:30 -5:30 at the Coke Hallowell Center for River Studies - River View Ranch, 11605 Old Friant Road, Fresno. To find out more please contact Emily at 559-226-2570, visit www.savethekings.org or www.californiawild.org

Sunday, February 8 • 2 to 4 PM

Renew Your Spirit of Nonviolence: The theme is nonviolent communication. Examine how speech as a means is as important as the ends we seek. Watch a segment of the video "A Force More Powerful" and hear a presentation on nonviolent communications. Co-sponsored by Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. Free event. At the Center. Public invited. For more information contact Diane Marks (559) 642-3793

Wednesday, February 11 • 7 PM

Meetup with other local concerned citizens to discuss the impact of big Media in America; who owns it and why it matters. This meeting will be at the Starbucks at Fig Garden Village in Fresno. For more information go to <http://commoncause.meetup.com/>



Friday, February 13 • 5PM and 8PM

Fresno Filmworks presents *To Be and To Have*, the award-winning documentary from France about a group of young students and their nurturing teacher, at the Tower Theatre. Tickets are available at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village, and at the door. Tickets are \$9.00; \$7.00, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to www.fresnofilmworks.org

Saturday, February 14

The Sierra Club annual awards banquet will be held at the La Ryan Event Center at 4277 N West Ave. For more information call (559) 271-0652.

Saturday, February 14 • 7:30 PM

"Valentine Heartsongs" Three guys singing their hearts out for the Museum. JON ADAMS weaves a web of birdsongs—favorite classics and wistful ballads; JEM BLUESTEIN sings and plays songs ranging from high lonesome to the sweet ballad, blues to primal Zydeco. GLEN DELPIT writes and sings the blues; literate poetic songs of lost loves and spiritual quests. Come celebrate and groove along at this fundraiser for the Fresno Art Museum at the museum's intimate and beautiful Bonner Auditorium. Tickets \$15, Family Maximum \$40. Out-of-towners phone (559) 447-5397 for ticket information.

Sunday, February 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the March Community Alliance magazine. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Wednesday, February 18 • 7 PM

"Whites Looking at White Privilege", fourth in a series of discussions in which whites will be challenged to examine the benefits received from centuries of racism at Fresno City College, Room SO-110. Contact Richard Stone to enroll: 266-2559. Contact Gerry Bill for parking permit: 227-2133, or 442-4600 ext. 8348

Friday, February 20 • 10 AM - 2:30 PM

Community Forum - Latino's and Environmental Health. The community forum will bring together elected officials, community residents and organizations to discuss air quality issues, the Latino Environmental Health Project, and policy solutions to create healthier communities in the San Joaquin Valley. At Casa Blanca 2717 Tuolumne in Fresno. For more information contact Rey Leon at (559) 241-6572 or email releone@lif.org

Friday, February 20 • 8 PM

REPATRIATION LOST. Celebrate African Peoples' History Month as CSU, Fresno Peace & Conflict Studies brings you this short controversial film followed by a panel discussion on the issues of inherited land battles, reparations and other pertinent issues relative to the film. (Please note that the panel discussion will be filmed and broadcasted on television.) Free Admission. Cocktail Hour: 7 P.M. Showtime: 8 P.M. CSU, Fresno Room 200 (Upstairs Cafeteria). For more information please call our voicemail and recording: 1-800-971-6498 For media inquiries only, please call our representative James Dominguez: 681-8936 or email: jamesd86@sbcglobal.net

Saturday, February 21 • registration: 6:45-8:00 AM

Race Judicata Fun Run for charity: featuring a 5K run, a 2-mile walk/run, and a 1/4 mile kids run. San Joaquin College of Law, 901 Fifth Street, Clovis, CA; Contact: info@proracegroup.com or (559) 432-2144

Saturday, February 21 • 8 am to Noon

Citrus drop-off, Garden of the Sun, 1944 N Winery (north of McKinley; just south of the Discovery Center) 9:30 am to Noon: Free class: All About Citrus: Relative Merits of Varieties and Flavors Contact number for more information: 456-4151/mailbox#2

Sunday, February 22.

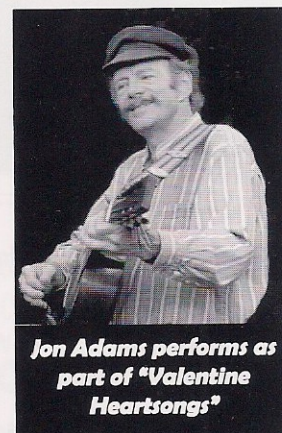
The Tower District Mardi Gras Parade

Sunday, February 22 • 2-5 PM

There will be a benefit showing of Rising UP at the North Fork Studio. Donation at the door is \$5 - \$10. This is a fund raiser for Sun Mountain's media and straw bale projects. A great chance to get out of the fog and see some of the latest films by Elfie (aka George Ballis). For information contact: Don Loweburg 559- 877-7080 or ofln@aol.com

Tuesday, March 2

Primary election



Jon Adams performs as part of "Valentine Heartsongs"

For up-to-the-minute information about what is happening in Fresno's progressive community, join the Community Alliance email alert network. We send out an updated calendar of events once a week and alert you when there is an emergency rally or demonstration. This is a free service. You can join by sending your email address to:

<AllianceEditor@comcast.net>

and say you would like to subscribe to this service.

FEBRUARY TAKE-ACTION REPORT

By Vickie Fouts

Health Care for All California SB921: A bill creating universal health care through a publicly financed administration in California, authored by Senator Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica, is due for discussion soon in the state legislature. It will pass only with grass-roots support from us. To learn more or to take action see <www.healthcareforall.org>.

CAPPS II: The Bush Administration is moving forward with a secretive new system for conducting background checks on all airline passengers, which threatens to create a blacklist of Americans who cannot travel freely. This new government program, called Computer-Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System or CAPPS II, would search secret intelligence and law-enforcement databases and rate every airline passenger a red-, yellow- or green-level threat. Voice your opposition to CAPPS II by faxing a letter to your members of Congress at <www.aclu.org>.

FAIR TRADE VALENTINES: Chocolate is a number-one Valentine's Day gift. Share the Valentine's love with cocoa producers & child workers by buying and requesting only fair-trade chocolate. To learn more: <www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/valentines2004.html>.

CHURCH AND STATE: The Interfaith Alliance asked the 2004 presidential candidates a series of four questions regarding his or her personal views on faith, how those views impact policy-making and where each candidate stands on issues related to religious pluralism and religious liberty. See what they had to say at: <www.interfaithalliance.org/Election2004/Election2004List.cfm?c=89>.

CHAANGE EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT GOVERNOR'S 2004/05 BUDGET

By Gary Dennis Assist. State Regional Rep.

Fresno San Joaquin Valley – The California HIV/AIDS Advocacy Coalition Grassroots Evolution (CHAANGE) expressed its concern about the governor's proposed enrollment cap for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. CHAANGE certainly appreciates the fiscal challenges the governor faced; unfortunately barriers to treatment ultimately lead to increased costs to the state and compromises patient health. The organization is disappointed in the governor's cuts to healthcare overall. HEALTHCARE is a priority of LIFE, the first and foremost inalienable right of all Californians.

The Governor's complete enrollment cap proposal offers a general fund savings of \$1.2 million 2003/04 and \$60.5 million 2004/05, the concern is what the increase to emergency care costs will be. It has been proven, AIDS drugs reduce overall healthcare costs and mortality rates. The proposed enrollment caps Will Not Help reduce the state's deficit; in fact as a result it will only exacerbate emergency care costs.

CHAANGE believes the state has a responsibility to ensure complete and comprehensive treatment for California's citizens that require life-saving medications like those in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. CHAANGE looks forward to working with the Governor, the new administration and the legislature, as a grassroots resource when considering health care policy that affects so many different constituency groups.

CHAANGE believes the most effective way to influence the political process on a state-level is to be a diverse group that includes the voices of individuals and organizations from the many communities and geographic areas affected by HIV/AIDS. CHAANGE chapters will hold local community forums February and March around the state to increase membership, obtain community input on HIV/AIDS priorities for 2004/05 and prepare for Advocacy Day, April 19th, in Sacramento. Fresno's Lobby Day Information Recruitment Dinner will be held on March 18th, @ Four Point Sheraton, Fresno. To attend dinner/forum, Call the above State Reps. for

reservation and more information. Open to the public and those who support individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

The California HIV/AIDS Advocacy Coalition Grassroots Evolution (CHAANGE) is a grassroots alliance of regions, organizations, families, and individuals that advocate on behalf of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. There are Five (5) CHAANGE chapters located throughout California that include East Bay (San Francisco/Oakland Metropolitan Area), Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Joaquin Valley. For more information please contact (916) 869-1312, chaange@aol.com or visit our website at www.chaange.org.

Organizing continued from page 8

a small number of precincts in a district election and influencing the balance of power in this community. "Not only will we help elect candidates, we will hold them accountable to the community," Toledo added.

The third group, and the newest to the area, is ACORN. According to its website: "ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, is the nation's largest community organization of low and moderate-income families, with over 150,000 member families organized into 750 neighborhood chapters in about 60 cities across the country." ACORN is still getting established in Fresno and its staff is going door-to-door in Southeast Fresno to build membership. Once established, expect ACORN to work on such issues as better housing for first time homebuyers and tenants, living wages for low-wage workers, more investment in our communities from banks and governments, and better public schools.

The Relational Culture Institute is now working closely with PICO through a new group called Faith in Community (FIC), which is a network of local congregations. FIC is affiliated with PICO. That association will mean a closer relationship between the Institute and the religious community. With their already strong ties with organized labor, an even closer connection with the religious community through their association with FIC, and a firm connection with many grassroots community groups, the Relational Culture Institute is becoming an influential group in regional politics.

What does all of this mean for the progressive community in Fresno?

Poverty, racism, environmental degradation, and economic exploitation in the Central Valley are so intense that most people can't see how it can ever change. They feel powerless and beaten down. That is about to change because now we have groups here, and they are willing to train grassroots activists how to organize for change. All of these groups want to empower poor and working people to stand up for their rights. Each of them has a different culture and some slightly different techniques and styles of work. But, in the final analysis, each organizer they train and every victory they achieve will make Fresno a better community. Fresno's progressive community welcomes PICO, ACORN, and the Relational Culture Institute. In unity there is strength.

ACORN

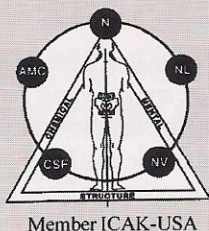
560 E Shields
Fresno CA
(559) 441-7131
caacomsjro@acorn.org

Fresno Area Congregations Together

2839 Mariposa
Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 442-3120
Fax (559) 441-3126
organizerpoet@comcast.net

The Relational Culture Institute

3485 West Shaw Ave
Fresno, CA 93711
Ph. (559) 266-6172
Fax (559) 266-6175
keith@relational-culture.com



Member ICAK-USA

Phone/Fax (559) 248-9527

E-mail: lbassman@pacbell.net

Larry F. Bassman, D.C.

- ♦ Natural Health Care
- ♦ Applied Kinesiology
- ♦ Nutrition
- ♦ Chiropractic

4905 N. West Avenue, Suite 108
Fresno, California 93705

PATIENCE MILROD

LAWYER/LICENCIADA EN LEYES

844

North Van Ness

Fresno, California

93728

559/442-3111

pm097@csufresno.edu



Sari H. Dworkin Ph. D

Psychologist Lic. #13852

Marriage and Family Therapist Lic. #23370

**Feminist Therapy
Sexual Orientation Issues**

1130 E. Shaw Ave., Suite 105 • Fresno, CA 93710
Ph. (559) 227-1977 • Fax (559) 227-2698

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno

Rev. Bryan D. Jessup

*Welcomes you, whoever you are
and whomever you call family, our doors are open.*

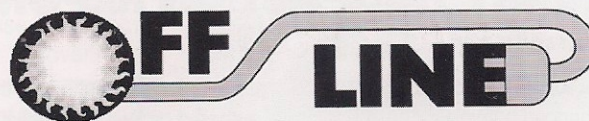
Sermon Topics:

- 02/01 • "Everyday Transformations" by Rev. Bryan Jessup
- 02/08 • "Spiritual Disciplines and Sunday Services" by Rev. Bryan Jessup
- 02/15 • "The Influence of James Martineu on the Australian Constitution" by Ellie Campbell
- 02/22 • "Applied Religion and Building Healthy Local Governments" by Rev. Bryan Jessup & N. Richardson
- 02/29 • "Is There A World Soul? Evidence from the Dream World" by Jeremy Taylor

Services 9:15 & 11:00 am • Church School 9:15 & 11:00 am

Nursery care Available

4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno • Phone: 227-6146



Offline Independent Energy Systems
PHOTOVOLTAIC DESIGN, INSTALLATION & SALES
19 years of inspired service

Don Lowebug
Cynthia Lowebug
ofln@aol.com
559 877-7080

Box 231
North Fork, CA 93643
<http://www.psnw.com/~ofln>
License #661052

Chanah Cossman, CNM
Nurse-Midwife
Prenatal and Newborn Care

Enfermera Partera
Cuidado Prenatal y de Bebé



CHINATOWN

Family
Medicine
and
Midwifery
Medical Office

Hospital & Home Birth Services

829 F Street
Fresno, CA 93706

Tel (559) 266-0444
Fax (559) 266-7745

Partnerships in Understanding

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

**First meeting at no cost
(559) 266-2559**



HUME
PRINTING & LITHOGRAPH, INC.
SERVING FRESNO SINCE 1911.
A COMPLETE OFFSET & LETTERPRESS FACILITY

FRESNO'S UNION PRINT SHOP

3021 W. Dakota Ave., Ste. 199
Fresno, CA 93722-4975

Phone: 559-226-4863
Fax: 559-226-4828

Email: humeprinting@sbcglobal.net

BUSH'S IMMIGRATION PLAN WOULD PROVIDE QUASI-SLAVE LABOR TO LOW-WAGE BOSSES

By Harry Kelber

Since 1996, Congress has refused to raise the federal minimum wage, forcing millions of workers to accept a poverty-level rate of \$5.15 an hour to hold onto a job.

The beneficiaries of Congress inaction are the hotel, restaurant, hospital, nursing home fast food, supermarket, dry cleaning and other low-wage industries that thrive on the exploitation of an enormous pool of unskilled workers, hungry enough to take deadend jobs.

This cheap, compliant work force has been augmented by from eight to ten million "undocumented" workers, who quietly suffer abuse and humiliation from their employer, lest they be fired from their jobs and deported back to their homeland.

The employers in these low-wage industries are now complaining that American workers are shunning the jobs they offer and that their needs can only be met by the importation of foreign workers who would love whatever pay and working conditions are offered them.

It has not occurred to employers that if they paid a decent wage and improved working conditions, they could get plenty of Americans to work for them. And wouldn't it help if Congress finally passed a minimum wage law that would be fair to working people? After all, there still are some nine million unemployed, able and willing to work if offered a decent-paying job.

To provide employers with an additional source of cheap, servile labor, President Bush's immigration plan would allow them to hire foreign "guest" workers for three-year periods, provided they could show that no American wanted those jobs.

The President's plan has several similarities with the system of indentured servitude that existed in Colonial America. Impoverished, jobless Europeans were brought by ship to the New World, and they paid the cost of their passage by signing a contract, usually for four years, that classified them as "indentured servants," who worked for little more than the food, clothing and shelter their employers were willing to provide. At the end of their contract, they received "freedom dues": a set of clothes, a set of tools, a rifle and a plot of land.

Unlike the indentured servants in the colonies, President Bush's imported workers would be denied an opportunity for permanent residency and full American citizenship. At the end of their three year term of employment (renewable for an additional three years), they would be sent home.

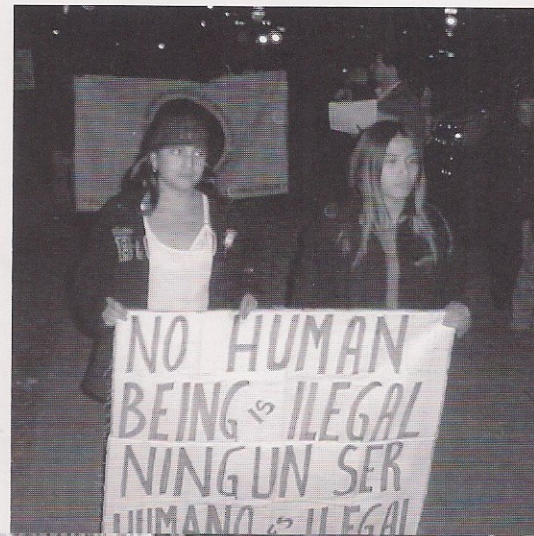
Like today's undocumented workers, the "guests" would be at the mercy of their employer. For fear of deportation, they'd have to withhold complaints about unpaid overtime work, unsafe and unhealthy workplace conditions, speedup, discrimination, sexism and other abuses on the job. They certainly wouldn't dare to show an interest in joining a union.

Multinational corporations, aided and abetted by the White House, are aggressively trying to hammer down the wages and benefits of working people. They are continuing to ship out hundreds of thousands of good-paying manufacturing jobs to low-wage countries. Now, with the Bush immigration plan, they hope to import a work force that, out of sheer necessity, will have to comply with their every wish and whim.

This two-sided attack on the jobs and living standards of American workers is one of the worst effects of a corporate controlled globalization.

The Bush immigration plan, in this election year, is also an obvious ploy to win Hispanic votes. But if the proposal ever comes before Congress, the AFL-CIO must marshal an army of trade unionists to militantly oppose it.

Our weekly "LaborTalk" and "Labor and the War" columns can be viewed at our Web site www.laboreducator.org. Union members who wish to learn more about the AFL-CIO reform movement should visit www.rankandfileaflcio.org



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By the Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr.

Here we are in the twenty-first century and we are still fighting the fight that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had to die for. Many of us today don't understand the in-depth scares that black men, women, and children have suffered in America. There was no justice in a time where lynch mobs hunted blacks down to kill them in front of a town hall rally. Little black children, men, women were hung from street posts, trees, and bridges and were hunted with bloodhounds like animals in a jungle. There were laws like Jim Crow to keep segregation alive and to keep people of color from having access to the same public facilities as whites. Blacks who thought that they were equal and had human rights could only hold on to hope that someday their God would make life better. There was a man named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who couldn't stand by and watch people be treated like second-class citizens. Dr. King believed that love was the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. Dr. King was a man who led by example and put himself out in front. Dr. King didn't want to leave anyone behind; he felt that if he could educate you about the struggle, then you would be that much stronger to stand on your own. Dr. King said, "A man who won't die for something is not fit to live." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. knew that there had to be a price paid and the price was his life. I believe that Dr King knew that respect was not going to be given but it had to be earned through nonviolence.

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will... The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those they oppress."

-Frederick Douglass

Today as African Americans we are still faced with injustice.

1. Education
2. Wages
3. Environmental Racism
4. AIDS
5. Racial Profiling
6. Voters' Rights
7. Air Quality
8. Bad Water
9. Homelessness
10. Unemployment

Because of these things, it helps us to remember the dreams and to keep the flame burning.

**February is
Black History
Month**

OCCUPIED TERRITORY

by the occupied territory collective

Occupied territory is the grass beneath our feet, stolen by European religious zealots coming to cleanse the land for the Christ-god and establish a new Christian state with the doctrine of manifest destiny. The inhabitants of the great Turtle Island once numbered around 15 million; by 1890, fewer than 250,000 indigenous remained alive. In our occupied territory of California, the indigenous number was approximately 300,000 in 1800, then to fewer than 20,000 in 1890. As a part of the struggle to understand the binds of oppression and restrictions that surround us, it's vital to recognize how we got here, to this place that separates by class, race, gender, sex. Only by knowing the history of this land can we honor those who came before and plan how to participate in our emancipation from the systematic greed of capitalism.

Occupied Territory is a private* gathering of like-minded individuals who dream of freedom from the sin of capitalism and sham of the state. For a moment we can gather to organize theories of community and autonomy into a active and effective revolutionary movement involving the various trends of anarchism that exist today. To have an effective revolutionary movement we must prove we can live as a community to benefit each other. Without a model to compare to, all we have are dusty relics of the past to look back to with longing eyes. Occupied territory is based upon the principle of temporary autonomous community. A TAC is a non-hierarchical temporary autonomous community based on free associative mutual aid to ensure that a community, solely comprised of individuals, individually contributes personal resources for each other without coercion, to sustain a community for days, weeks, or months. Occupied territory is more than a conference but an experience in autonomous community.

To achieve permanent autonomy, we like-minded* individuals must create a network of those opposed to the state and its lackey capitalism in one of the most influential and expansive areas in the world—to build a cohesive autonomous community in the shell of the old, to sway the will of the worker to bring the US economically to its knees. We need a network to support the development and lend mutual aid to emergent anti-authoritarian collectives, by giving those alienated by geography a resource on anarchist collectives and community.

Our gathering will take place June 18-20 in the mountains east of Fresno. To get informed of developments first, subscribe to the gathering list occupiedterritory@lists.riseup.net. IF you would like to get involved or contribute in any way, email the occupied territory (de)central command at occupiedterritory@riseup.net.

* This gathering is for like-minded private citizens. Those who have employment or membership in law enforcement agencies, corporate news agencies, etc. are strictly forbidden to come to the occupied territory gathering June 18-20. Those who purposely break the law by coming to a private gathering will be removed under the extreme limits of the law.