

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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FRESNO MAYOR WANTS TO BUILD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN MY BACKYARD

By Mike Rhodes

A proposal to build a nuclear power plant, next to the wastewater treatment facility southwest of downtown Fresno, has been proposed by a group of businessmen in Fresno. Alan Autry, the mayor of Fresno, supports the proposal saying that it will reduce electricity costs by two thirds and bring thousands of jobs to Fresno.

The proposal to build a 1,600-megawatt nuclear reactor is estimated to cost \$4 billion. In an exchange earlier this month with the mayor (see <http://fresnobeehive.com/opinion/mayorblog2006>), I wrote “Mayor, there was a proposal made last week to the Fresno City Council to build a nuclear power plant in Fresno. Do you think this proposal should be seriously considered? Do you support building a nuclear power facility in this community? If you support the idea of a nuclear power plant, do you think it should be located near the bluffs in north Fresno or on the Westside?”

Mayor Autry replied: “Mike, I believe nuclear power holds great promise for the entire San Joaquin Valley. We must find a way to become energy self-sufficient. High energy costs are crippling households throughout the Valley. The nuclear power plant being discussed is very small. The size being discussed, which is small enough to operate a nuclear submarine, could provide enough power for the entire city of Fresno. As for the Bluffs or Westside, it makes no difference to me since it is the safest source of energy around. Mike, by the way, how big is your back yard?”

According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_power_plant) a 1,600 MW nuclear power plant, if built today, would be the largest plant in the world. The mayor wants to put that plant in my backyard???

If a nuclear plant does get built in Fresno it will produce a waste material that will have to be stored for thousands of years. The problem of nuclear waste storage is so serious that there is a moratorium banning the building of nuclear power plants in California until there is a solution to how to dispose of the spent fuel. Yucca Mountain, Nevada, the Federal government’s primary candidate for a permanent waste repository, is on indefinite hold due to Nevada Democrat Harry Reid’s rise to Senate majority leader. Out of six nuclear power plants in California, four have been decommissioned because of high operating costs and safety concerns.

The Fresno Nuclear Energy Group LLC, which consists of several local businessmen, wants to build this plant far away from the upscale neighborhoods of north Fresno. The poor residents of west Fresno will be the beneficiaries of all the gifts the nuclear industry has to offer.

One gift that is sure to please neighbors of this power plant is the constant threat of a nuclear disaster. Remember Chernobyl and Three Mile Island? The radiation from the 1986 Chernobyl disaster resulted in the evacuation of 336,000 people, the contamination of all nearby farmland, and reputable estimates of over 30,000 deaths. The agricultural use of 1.9 million acres of arable land and 1.7 million acres of forest was discontinued after the reactor disaster. In addition, the milk produced in some parts of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine may still have high levels of caesium-137. For decades to come, most of the radioactive materials that people take in through food and drink in the affected areas will be caesium-137 present in milk, meat, and crops. Chernobyl’s human impact was softened by the

remoteness of the plant from population centers. A similar disaster here would have an unprecedented impact on human life and end agricultural production in much of this valley for centuries.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California’s July, 2005 Statewide Survey, “Most Californians (59%) oppose constructing new nuclear power plants in order to expand U.S. energy sources. While 33 percent of Californians support building more nuclear power plants, only 20 percent would still support the plan if a plant were built within 50 miles of their home.” The proposed nuclear plant site at the Fresno wastewater treatment facility is within 50 miles of every major city in Fresno, Madera, Tulare, and Kings Counties. For over 1.5 million people, it would be a disconcertingly close, largely unwelcome neighbor.

The group proposing to build this nuclear power plant has no intention of paying for it themselves. They want to rely on massive government subsidies to finance this project. So much for the free market system. If nuclear energy is such a good idea, why aren’t Wall Street investors lining up to underwrite the endeavor? The answer is simple - because they know you can pour billions of dollars into one of these power plants and in less than a day it could all melt down. Not only that, they could be on the hook for billions of dollars in clean up expenses. That is why private industry will not finance this dinosaur. The group that is promoting nuclear energy in Fresno wants you and me to take on the financial liability of their project, the risk of turning the Central Valley into a wasteland, and the death of our families, so they can become wealthy. That does not sound like a fair trade to me.

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FEBRUARY 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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The Community Alliance newspaper reserves the right to edit all articles for space and clarity.

FROM THE EDITOR



From the Editor

I was standing in the Lorraine Hotel (now the National Civil Rights Museum) in Memphis Tennessee, at the very spot where Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated. The moment was unforgettable. I was thinking about the evening before, back in Fresno, where

the Community Alliance newspaper had been presented with an award recognizing the “valuable contributions” we have made in exposing the injustice inherent in the City of Fresno’s attacks on the homeless. The award came from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Committee. That same night we also received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Fresno Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for our “years of service and contribution to the City of Fresno and to the community as a whole under his same Spirit to keep the dream alive.”

The civil rights museum is a tribute to people who stand up against injustice, who put their lives on the line, and demanded equality. It was shocking to see the cruelty of the system of slavery, segregation, and forms of social control used to maintain white privilege. It was inspiring to see the courage and strength Dr. King and his allies had to confront this fundamentally racist and violent system.

I was actually in Memphis to attend the national Media Reform Conference that took place over the three

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day weekend that includes the Dr. Martin Luther King holiday. So, it was with a special appreciation that I heard speeches by Rev. Jessie Jackson, Amy Goodman, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Bill Moyers. The speech Bill Moyers gave, which was the opening presentation at the conference, was particularly inspiring. It is printed, in its entirety, starting on page 25. If you want to know what is motivating us to print the Community Alliance newspaper and why we value alternative/independent media, I encourage you to read the Moyers article.

Our front page story this month is a good example of the kind of coverage you will get in the alternative/independent press, but not in the corporate media. It is an in-depth look at the proposal by a group of businessmen, and supported by Fresno mayor Alan Autry, to put a nuclear power plant in Fresno. While it would be easy to dismiss this threat as a fantasy being promoted by delusional zealots, the reality is that these people are dead serious. They want to put a nuclear power plant in Southwest Fresno, near the sewage treatment plant.

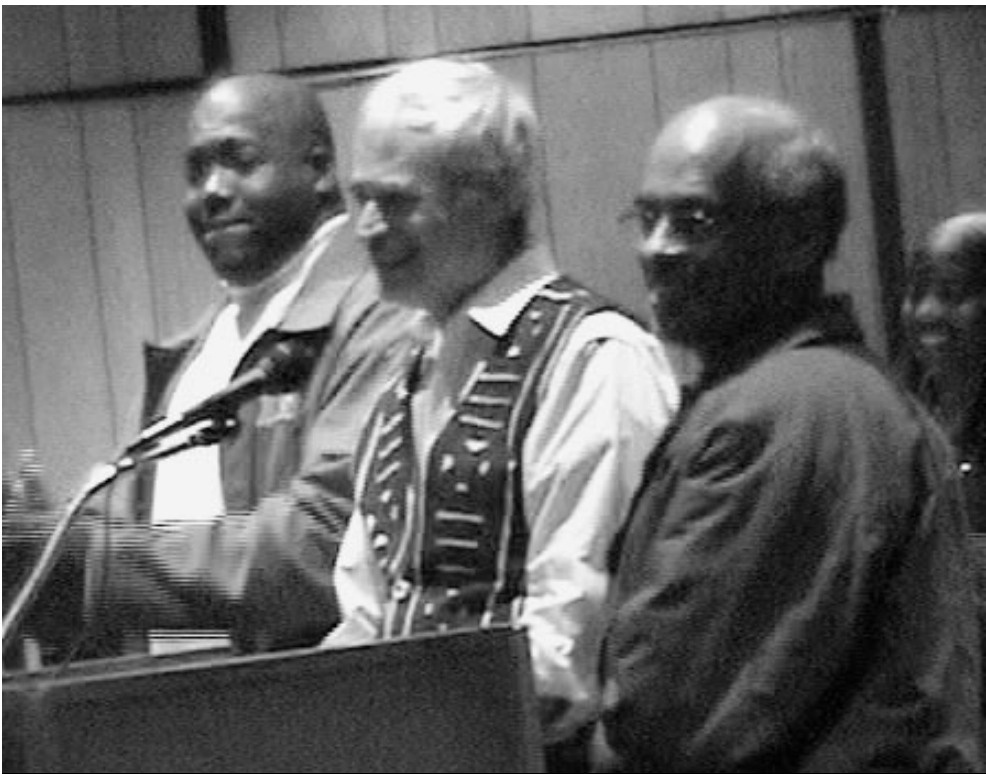
The proponents of nuclear power are bringing Patrick Moore, who they claim is an environmentalist, to town on February 22. We present you with Mr. Moore’s credentials on page 6. Alan Cheah and Mark Stout have written a powerful expose on the economics of building a nuclear power plant in Fresno and the obvious alternatives - solar and wind. That article is on pages 7 and 8. The proponents of this project have used Finland as an example of an environmentally conscious European nation that is building nuclear power plants similar to the design they want to build in Fresno. We asked anti-nuclear activists in Finland to tell our readers how things look from their perspective. That article - *Scandal after Scandal in Olkiluoto* is on page 9.

In addition to the series of articles about nuclear energy and the media reform article by Moyers, there is

much more to read about in these pages. We have an exclusive article about the homeless in Fresno, prison reform, news from the water wars in the Westlands Water District, stopping the war in Iraq, an inside look at gang suppression, and the largest peace and social justice calendar in the Central Valley.

If you are tired of business as usual - where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, where the war in Iraq goes on and on, and there is always enough money to build more prisons but not enough for education, then you need to be a part of the solution. The civil rights movement was successful because people were willing to work hard, sacrifice for the cause, and believe that justice and social change could be achieved. I encourage you, our readers, to continue in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, join the groups working for social/economic/environmental justice, and build a progressive movement for social change.

In addition, we need you now (more than ever) to subscribe and donate to the Community Alliance newspaper. We simply can’t do this without your support. Subscriptions are just \$35 a year (\$10 low income). Subscriptions and donations can be sent to the Community Alliance newspaper at P. O. Box 5077, Fresno Ca 93755.



Community Alliance newspaper editorial board members Rev. Floyd Harris, Richard Stone, and Dan Yaseen as they receive an award from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Committee for this paper’s coverage on the homeless issue.

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The Fresno Ministry of Truth

By Jeremy Weir Alderson

I'm not cut out for this, or at least, maybe I should say, my fantasies are mutually exclusive, you know, kind of like a guy who wants to have his wife and his mistress in bed together but who missed the step of telling either one about the other. In my case, well, not only do my fantasies not get along with each other, but they aren't that much fun to begin with.

Me, I want to change the world and, yes, while it would be nice to implement my ideas on why there ought to be cheap vegetarian entrees at every roadside restaurant and golf pros should be forbidden to wear shorts, I'll settle for just getting all the homeless people into houses. Unfortunately, my idea of a person who ought to be engaged in this pursuit is a combination of Will Rogers and Gandhi, someone who radiates love, good will, and compassion for the foibles of mankind. But that's not me. There are some people who just plain piss me off, and it seems like a bunch of them are running the City of Fresno.

Let me back up a bit. In 1998, I was the host of a weekly radio show in central New York, where I wasn't important enough to explain to anybody why I wasn't important. But by that time, I had already been writing about and talking about homelessness on the radio for ten years. So when I got the chance to do a long broadcast about homelessness, I grabbed it. I put a desk outside on the Commons of Ithaca, New York (to dramatize the fact that people are outside in the cold) and raved and ranted all night about why we ought to care about homelessness. I think right in that first "Homelessness Marathon" I used a phrase that I've used ever since, "When that canary dies in the coal mine, it's not a veterinary problem."

That first broadcast really stank, but people loved it. Go figure. So I've been going around the country ever since, originating Homelessness Marathons in Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Atlanta, among other places, and the broadcast has grown and grown. Last year we were on over 110 stations coast-to-coast with another 30 or so stations in Canada airing a parallel Canadian Homelessness Marathon. This next one, originating from Fresno **starting at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 20th**, will be our tenth broadcast, but don't worry, I long ago stopped haranguing people about why they should care, because I realized most people already do. If we have a problem in this country, it's not with our people but with our leaders, and that, naturally enough, brings me to Mayor Autry, one of those leaders who makes me feel like something less than a saint.

I think any honest assessment would have to conclude that, when it comes to homelessness, Mayor Autry does the wrong thing, lies about it, gives obscene rationales for his conduct and presides over an administration well stocked with people eager to do his conscienceless bidding. It's a disgraceful record, but what would anybody expect? We wouldn't have hundreds of thousands of people sleeping on our streets if something hadn't gone deeply wrong with our nation.

Now don't get me wrong, as a visitor from the east, I really like Fresno, and I didn't come here to pick on the city. No city can solve the problem of homelessness by itself, and we consider other factors in selecting a site besides local homeless policy. Here in Fresno, we're fortunate to have KFCF (88.1 FM) for an affiliate and Mike Rhodes, a terrific reporter and the editor of this very paper, as a guide and liaison. But, sure, knowing that Autry was waging a war of aggression against his own most vulnerable citizens made me want to rip off my secret-identity shirt and expose the initials "MOHA" on my chest (that stands for "Marginalized Old Hippy Agitator" in case it isn't obvious).

On our broadcast, we're going to be giving experts, callers, and the homeless, themselves, a chance to speak, so this may be my best personal soapbox, and what I really want to tell the good people of Fresno is that a policy like Autry's cannot be implemented without an accompanying campaign of manipulation and misrepresentation. I'd like to concentrate here on some of the dishonest games that have been played with this com-

munity in general and with me in particular as I've tried to organize this broadcast. I'll start with some items readers of the Alliance mostly know about and then move on to some things you haven't heard.

THE GAME WITH THE SWEEPS

You probably all know this sorry history. First the city attacks homeless and destroys their possessions, then the city's lawyers justify this conduct so unconvincingly that a Federal judge calls the city's arguments "disingenuous:" and "dishonest," then the mayor insults the judge, calling his ruling "cavalier" and "veracity challenged" and suggests that the judge should "enter the real world." After the ruling, Autry insisted he had to order sweeps because kids were "watching [homeless] people have sex." But how could the judge have given weight to this scandalous behav-



The City of Fresno police and sanitation department attack the homeless in this photo from a raid on Santa Clara street in 2004. Photo by Mike Rhodes

ior when no testimony to this effect was presented at trial?

And I remember standing with Rev. Noe Lopez, the anti-poverty pastor of the Mexican-American Baptist Church, who pointed at a lot and said there had been homeless people there and that it had been fine with him, but that they had been swept out anyway. The lot he pointed to was bounded by the church, a fence beyond which was the freeway, and an abandoned industrial building. In other words, according to Rev. Lopez, the city swept homeless people out of at least one area where there were no neighborhood kids at all.

Autry also claimed that a swept encampment was "a disease factory," though there was no testimony at trial about disease either. In fact, the mayor claimed in an interview that he had gone there the day before the sweep and "hugged people," so how worried could he have been?

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Autry also derided the judge because, "This mattress that the judge says we should have gave back was riddled with everything from e. coli to hepatitis... something that it would take a hazmat suit to give back to that person." But, again, there was no testimony to this effect at trial, and one might be just the teensy tinsiest bit curious as to how come hazmat suits would be necessary to return belongings when they weren't needed to confiscate them in the first place.

In other words, the *evidence* is that Mayor Autry is either a pathological liar or a political special Olympian, incapable of distinguishing truth from his own fictions. But that's not the worst of his verbal sins. The worst is his claim that, "This action had to be taken on behalf of the homeless as well as anybody." Yes, he's just siccing the police on poor people for their own good. In other words, in addition to tearing up the Constitution, as already determined in court, he wants to eviscerate the social contract which is the bedrock of our society.

In America, you're supposed to have rights, and those rights are supposed to protect you from the predations of both the ill-intentioned and the *well*-intentioned. You're not supposed to live in fear of some municipal monarch just because he thinks he's got a better idea about how you should lead your life.

One reason Autry shouldn't do to poor people what his wealthy campaign contributors don't want done to them, is because what goes around does, indeed, come around. Mayor Autry had his armed minions rob the homeless for their own good, so why shouldn't armed poor people rob the rich for *their* own good? Didn't Jesus say it would be harder for a rich man to get into heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle? So what nicer thing could a poor person do for a rich one than take their money and bring them closer to God?

No, I'm not cut out for this work, but you don't have to be a curmudgeon with MOHA on your chest to take exception to Autry's policies. City Council President Jerry Duncan – a hero of this story for reasons I'll come to later – told me he doesn't think the mayor's policies are working, and then he added that he views them as an "embarrassment" to the city. I couldn't agree more.

THE NUMBERS GAME – PART ONE

Personally, I'm not a farmer, but I do live on a farm, and I know how it is in the country. Yup, when we're not saying "aw shucks," we country folk can count up to ten, and if we've got all our toes, we can make it up to twenty. So golly gee, how come all these here city slickers working for the City of Fresno can't count to two?

The "two" I'm referring to is the two contained in a particularly important section of the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC) Ten Year Plan To End Homelessness 2006-2016. Here's what it says:

"The national Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office has, based upon research and nationally accepted generalizations, provided a formula for identifying regional estimated homeless populations (described above). Based upon National actual numbers that have been received, a generalization formula consists of 1-2% of an areas (sic) general population. To ensure a conservative and appropriate estimation for the Fresno and Madera areas, a 1% application was utilized..." Unlike the mayor's allegations about e.coli, hepatitis and public sex, this 1-2% figure really did play a part in the hearing about the city's attacks on homeless encampments. There was some question raised about whether or not Fresno's homeless actually had some better option that they were just choosing not to exercise, you know, like besides the tents that the city threw away they maybe all had second homes in the Bahamas. The evidence is indisputable that there isn't enough shelter space, much less low-cost housing, for Fresno's homeless, but the City has repeatedly tried to say otherwise.

Knowing just how many homeless people there actually are in Fresno is crucial to deciding this issue. So I wondered about that 1-2% figure, and in particular, I wondered how just invoking the words "conservative" and "appropriate" would permit the city to lop off the higher 2% figure altogether and arbitrarily drop the estimate of Fresno/Madera homeless down to just 1%. So I asked HUD if their study had provided any methodological basis for throwing away the 2% figure, and guess what, HUD *disavowed this formula completely*. The HUD public affairs office wrote, "HUD is most certainly not the source of this 1-2 percent homeless estimate." Hmm, what was that phrase of Autry's? Oh yeah, it was "veracity challenged."

Needless to say, I tried to track down the source of the HUD citation in the FMCoC Plan. I wrote to Fresno's Public Affairs Officer, Rhonda Jorn and she referred me to Karri Gordon who, I gather, was integral to the FMCoC work group, and Karri Gordon said she was passing my request along to an unnamed person who had actually written the plan document. That unnamed per-

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son never wrote me back, though, so after a month, I asked Karri Gordon again, and she said she'd see what she could do, and I finally got a response, but unfortunately, the answer I got left out the part about explaining where the HUD citation came from.

So I wrote again asking if we could now just say the HUD reference was in error. I got an email back from an applications specialist with the Fresno Housing Authority named Jenifer Fisher, who said, "the e-mail that you wrote has passed through my hands" (don't ask me how), and that she thought it seemed "a bit confrontational." I said no, I was just trying to get a straight answer, could she help me, and by the way, what do the housing professionals working with the city think of the attacks on the homeless? Funnily enough, I never heard back from her either, so as of now, there simply is no explanation for how that HUD reference got into the FMCoC plan, much less how come they conservatively and appropriately chopped their estimate in half.

THE NUMBERS GAME PART TWO

One thing I can say for both Rhonda Jorn and Karri Gordon is that they did forthrightly answer another question of mine, but unfortunately, it's amazing how much their clear answers actually obfuscated.

The FMCoC Plan described another method that had been used to determine the number of homeless people in Fresno, and that involved "locally funded homeless-facility use statistics." The directors of two of the locally funded homeless facilities had testified on the city's side at the court hearing, so I asked Rhonda Jorn, "does the City of Fresno make payments to Poverello House and/or the Rescue Mission for services rendered and, if so, for what?"

In a telephone conversation, Jorn told me that the answer was no. Other than contracting for the training of nine formerly-homeless "Ambassadors," there was no financial connection. And Karri Gordon wrote, "we do not pay the Fresno Rescue Mission or the Poverello House for anything."

Then somebody sent me a link to a 35-page document with the catchy title, "PROGRAMS/SERVICES DELIVERED TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS IN FRESNO COUNTY – FY 2006-07." On the 16th page there is an entry for the Craycroft Shelter, operated by the Fresno Rescue Mission. The program is described as a "DCFS contract for emergency shelter for children unable to return to their parent's home," for which there are "24 beds contracted" for stays described as "Short-term (up to 30 days)." Most surprising, this record also reads, "Contracted amount: \$983,000."

I queried Rev. Larry Arce, the CEO of the Rescue Mission, if he could confirm this, and unlike Gordon and Jorn, he didn't have any problem. He wrote back, "Yes. It is run out of a separate 501c3 nonprofit." Now, since it is run out of a separate corporation, I suppose one could argue that, technically, Fresno doesn't pay money to the Rescue Mission. Then again, arguments like that put Enron's executives in the slammer. And apparently, this is a County not a City program (I *had* asked about the City, but in response to a County document). Either way, in my book \$983,000 is a pretty hefty chunk of change to just fail to mention.

THE CITY HALL GAME

I'm putting on a show, and it's axiomatic that, before you

can put it on, you've got to have a place to put it. So I requested the use of the City Hall plaza. It seemed perfectly appropriate to bring homeless people to the front of City Hall and have them speak to the nation from there. After all, homelessness is a political issue, and it should be addressed through the political organs of our society.

City Council president Jerry Duncan turned out to be a surprising ally. I've concluded that he's either the last holdover of a Communist sleeper cell who doesn't know the cold war is over or an honest politician trying to prove that the term "Honorable Conservative" isn't an oxymoron. I'm not sure which of those is more likely, but however it is, Duncan clearly wants the Homelessness Marathon to be treated fairly. He told me that he had even told assistant City Manager Bruce Rudd that he wanted us treated the same as an "I Love Autry Marathon," and for a while there it looked like we were in.

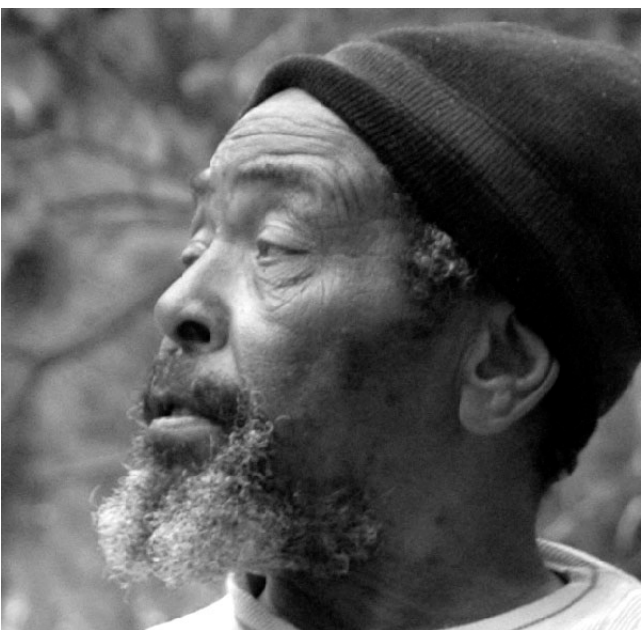
In a disputed conversation, I say that Rhonda Jorn told me, by whatever words, that our use of City Hall would be no problem so long as we complied with the same rules as everybody else, which was fine with me, and she advised me that I should meet with Doug Dow, the City Hall facilities manager, to go over logistics. I met with Dow and he said there would be some mandatory charges for security and what not, and that he would make up an estimate. But when I called Dow for the estimate he told me that he had received a call from the Mayor's office and been told that he had "better things to do," and that now this matter would be between the mayor's office and Jerry Duncan. I asked Duncan what was up, and he said this was the first he'd heard of it.



The homeless fight back. This Press Conference was called to announce a lawsuit against the City of Fresno to stop them from taking and immediately destroying the property of homeless people. A federal judge issued a preliminary injunction protecting the civil rights of the homeless. Photo by Mike Rhodes

What followed was more than three weeks of Duncan writing e-mails to City Manager Andy Souza and a whole cast of characters in the municipal administration, trying to get a straight answer about the availability of the City Hall site for our broadcast. He's written to me, "I can't tell you how frustrated I am," and "this is getting very confusing and more and more frustrating." At one point he wrote to Rudd about us, saying, "Last week you told me you would connect them up with someone with the information and the authority to get them the answers they seek. Have you done that yet?" The answer was no.

For her part, though, Rhonda Jorn said, "I don't believe I ever said you were 'cleared' to use the building. As with any other organization wanting to stage an event using City Hall Facilities, the 'clearance' would come from your end once you've obtained the proper permits, insurance and security you require for your event." That was the first time, after nearly four weeks, that anyone said anything to me about permits. Dan Waterhouse, who has worked with the Fresno Rainbow Pride



Alphonso Williams is homeless and lives near Roeding Park. Williams testified in Federal Court that the City of Fresno, during one of their homeless sweeps, took and destroyed his wife's wheelchair, her medicines, and their wedding pictures.

Parade, filled me in on what this means. Apparently, we're supposed to get a Special Event Permit, which takes 30 days to obtain, because the Fresno police have to do a background check. We have to allow 30 days for the installation of our phone and data transmission lines, and we can't order the installation for a site we're not sure we're going to get. So if Waterhouse is right, we're probably already out of luck as far as City Hall is concerned, because we don't have 60 days before the broadcast. But it's not like anybody from the City has said one word to us so far about what we're supposed to do. Were we treated just the same as an "I Love Autry Marathon?"

As I write these words, I don't know where we'll be. I do, however, know *when* we'll be, so let me repeat, **the Homelessness Marathon will begin at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 20th and end at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, February 21st. And you'll be able to hear it on KFCF, 88.1 FM.** I hope you'll be listening, no, I mean, **I hope you'll be listening.**

I'm telling you, sometimes I wonder how come I'm so grumpy; and how come Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi and Abraham Lincoln all got shot. But far be it from me to close on a note of such depressing speculation.

No, I want to make a positive contribution to the civic life of Fresno, and toward that end, I'd like to suggest that many of the City Departments I've encountered in planning the Homelessness Marathon could be consolidated. Surely the Fresno Office For Slandering the Poor, The Fresno Office of Fabricated Statistics, The Fresno Office of Plausible Deniability and the Fresno Office for the Unequal Use of Public Facilities could all be combined into a single Ministry of Truth. That might save the City a lot of money, and who knows, maybe it could be put toward places where Fresno's homeless won't have to live in fear.

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Crackpots and Heroes

By Catherine Campbell

Our Police Chief, Jerry Dyer, has announced he’s “going to eliminate” the Bulldog Street Gang. One has to wonder how he is going to do this, since it’s not yet a crime to simply belong to a gang, and even Dyer can’t force people to move out of town. But that’s what he says and, one has to agree, it sounds good on TV and looks good on the front page of the Fresno Bee.

“Hasn’t he been fighting the Bulldogs before?” said Jack Daniel, long time advocate for youth and legal aid lawyer. “And why gangs?,” Jack continued, “why not fight crime? I mean, there are burglaries, robberies, murders out there. If gangsters are committing crimes, arrest them. Why go on this special hunt?”

Jack and I are whiling away his time at Kaiser as various liquids are swapped in a tube over his body. Nurses hustle around, busy at their desks and with other patients who are strapped into similar gizmos in the Oncology Department. The other patients look desultory, even bored, but Jack’s station is piled with paperwork, including a lengthy tome out of the Children’s Law Center. Jack knows a lot about kids and he’s done a lot for kids. That’s why he recently won the Youth Law Center’s Loren Warboys Unsung Hero Award in San Francisco, where his friends, family, and colleagues gave him a standing ovation for his work with youth.

“Not so,” said Jack. “They gave me the award because I have liver cancer and they’re afraid I won’t be around next year.”

I laugh. That’s the way Jack is about his illness, frank.

Jack has been my friend since shortly after I moved back to Fresno in 1992. He is missing a front tooth, a fact that separates wheat from chaff, friendship-wise. I once asked him why he didn’t get a replacement tooth and he said it was because “the way it is, people think I’m ugly because I’m missing a tooth. If I replace it, people would know I’m just plain ugly.”

Jack was raised Catholic in Texas. He’s from the Molly Ivins, Ann Richards, Bill Moyers, and Jim Hightower branch of the Texas tree, as is his best friend and brother, Mike Daniel, and his devoted, lovely wife of 25 years, Mary Betteschild, who teaches high school and has won the California Woman Educator of the Year Award and the Teacher of the Year for the Caruthers Unified School District. My husband is from Texas and from him I have learned the greatness of an integrity that is given to some from Texas. Jack is one of those people.

I am at Kaiser to ask Jack about Jerry Dyer, the war on the Bulldogs, the new juvenile hall, and what we really need to do about children in the Central Valley.

Not that the Bulldogs are all kids but, let’s face it, gang involvement begins in youth and continues into adulthood. The most obvious soil for the propagation of gangs is detention, whether it’s in the dungeon we once called our juvenile hall or the new, sunlit juvenile hall we’ve just built seven miles outside of town. Whenever kids are locked up, gangs abound to provide identity for the alienated, society for the lonely, and protection to the vulnerable. The less we detain and incarcerate youth, the fewer gangs we will have.

But that’s not Dyer’s tack. He wants to lock more of them up and somehow, viola!, that’s how he is going to “eliminate” the Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs are infamous throughout California because they have a reputation for eccentric rules and individualistic ferocity. There are various stories about how the gang got started, but all criminal gangs in California trace their origins to some form of incarceration, most of it at the California Youth Authority (CYA), an adult-style prison for youth well known in legal circles for its gangsterism (by guards and youth), brutality (same), lack of medical and mental health care, and the wholesale neglect of the kids locked up there. CYA, as it’s called, is known to have been the source of most of California’s gangs, whether they exist on the street, in prisons, or both: CYA is where it all began. Like our prison system, CYA is now under the supervision of various court monitors.

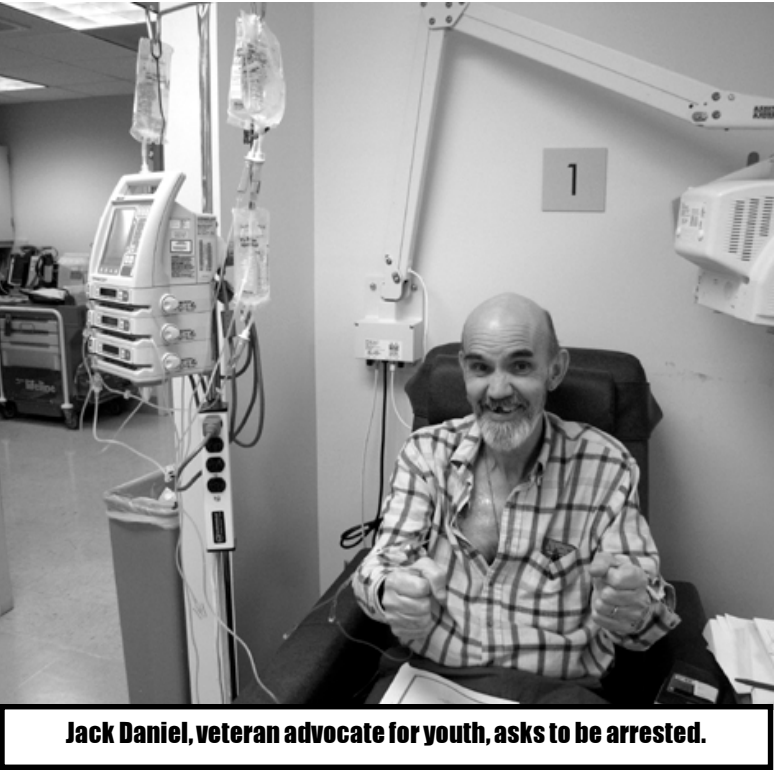
Dyer wants to send more kids to CYA. Good job.

California is divided into two Mexican gang cultures, the northern Norteños and the southern Sureños. The Norteños wear red while the Sureños wear blue. Many Mexican kids growing up in these worlds identify from a very early age with either the north or the south of the State, and they learn at the knees of their parents and

siblings that their identity in the world of Aztlan, a romantic term Chicanos use to describe their land, is deeply rooted in where they were born and raised. In Chicano barrios all over the state, gangsters are kings, and gangsterism is a way of life. While only a small percentage of Chicanos are gang members, all are affected by the reality of gangs.

When I was a student at Fresno High many years ago, the Latino gang around town was the F-14, “F” standing proudly for Fresno. Little is known of the history of Bulldog development, but it is known that eventually when these little gangsters went off to CYA, they were set upon by Norteños and Sureños who wanted to adopt and absorb them to increase the strength of their prison gangs, the Nuestra Familia and the Mexican Mafia. The F-14 gang initially aligned with the Norteños, then refused to be a part of either side, and ultimately, the F-14 adopted the color and logo of our local football team, the Bulldogs. They believe that, in the world of Aztlan, they have created a world of their own.

Many Mexican kids recently arriving here from Mexico and Chicanos fleeing the gentrification of the California coast are blending into the mix and know nothing of this history. They quickly identify themselves as northern or southern without realizing the consequences. Dyer’s officers have been picking up these kids too, as if they are serious gang members, when identification with the north or the south is mandatory for some and not necessarily an indication of gang identification or membership. The police put them in juvenile hall – where their lightly worn northern or southern identification will solidify into true gang membership. Dyer’s estimate that there are 4,000 Bulldogs in Fresno seems deliberately manipulated to include any kid vulnerable to gang influence – a learned ignorance designed to enlarge his street sweep, gang numbers, and the monetary rewards of engaging in gang abatement.



Jack Daniel, veteran advocate for youth, asks to be arrested.

Good luck, Jerry.

The Bulldogs are known to have rejected the extreme hierarchy of the Norteño prison gang, the Nuestra Familia, also known for good reason as “The Structure”, where the blithely rendered command of a “shot caller” or leader can land you in prison for life. The Bulldogs are more democratic and egalitarian, a break-away from the militarism of the Nuestra Familia. They are not believers in the “blood in and blood out” creed of other gangs. A member can leave the Bulldogs when he “matures out” of the gang life. The Bulldogs have many splinter groups and no absolute leaders – they are fragmented and exist in enclaves all over town in poor areas. In and out of CYA and prison, they cannot maintain an enemy stance against both the north and the south, so the tendency of serious adherents is to identify with the south.

I asked Jack what should have happened to the old juvenile hall.

“Bulldoze it,” he said.

“And build what?”

“Something much, much smaller on the same site. It’s true the new hall doesn’t have moss growing on the walls, and the pastel colors are prettier, but it’s still an institution with a fence around it with all the problems that brings with it, including gang development. And, it’s too far away. Families have a much harder time visiting their kids if they have to ride spotty public transportation seven miles outside of town. What were they thinking?” Jack received the Loren Warboys Unsung Hero Award from the Youth Law Center because of his work for the

kids in the old and the new juvenile hall. He has labored to ensure kids who are in lock-up will still get educational services. He thinks the school district is failing special education youths by insisting they have no obligation to assess their educational needs out at the new hall. He advocates for these kids before Judge Denise Whitehead at Juvenile Court, who has set up a Behavioral Intervention Court, much like a mental health court, to ensure adequate services are available to kids in juvenile hall. According to Jack, “Denise Whitehead has spent incredible energy trying to do the best for youth in the hall who have mental health and education needs which have led to their detention. She is doing all she can to prevent these youth from being caught in a cycle of detention.”

I asked Jack what is wrong with Dyer’s plan to “eliminate” the Bulldogs.

“Everything. He does it for the money, for the federal grants that come with big promises to eradicate gang activity. He does it because he can, because our local government has never seen a police expansion it doesn’t like. But he is militarizing the community.”

Jack has also challenged the ways local police departments identify kids as gang members. He recalled a case out of Watsonville where the police labeled “gangster” a special education kid who was 16 and with no criminal history, who was identified as a gang member because he wore a San Francisco Forty-Niners’s T-shirt and carried a Jarman sports bag. The school cop asked the kid if he knew any gang members and of course the kid was honest – the gangsters were his neighbors and classmates, so he said he did. And then, proverbial final straw, the kid denied being a gang member. That confirmed his gang identity.

Jack won that case.

But all over the state, police anti-gang policies are causing people to lose their freedoms of speech, travel and association. In West Sacramento, a gang-suppression tactic very similar to the anti-gang injunctions the Fresno District Attorney has obtained, has caused enormous controversy because so many innocents were caught up in the injunction and told they were not free to travel and associate without criminal penalties. Because the criteria to identify gang members are so vague, like wearing colors, or having tattoos, they are subject to a wide-ranging exercise of police discretion. The California Supreme Court found such injunctions legal in a 4-3 decision in 1997, but that does not make it sound public policy. Research by the National Institute of Justice, through the University of California at Irvine, has shown that gang injunctions have short term benefits, such as reducing neighborhood fear of gangs, but that real community change takes a long time and involves deeper efforts than gang injunctions.

“The police have gang books with photos of kids they think are gangsters, and they’re always stopping them, asking them questions, examining them for tattoos, detaining them illegally,” Jack said. “They have no sense of restraint. Some cops once tried to harass some kids in the hall of the courthouse, and I told the cops to go away, get out, leave the kids alone. One of the cops said he was going to arrest me for interfering with his investigation. I told him to go ahead,” and Jack held out his hands, ready to be handcuffed. (See photo.) The cop let the kids, and Jack, go.

He rails against the local schools’ anti-gang-clothing rules. “They do it a couple of ways, listing colors and types of clothing that are verboten, but then they always throw in clothes they don’t like, like spaghetti-straps. It’s legal, but it’s stupid because it’s arbitrary. One school district threatened to suspend a bunch of nerd kids because they put on an improvisational play emulating and mocking gang kids, wearing red and throwing their hands around signifying. I tried to tell the district that they’d have to suspend kids for acting in West Side Story, but that district’s policy against emulating gang activity is still there. They don’t get it.”

“What does it take to get rid of gangs?”

“Well, nothing really, they’ve been around forever and they won’t go away. Gangs produce income for whole families. Even more important, gangs give power to a group of youth that is almost entirely powerless and a structure in which these kids can achieve greater and greater status. Virtually nowhere else in our society are such options available to these kids. Gangs don’t end until their members find a niche in the middle class. It’s the existence of a middle class that gets rid of gangs.”

Dyer has been quoted as saying fighting the Bulldogs is like being in Iraq, and this recent “war on the Bulldogs” is apparently his “surge.” I was reminded of the late Texan C. Wright Mills’s discussion of the “crackpot realism” of people who believe there is a winnable nuclear war. Now,

Continued on page 6

Who is Patrick Moore?

From SourceWatch.org

[Editor’s note: The proponents of nuclear energy in Fresno are bringing Patrick Moore to Fresno on February 22. They will cite his record as an environmentalist and support of nuclear energy to calm concerns about this power source. But, others say he is a sell-out and a shill for the nuclear energy. Will the real Patrick Moore please stand up?]

Patrick Moore was a leading figure with Greenpeace Canada and subsequently with Greenpeace International between 1981 and 1986. In 1991 he established a consultancy business, Greenspirit Enterprises, “focusing on environmental policy and communications in natural resources, biodiversity, energy and climate change.” He has worked for the mining industry, the logging industry, PVC manufacturers and in defense of biotechnology.

Moore describes himself as “chairman and chief scientist” of Greenspirit Strategies Ltd., a PR company that “work with many leading organizations in forestry, biotechnology, aquaculture and plastics, developing solutions in the areas of natural resources, biodiversity, energy and climate change.” Since 2006 he has been a consultant to the Nuclear Energy Institute front group, the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition.

In an interview with Iceland Review Moore claimed that the dangers of nuclear power “are overstated. Chernobyl was the only accident that caused death and injury and that style of Soviet reactor should never have been built. Of course, there are risks with all technologies, but nuclear is one of the safest. Many of the other Chernobyl-style reactors are still operating, after they were refit so that a Chernobyl type accident could not occur again. We learn from our mistakes.”

History

Patrick Moore, grew up on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada where his family was involved in the fishing and logging industry. His father, Bill Moore, was past president of the B.C. Truck Loggers Association and past president of the Pacific Logging Congress.

After completing a Bachelor of Science in forest biology at the University of British Columbia and a PH D in ecology on the administration of environmental law relating to the mining industry, Moore became involved first in the Western Canada branch of the Sierra Club and later Greenpeace. His involvement in Greenpeace between 1971 and 1986 spanned roles as a campaigner in Greenpeace Canada against whaling, uranium mining, sealing, toxic waste and nuclear warships.

He was President of Greenpeace Canada between 1977 and 1986 and as Director of Greenpeace International.

From 1984 he became involved in a family business, Quatsino Seafarms Ltd, farming salmon on Vancouver Island. Until 1991 he was President of the company and between 1986 and 1989 was President of British Columbia Salmon Farmers Association.

Following claims by the United Fishermans and Allied Workers Union about pollution by the industry generally, the Vancouver Sun reported “Moore called the union’s concerns ‘phoney’ saying that we are not causing pollution and there is no such thing as genetic pollution”.

In 1990, PR consultant James Hoggan (who had worked for Western Forest Products) told a meeting of forest executives that the industry was wasting millions on ineffective PR. He said he and Patrick Moore had designed a “green audit” program to sell to industry.

Subsequently, Moore and two others formed Greenspirit to help business and government “incorporate the environmental agenda”.

In 1991, the year Moore created Greenspirit, he became a member of the Board of Directors of the timber industry created Forest Alliance of B.C.

In 1991 Moore was appointed as Director of the British Columbia Forest Alliance which was described by O’Dwyer’s PR Services Report, as “a Burson-Marsteller created group, bankrolled by large timber companies”, which “is waging a PR war with environmentalists upset with the logging of rainforests in western Canada.”

Burson Marsteller employee, Gary Ley, was the Executive Director of the BC Forest Alliance in 1991. Ley subsequently headed up the Vancouver office of National PR, which B-M had a stake in. National PR had the BC Forest Alliance account.

Tom Tevlin, who was part of the initial Forest Alliance team and later succeeded Ley as Executive Director and then President at the Alliance, is now President and CEO of Greenspirit Strategies Ltd.

Burson Marsteller had worked for the Argentinian junta to “improve [its] international image” and boost investment. [Joyce Nelson, interview with Harold Burson (founder of Burson Marsteller) fall 1981, New York]. B-M’s work for the Argentinian government occurred at the time that 35,000 people were disappeared by death squads.

In July 1991 Moore was asked by a Canadian journalist about B-M’s work for the Argentinian junta. “Forest Alliance Director, Patrick Moore, argues that Burson Marsteller’s contract was with Argentina’s economic ministry and its non-political role was to encourage foreign investment”, Stephen Hume wrote. “It [B-M] has a record of truth in public relations as its bottom line,” Moore said, citing the company’s role in the Tylenol recall.

Moore went on to object to the juxtaposing the reality of state murder of political opponents with Burson Marsteller’s strategy for marketing the perception of Argentina’s stability. Besides, Moore argued, “people get killed everywhere”.



Patrick Moore will be speaking at the Warnor's Theatre on Thursday, February 22. For more information see: <http://warnors.com/news.php?ax=v&n=6&id=6&nid=19>

In August 1993 Moore was part of the delegation that lobbied a US foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust, against a decision to fund British Columbian environmental groups. Following the meeting, the Chair of the BC Forest Alliance, Jack Munro, told the Vancouver Sun “we are not opposed to them giving money to environmental groups. We are opposed to money filtering into protectionists like the people protesting the Clayquot”, he said.

In January 1994, Moore claimed in an interview that while Greenpeace had acted within the law in all matters relating to the International Whaling Commission that they may have funded travel expenses for some delegates to the Commission. “This statement was in error”, Moore wrote in a retraction several days later.

Two months later, Moore was criticized for claims that he made that Greenpeace “blackmail” had forced the rejection of The Times of London of an ad from the BC Forest Alliance. The Times rejected Moore claim: “The Times had not even received the art work for the ad from the alliance ... we do not even know what this ad is supposed to look like so we can hardly be accused of censorship or bias”.

In 2000 Moore went to the Brazilian Amazon rainforests for the filming of a documentary by Marc Morano for American Investigator, According to an interview in the New York Post, Moore dismissed concerns about the impacts of logging, mining and clearing for agriculture on the Amazonian rainforests. “All these save-the-forests arguments are based on bad science ... They are quite simply wrong. We found that the Amazon rainforest is more than 90 percent intact. We flew over it and met all the environmental authorities. We studied satellite pictures of the entire area,” he said.

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“They are just about the healthiest forests in the world. This stuff about them vanishing at an alarming rate is a con based on bad science ... Anyone who has been in the jungle knows that if you want to live there, you’d better take a few machetes. Otherwise, it’ll take it all back,” he said.

In October 2002, Moore was a keynote lunch speaker at the Best Practices in Communications: Wood Products and Forests, organized by the Wood Promotion Network conference in Vancouver. Moore’s speech was titled “Declaration in Support of Protecting the Environment by Growing More Trees and Using More Wood”.

In October 2003 Moore endorsed the launch by The Hudson Institute’s Center for Global Food Issues (CGFI) of “Earth Friendly/Farm Friendly” Seal of Approval for the food and dairy industry. Monsanto, Dupont, Kraft/Phillip Morris, and the nuclear industry have funded the Hudson Institute.

In late January 2004 Moore was the key speaker at a ‘teach-in’ organized by Paul Driessen and hosted under the name of the Congress of Racial Equality on ‘eco-imperialism’ at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers. The environmental movement I helped found has lost its objectivity, morality and humanity ... The pain and suffering it inflicts on families in developing countries can no longer be tolerated,” he said.

Crackpots continued from page 5

equally crackpot, there are those who think we can “eliminate” the Bulldog gang by locking them up.

“We have a disappearing middle class,” I responded. “We have more of the rich, more of the poor, and fewer of the middle class. And in Fresno, we have more poverty than New Orleans. What hope do we give these kids?”

“Well,” said Jack, “they could become prison guards. That’s the way the poor get into the middle class now, but of course, if they have a criminal record, they cannot become prison guards.”

As usual, my friend Jack is right. Detention and criminalization have a profoundly negative impact on young people’s employability. Economists have shown that the process of incarcerating youth will reduce their future earnings and their ability to remain in the workforce. Educational researchers have found that upwards of 40 percent of incarcerated youth have a learning disability, and they will face significant challenges returning to school after they leave detention. Most importantly, there is credible and significant research that suggests that the experience of detention may make it more likely that youth will continue to engage in delinquent behavior, and that the detention experience may increase the odds that youth will commit more crimes, further compromising public safety.

After he learned he has cancer, Jack dropped off a poetry manuscript on his friends’ front porches, poems he had worked on quietly for more than 20 years. An excerpt from *Contemplating Cana – Considering A Coming*:

...
I know well the graces I received early on in
My journey

A good & beauteous woman
Standing beside me for more
Decades than most pray on their rosaries nowadays
& a life that has contemplated
more glorious than sorrowful mysteries

A brother’s and his family’s love
Hanging like provisions
In a smoky chamber of my heart
Ensuring that, whatever I succumb to,
It will not be from famine of affection.

Work that will not send me to hell
Or a shrink or
a dealer

Sobriety without boredom since ‘79

...
Jack will toil on in defiance of the odds as he always has. I believe in that, as do his many other friends who love him, those who know the real heroes in this world are not on TV and not on the front page.

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Catherine Campbell is a Fresno civil-rights and appellate lawyer.

The Economics of Building a Nuclear Power Plant in Fresno

by Alan Cheah and Mark Stout

It was only seven years ago when the promise of cheap electricity through deregulation helped plunge California into a deeper budget crisis and robbed ratepayers of their hard earned money. They are poised to do it again. Nuclear proponents are grateful for our citizenry’s short memories. Now, nuclear power advocates promise cheap, clean, safe energy and jobs. This section focuses on the economic viability of nuclear versus renewable energy and conservation.

The Fresno Nuclear Energy Group LLC is proposing a 1600 megawatt nuclear power plant costing \$4 billion. History tells us that projected costs differ vastly from actual costs. Just look at the table below:

PROJECTED VS. ACTUAL COST OF SELECTED NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS (in billions of dollars)			
Unit	Megawatts	Initial cost estimate	Actual cost
Millstone III (Massachusetts and Connecticut)	1,150	.400	3.82
Limerick 1 (Pennsylvania)	1,055	.344	3.80
Wolf Creek (Kansas)	1,055	1.03	2.93
Susquehanna 1 (Pennsylvania)	1,050	.665	2.05
Susquehanna II (Pennsylvania)	1,050	.720	2.05
Source: Public Utility Commissions in the respective states http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/articles/spring01/nuclear_power.html			

As you can see, actual costs range from 3 to 11 times projected costs. Nuclear proponents argue that much of the added costs are because of unnecessary environmental and safety regulations, politics and finance issues. Whatever the reason, the reality is that the actual cost would likely exceed \$12 billion. If nuclear is such a good investment, why has no nuclear power plant ever been 100% privately funded? In Dick Cheney’s Energy Policy of 2003, Title IV, subtitle B: New Nuclear Plants¹, it authorizes the Department of Energy to provide 50% of the costs to build new reactors and there are no guidelines regarding interest rates and repayment of these loans. In layman’s terms, we heavily subsidize the building of the plant. We do not share in the profits of the privately owned plant and there is no guarantee our financing will be paid back. If it is so safe, why does provision Title IV, subtitle A: The Price Anderson Act² limit the liability of nuclear power plants to \$10B. A serious nuclear accident according to Sandia National Laboratories could cost upwards of \$300B. Taxpayers will pay the difference.

John Hutson, Chairman of the PUC and President/CEO of the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group LLC, claims nuclear will bring jobs. Undoubtedly, but let’s look at the job creation comparison for different energy sources:

Table 1. Jobs Involved in Producing 1000 Gigawatt-hours of Electricity Per Year ³				
Number of jobs:	100	116	248	542
Energy source:	Nuclear fission	Coal	Solar thermal	Wind

This 1993 finding by the Worldwatch Institute should still apply today on a comparative basis. There is no doubt that job creation for renewable energy exceeds that of fossil fuel and nuclear energy. Many states are ignoring the direction of the Federal government and

finding more economic benefits in pursuing green energy.

Since 1980 the cost of wind power has declined from \$.30 - \$.45 per kWh to \$.05/kWh⁴. The Federal Production Tax Credit, currently at 1.9 cents/kWh and indexed to inflation⁵, further drives down the cost of wind power to ratepayers, allowing utility power purchase agreements to be signed as low as 3.5 cents. Solar photovoltaic (PV) is about \$.20/kWh, and is now reduced with an expanded 30% Federal Investment Tax Credit, and the California Solar Initiative’s incentives for customer self-generation⁶.

Nuclear power arguably costs \$.03/kWh, only by ignoring large construction capital costs. According to the World Nuclear Association (WNA) report⁷ \$.03/kWh represents operational costs and waste and decommissioning costs. How they account for waste cost is suspect since the Yucca mountain waste site still has not been approved. If it is approved today it will not be ready till 2017⁸. Meanwhile thousands of tons of nuclear waste from San Onofre, Diablo Canyon and Humboldt Bay are waiting. What’s not accounted for is construction and financing costs and most importantly, an investor’s required return on capital. According to the Ontario Power Authority’s assessment of the proposed CANDU 6 nuclear power plant, the cost per kWh to the consumer would probably be \$.21/kWh⁹ when accounting for the required return on capital.

Let’s look at this from a more meaningful perspective. Regarding nuclear, there are four things the consumer needs to consider: 1) How much am I going to pay per kWh?; 2) Will the fuel cycle and generation cycle pollute our environment?; 3) Is it safe?; 4) How does it affect our national security? Each of these issues has a major economic impact.

What am I going to pay per kWh?
Currently, the average PG&E residential electricity rate is over \$.16/kWh¹⁰ even though it costs about \$.06/kWh for fossil fuel based generation. This should highlight the distinction between what you pay and what it costs to generate one kWh of electricity. Similarly what you will be paying for nuclear will far exceed the reported generation cost of \$.03/kWh. As the Ontario Power Authority learned, it could be as high as \$.21/kWh. It is expected that uranium 235 will be depleted by 2055¹¹. As that limited resource gets scarce, we will see the cost per kWh rise.

doggle. We also need to present the alternative, because there is truth to the argument that we need to reduce global warming and provide for the energy needs of the future. The alternative to nuclear is obvious - we need to develop solar, wind and other alternative sources of energy (see economics and alternatives article). Fresno’s political leadership needs to focus on urban planning that restricts urban sprawl, supports public transportation, and facilitates the creation of alternative energy initiatives. In addition, each of us has the responsibility to do our part by conserving energy, creating a more green friendly environment, and electing politicians that share this vision.

Will the fuel cycle and generation cycle pollute our environment?
Conventional and in situ leaching methods of mining Uranium 235 result in radioactive contamination, lung cancer, respiratory diseases and contamination of ground water. Enrichment of uranium produces toxic hydrogen fluoride gas and large amounts of depleted uranium. Millions of gallons of water which will be radioactively contaminated are required to cool fuel rods.

Is it safe?
Since 1952 there have been about 301 nuclear accidents¹² and 22 nuclear disasters¹³. Maybe that’s why the Price-Anderson Act limits a nuclear corporation’s liability to \$10 billion¹⁴.

How does it affect our national security?
In an age where terrorism is such a major threat, putting in a nuclear power plant only makes Fresno a more attractive terrorist target.

How can we better use \$12 billion?
If the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group is able to suppress local resistance, overturn the 30 year old State moratorium on siting new nuclear reactors, and overcome nuclear power’s equally old losing streak in the US investment capital markets, it will still have an uphill financial battle ahead, in the face of more promising alternatives. The proposed nuclear plant will have a capacity of 1600 MW which, assuming a manufacturer-specified 92% plant availability, translates to 12,895 GWh/yr¹⁵. 92% plant availability is comparable with recent US nuclear plant fleet capacity factors published by the Department of Energy¹⁶. 12,895 GWh/yr is roughly 4.5% of California’s annual consumption, which was 208,245 GWh in 2005.¹⁷ For comparison, we will take the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group at their word that this plant could be operational as soon as 2015.

Let’s look at what \$12 billion can buy us invested in truly clean energy. The investors could put \$12 billion into a solar power capital fund, which would be leveraged by Federal tax credits, Federal five-year accelerated depreciation, California Solar Initiative (CSI) incentives, rising utility rates, and rapidly falling solar photovoltaic/solar thermal electric costs.

This solar power capital fund would be available for the development of residential, commercial, agricultural, and public sector solar energy systems, using existing, commercialized technology. Rather than selling hardware, the investors could sell power from customer-sited solar power equipment they own, to Valley energy consumers (via “solar power purchase agreements”), at a guaranteed discount compared to PG&E and Edison (10-25% to guarantee rapid adoption). These solar power purchase agreements are a high yield, low risk return on investment. The combination of Federal and State incentives lead to a short payback period of roughly five years, with an ongoing “solar annuity” from the sale of power.

For the purposes of illustration, \$12 billion could be used to develop 1.5 GW of customer-sited solar photovoltaic at \$8/watt (CEC AC) in year 2006 prices¹⁸. The California Solar Initiative will reduce over time, offset by reductions in PV system costs. Here is how the cash flow would look in this solar capital fund¹⁹:

Initial capital investment:	\$12 billion
Federal 30% tax credit (first tax year):	\$3.6 billion
5 yr Accelerated Depreciation (net present value):	\$4.1 billion
CSI incentive/system cost reduction (five years):	\$5.4 billion

Capital investment – Federal/CA incentives:	(\$1.1 billion)

Continued on page 8

Backyard continued from page 1

This proposed nuclear power plant will never be built in Fresno. What will happen if Fresno Nuclear Energy Group LLC got a green light to move forward on this project is that millions of our tax dollars will be given to these larger than life welfare recipients who feed at the public trough. In the end, no nuclear power plant would be built, but those involved will have received huge salaries and bonuses, paid for by you and me. It is enough to make a pirate blush.

What can we do about this outrageous proposal that has the potential to destroy our valley, enrich a couple of corporate kingpins, and throw our tax dollars down a rat hole? We must speak out against this boon-

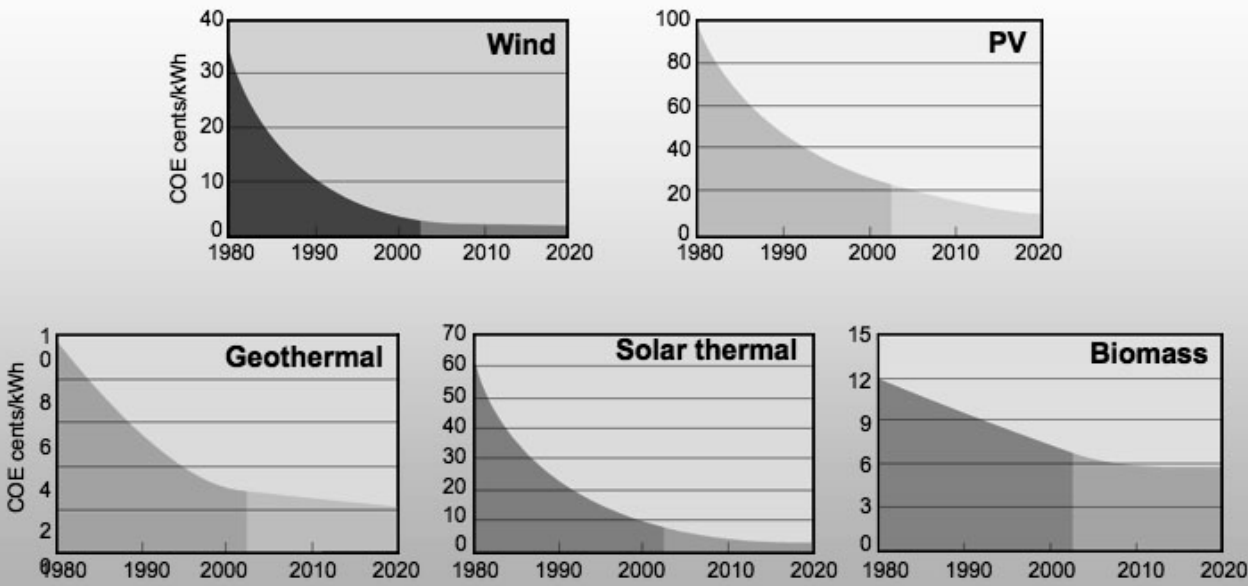
How to get involved:

Opposing Nuclear Power
Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility
<http://a4nr.org> (805) 772-7077

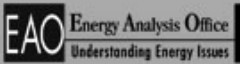
Promoting Clean Energy Alternatives
Becky Van Stokkum, 559-261-5775
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<http://sierraclub.org/energy>

Renewable Energy Cost Trends

Levelized cents/kWh in constant \$2000¹



Source: NREL Energy Analysis Office (www.nrel.gov/analysis/docs/cost_curves_2002.ppt)
¹These graphs are reflections of historical cost trends NOT precise annual historical data.
Updated: October 2002



In our own back yard, the City of Fresno and the Farm Bureau are adopting solar PV solutions. OK Produce, in downtown Fresno, installed a 231 kW system in January, 2003, and PR Farms, in Clovis, installed a 1.1 MW system in July, 2005. Major corporations like Citigroup, PNC, Bank of America, Toyota, GM, Ford, Honda, Wal-Mart, Target, Home Depot, Lowes and Chipotle, to name a few, are going green²⁶. Despite what you have heard, there is a declining use of nuclear throughout the world because of cost, environmental concerns and safety²⁷. New nuclear power plant construction around the globe (France, Germany, Sweden, and Japan) have been reduced or eliminated entirely. Seven European plants were shut down in the first two weeks of 2007.²⁸ Let's not regress when the rest of the world is moving forward.

Alan Cheah is a retired electrical engineer and software developer. Mark Stout handles Major Accounts for Unlimited Energy Solar Solutions, and is the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter Air Quality/Global Warming Co-Chair.

1) <http://www.taxpayer.net/greenscissors/LearnMore/2003%20Sen%20Nuclear%20Fact%20sht.pdf>
2) <http://www.taxpayer.net/greenscissors/LearnMore/2003%20Sen%20Nuclear%20Fact%20sht.pdf>
3) <http://www.greens.org/s-r/11/11-09.html>
4) National Renewable Energy Lab (http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/analysis_tools_benefits.html)
5) <http://awea.org/legislative/#PTC>
6) http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/csi/tax_credit.html
7) <http://www.uic.com.au/neweconomics.pdf>
8) "Nuclear burial site delayed" Fresno Bee, 14 Aug 2006, page B7
9) <http://www.cleanair.web.net/resource/fs20.pdf>
10) <http://www.pge.com/rates/tariffs/ResElecCurrent.xls>
11) <http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~ned/warming/mills.pdf>, page 8
12) <http://archive.greenpeace.org/comms/nukes/chernob/rep02.html>
13) http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/nuclear_disasters/framesource.html
14) <http://www.greenscissors.org/energy/price-anderson.htm>
15) http://www.aveva-np.com/common/liblocal/docs/Brochure/EPR_US_%20May%202005.pdf, page 55
16) <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/aer/txt/ptb0902.html>
17) http://www.energy.ca.gov/electricity/gross_system_power.html
18) <http://www.sdenergy.org/ContentPage.asp?ContentID=136&SectionID=122&SectionTarget=44>
19) Analysis performed for Fresno area location using the OnGrid Solar Financial Analysis Tool, <http://ongrid.net/payback>
20) <http://www.seia.org/solarnews.php?id=128>
21) IBID
22) <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/hottopics/1energy/r0404026.htm>
23) http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/_spotlight/051102_renewableenergy.htm
24) http://www.stirlingenergy.com/breaking_news.htm
25) <http://www.ceiinc.net/Download/Bethel%20Energy%20Solar%20Hybrid%20Project%20Overview%20%20R3.pdf>
26) <http://www.dtsolar.com>
27) Green Revolution, by Frank Geve, Fresno Bee, 17Dec2006, page E1
28) <http://www.brook.edu/fp/cuse/analysis/nuclear.htm>
29) <http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/default/dok/164/>

Continued from page 7

From this analysis, it is clear that the investors will have more than made their money back (a \$1.1 billion profit, in fact), simply considering the Federal and State incentives returned to them in the first five years. For example, the solar capital fund will have been replenished by 2014 if the systems are installed over 2007-2008.

The exciting part: the investors' solar capital fund would constantly be refilled by incoming Federal and State incentives, ready to roll into the next round of solar expansion. The Solar Energy Industries Association is optimistic that the 110th Congress will deliver an eight year extension of the Federal 30% solar Investment Tax Credit, recently extended through 2008.²⁰ From 2009-2014, before the proposed nuclear plant could have sold a single kWh, a second 1.5 GW solar photovoltaic network could be financed by income from Federal and State incentives. This second 1.5 GW network will receive substantially less money from the California Solar Initiative than the first, but the planned decline in rebates will be synchronized with a decline in installed system costs.

The first 1.5 GW of solar photovoltaic systems will also be generating an estimated 2,800 GWh/yr (at 5.1 hours/day of noon-equivalent sun, based on Department of Energy data for Fresno)²¹. If the average solar power purchase agreement retail cost of power starts at 10 cents/kWh, and the associated Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) trade at a conservative two cents/kWh, this first 1.5 GW phase of development will be generating \$336 million/year, or over two billion dollars in accumulated profit by 2014. By 2014, before the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group hopes to have an operational reactor, the solar capital fund would have fully manifested all 3 GW of the Governor's California Solar Initiative, generating 5,600 GWh/yr, with roughly \$1 billion/year in annual power and RECs sales. Since the Federal and California incentives for commercial solar development are so generous, they would have also returned the initial \$12 billion investment back to the investors, *twice over before a nuclear plant could be built*.

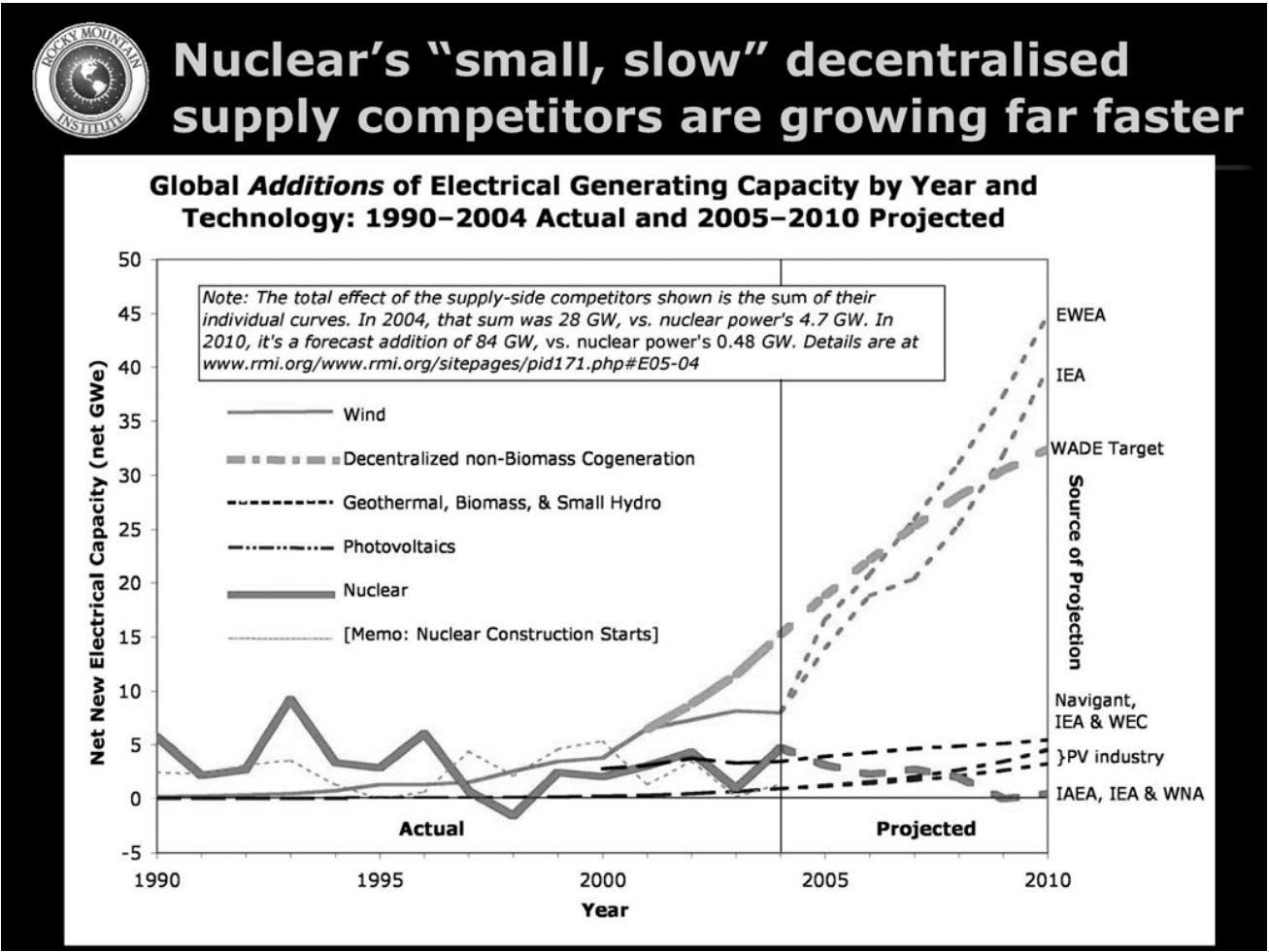
The same \$12 billion could then be used to capitalize a third round of solar power: 3 GW of solar thermal electric for wholesale power purchase agreements. PG&E and Edison have an obligation to by an increasing percentage of their supply from renewable energy resources under the Renewables Portfolio Standard, now 20% qualifying renewables by 2010.²² Governor Schwarzenegger is backing a goal of 33% qualifying renewables by 2020.²³ Edison, SDG&E, and PG&E have recently signed one to two GW of solar thermal electric power purchase agreements to meet their 2010 goal.²⁴ An unprecedented amount of renewables capacity will have to be added by 2020, creating significant market opportunities. This 3 GW, at an estimated \$4/watt capital cost, would be based on single-axis tracking for higher output/watt capacity, yielding 7,665 GWh/yr.

We are now looking at 6 GW of solar photovoltaic and solar thermal electric systems, all developed on the same timetable as a 1.6 GW nuclear reactor, with substantially better tax effects and return on investment than a nuclear power investment could dream of. In fact, most of their original money is back in the investor's accounts thanks to the Federal 30% Investment Tax Credit and five year Accelerated Depreciation. The solar investors are producing 5,600 GWh with customer-sited photovoltaic projects, and 7,665 GWh/yr with solar thermal power plants, gen-

erating 13,325 Gwh/yr of high value, peak period power. Compare this with 12,895 GWh/yr of baseload nuclear power.

Not only do the solar plants generate more power, they generate more valuable power for the investors. The photovoltaic solar power purchase agreements are retail, at over 10 cents/kWh plus REC prices, and the solar thermal electric are peak period Renewables Portfolio Standard contracts, significantly higher than the contract prices a baseload nuclear plant would command. Solar generates power where and when people need it, and California's markets now reflect that. The solar investment delivers a higher ongoing electricity production and profit, at a much safer and lower after-tax investment.

How do we know that this solar power purchase agreement model works? It is already being using by a growing list of investors and project developers: GE Commercial Finance, Chevron Energy Systems, Honeywell, PowerLight/DEPFA Bank, MuniMae/MMA Renewable Ventures, HSN Nordbank, Regenesys Power, Nautilus Energy, and Solar Power Partners. In fact, the solar power purchase agreement was the financial structure selected by the Fresno Airport administration for their recent, successful one megawatt solar Request For Proposals. On January 10th of this year, Ted Turner announced that he was breaking in on the solar development action with an investment in DT Solar.²⁵ California is expected to see over \$20 billion of private investment in solar power by 2020, driven by the \$3.2 billion California Solar Initiative and Renewables Portfolio Standard. Will the San Joaquin Valley take advantage of our natural solar resources to move into the clean energy future, or will we get stuck in the nuclear past?



Scandal After Scandal in Olkiluoto

By Lauri Myllyvirta

[Editors note: The backers of Fresno Nuclear Energy Group LLC, who are pushing the idea of a nuclear power plant in Fresno have pointed to Finland as an example of how well the technology is working. The Community Alliance asked anti-nuclear activists in Finland to tell us what is really going on. Here is what they had to say.]

The nuclear reactor now under construction in Olkiluoto, Finland was supposed to be a shiny showcase for the nuclear industry and a cheap way for Finland to reach its Kyoto targets, and this is how the project was sold to the Finnish public as well. Environmentalists warned about the hasty licensing procedure as well as unrealistic price and timetable.

Safety ignored the project had been going on for less than a year when the first scandals surfaced. The concrete of the base slab of the reactor was found to be too porous, and Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK) launched an investigation into the quality and safety control of the project, finding many severe problems and violations. It turned out that Areva had lied to Finnish authorities, covered up the problems for months and made unauthorized changes to the design.

A German manufacturing company won the contract for the steel liner (container) that is essential in protecting the reactor core from external threats and containing dangerous substances in case of an accident. The company subcontracted the work further to a Polish machine yard that had been manufacturing fishing vessels and had no earlier experience of nuclear technology. The machine yard used totally outdated and illegal methods like hand welding. The liner did not fulfill safety standards and apparently has been damaged.

During the investigation by STUK, there were 700 reported non-conformances.

HOT LEGS PROBLEMS

Three out of four of the ‘hot legs’ (the pipes that transfer heat from the nuclear island to the secondary circuit) were found to be faulty. The grain size of steel is too large for the type of ultrasonic testing required by Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK). If a suitable testing method cannot be found, the large pipes must be recast. Hot legs are one of the components most critical to safety, as its failure can lead to a serious accident. According to TVO, some of the work has already been redone. The



Greenpeace activists carrying out a peaceful protest against nuclear power at the nuclear construction site in Olkiluoto, Finland in August 2003. Photographer: Henna Tahvanainen/Greenpeace

project was announced by the Finnish investor TVO to be 18 months behind schedule mainly due to these problems.

PEOPLE THREATENED BY URANIUM MINES

The most powerful blow to popularity of nuclear power in Finland could be the threat of opening uranium mines. Finland is importing its nuclear fuel from far away, but exhaustion of old mines and expected surge in nuclear new construction are attracting the attention of international companies to Finland’s uranium resources.

While Finnish legislation on local environmental problems is strong in general, the mining law is a dangerous relic that allows prospecting as well as trial mining and milling 150 feet from people’s houses. At the moment, thousands of people fear that they and their children will be exposed to the environmental health hazards from uranium mines through air and drinking water. The planned mines are often situated next to important groundwater supplies or surface water bodies.

HOW ABOUT THE CLIMATE?

Olkiluoto nuclear power plant is supposed to offset around 7.5 Mt of CO2 emissions, or 12 percent of Finland’s energy-related emissions. This figure is based on the assumption that increased nuclear capacity mainly replaces coal and oil fired electrical generation – the kind of generation most harmful to the climate. In reality, it is obvious that the large project has blocked market access from renewables and investments in efficient use of energy as well as maintained the growth in use of electrical heating. So, also the rebound in energy consumption and use of fossil fuels that environmental NGOs warned about seems to be taking place already.

Globally, International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that are building 250 new nuclear power plants over the course of 25 years would achieve around 5 percent of the emission reductions necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change. Even this would require new public subsidies and the problems of nuclear waste and nuclear weapons proliferation would have to be solved. Without public subsidies, the share of nuclear generation is set to decline. Still, renewable sources of energy, and especially improving energy efficiency turn out to be nine times as important in IEA calculations. Power generation from renewables increases four times as much as from nuclear despite the measures to boost the latter.

SEND THE BILL TO TAXPAYERS

The Finnish government increased the allocation of free CO2 emission credits to the emissions trading sector because of delays of Olkiluoto-3 by EUR260 million. Also the costs of alternative capacity will eventually be borne by electricity users (or taxpayers, if rising electricity prices drive the government to offer further subsidies or tax breaks). Finnish investors can eventually reclaim most of these costs from Areva, but they will of course not share the compensation with other involved parties. The European Commission recently launched an investigation on public subsidies to the project, which could force the companies involved to repay the benefit they have acquired from illegal state aid.

To summarize, counting on nuclear power has already cost the Finns more than increasing renewable energy and improving energy efficiency of energy use would have.

For more information:
www.olkiluoto.info

Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Jamilla X and Latecia Mayle, better known to their audiences as Lady J and Lady Bombay, have been hip-hop activists for almost a decade, most prominently on their Sunday night radio show “The Remedy” (9p.m.-midnight on KFSR 90.7 FM, or streaming on KFSR.org).

There they serve up hip-hop, soul and “conscious revolutionary rap”, featuring artists like Paris, Common and Lauren Hill. “We used to do a lot of commentary, interviews and ‘Hood News,” the ladies report, “but at the ‘request’ of the station we’re down to not much more than music. We have to choose carefully so the music itself can make a difference.”

Lady J got her start while a student hanging out in the building on the CSUF campus where the KFSR studios are. “They wanted a hip-hop show, and just asked me if I’d like to try. I had no idea what I’d gotten into.” She says at first she just played anything that sounded good to her; but she gradually gained awareness of the possibilities for touching people and undertaking a kind of ministry.

Lady Bombay started as a champion free-style rapper, but after being invited to co-host the show, she too found the radio work and its ramifications a vehicle for her passion for justice and community uplift.. “We come to community events bringing the message of living with love and respect. We hosted the vigil for Rosa Parks’ death last year, and we also do a “Black History” tour of high schools. We organized two hip-hop summits to discuss what the music means and how to respond to the closing of music venues to hip-hop concerts. We want to counter the stereotypes of rap by featuring music that is positive and conscious. We’ve received calls saying our show has changed people’s lives, even one young man saying we helped him avert a suicide attempt.”

Most of the allies the ladies cite in their work are peers in

IDENTITY BOX

Name: Lady J & Lady Bombay

Birthplace: Fresno, Mansfield, Ohio

Primary Identity: Muslim, Black Christian, Black

Political affiliation: Independent, Registered voter

Frequented areas: South of Shields, WestFresno

Inspirations: Oprah, Hon. Louis Farrakhan, Maya Angelou, Pastors Kelvin & “my parents”, Assata Shakur, Ginger Morgan, “my mother and triumphing women my kids”

Motto: “everything happens for a reason”, “Life is a process and the best is yet to come”

Left - Lady Bombay • Right - Lady J

the music world, such as Tamika Steele (Mz Meti-q-less), Terehya Butler, Yolanda Walker, Brother Elijah, DJ Tragedy and Ansar el Muhammed. However, one—Rev. Floyd Harris—is a mentor who is especially appreciated for bringing political focus to their work, and in helping bridge the generational gap. “Some of our elders don’t get past the negative stereotypes and don’t see the potential for inspiring young people to positive action through the music.”

Lady J earns her keep as a substitute teacher, and struggles to find ways to engage her students. “The standard curriculum has little meaning for a lot of them. I try to reach them through the issues that affect them directly. At the school I’m at now, we’ve started a Girls’/Women’s Club to really look at what tears us down and what builds us up as females.” She see this as more an extension of the work begun as a DJ than part of her job as teacher.

The ladies voiced frustration that they’re not yet able to do their “real work” full time. They can envision clubs at every middle school, where participants can become a

source of sanity and peacemaking in their environment; and where a sense of sisterhood beyond the bounds of the school could be inculcated. And then they picture a “state-of-the-art enrichment center for youth, to bring art and philosophy and aspiration into their lives.”

In the meantime, in the existing world, Lady J and Lady Bombay are planning a big party in March to celebrate 8 years of “The Remedy”, and the opportunities for growth, self-expression and service it has led to. “We want it to be an occasion where we can encourage people to open their hearts to change, to realize we all can—and must—take part if change is to happen. If you’d like to join us, tune in to the show—or even invite us to your functions. If we can make it, we will.”

[Ed. note—Unsolicited testimonial. The Ladies have been doing all their community work for free, but they need to support themselves and their families. Any help with grant-writing, or finding paying gigs, would be greatly appreciated.]

Ranked Choice Voting: Is Fresno ready?

By Larry Mullen

There are many electoral reforms, which would improve the voting process. Some are very difficult to implement—like fair redistricting reform. Others seem shoo-ins—like free 200-word candidate statements in voter pamphlets. The question is what reform to implement first and when? Why can’t seemingly simple reforms like paper trails be implemented quickly?

What serious voters want is very simple. Voters want to know that their vote will count for the candidate of their choice first. And, if not the winner, they want to know that their vote will count for the candidate that most shares their views. Under our current winner-take-all, single-seat, district voting, voters don’t get to do that. The response by voters is either apathy [to stay at home] or to hold one’s nose and vote for the least offensive candidate.

Depending on the type of election being run, Ranked Choice Voting or Instant Runoff Voting [IRV] are the fair and reasonable solutions to the problem. Ranked Choice Voting is used in races with multiple seats districts. IRV is used in single-seat districts. Both systems require voters to select the candidate of their choice in rank order. A fifty percent plus one vote is required to win. If one candidate receives a majority of the vote, he or she is elected as usual. In a close race, voters’ second or third choices are used to “instantly” decide the winner — just like a runoff but without the delay or cost of a second election.

An example of a single-seat race would be the Fresno City Council or County Board of Supervisor races. Voters rank the candidate of their choice and votes are redistributed as in ranked choice voting. What’s the advantage you might ask? The recent Fresno City Council District 1 primary race is a good one to examine. The top four candidates had between 17% and 25% of the vote. If the lowest candidate’s 10% vote was added to the fourth place candidate’s 17%, the fourth place candidate would have 27% and be the leader. This is important. Instead of being a “spoiler,” these votes are “contributors” to a new leader. Ultimately, a different candidate may have won with no need for a general election.

IRV mean that someone who voted for a candidate who lost on the initial vote count can help contribute votes to the ultimate winner. It means that the issues separating candidates become real debatable issues. Answers to questions about sprawl, police auditor, living wage, PEG TV, solid waste, water, saving farm land,

and needle exchange become much more powerful and meaningful. IRV promotes less negative campaigning since candidates would like to be the second or third choice of their opponents. The question is not would IRV benefit Fresnans, but are Fresnans ready for IRV?

The Fresno County Green Party is interested in getting a multi-partisan group together to develop a presentation to educate the citizenry about Ranked Choice Voting and IRV. Anyone interested in helping with this endeavor may call Larry Mullen at (559) 227-0293. Information about electoral reform is available at www.fairvote.org on line and in 10 Steps to Repair American Democracy, by Steven Hill, Polipoint Press, 2006.

The time to inform ourselves about electoral reform and take action is now. The most meaningful reform

we can make locally is Instant Runoff Voting. Until we get IRV, we should reject any electoral reform, which allows for winner-take-all, single-seat districts, gerrymandered to protect incumbents, by unsupervised bureaucrats using discriminatory voter and census data.

IRV is not new. It is used by a lot of domestic organizations and foreign countries. It is catching on because it is more democratic. It has most recently been adopted in Oakland, California. IRV reframes the political debate, allows the maximum participation of voters in determining the winner, and decides the outcome in one election—thereby saving money. It is fair and cost effective. What will it take to get IRV in Fresno? Is Fresno ready?

Instant Runoff Voting

By Laura Wells

Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) passed in Oakland, California in November 2006 with 69% of the vote. The result was achieved by a broad coalition of the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, FairVote, and political parties including Democratic, Green, and Peace and Freedom.

In spring of 2006, the coalition was gearing up for a long-term effort, to either gather signatures for a ballot initiative in two years, or elect a more favorable city council to put IRV on the ballot.

In June there was a break. City Councilwoman and mayoral candidate Nancy Nadel contacted the group and said, “I’m willing to sponsor a proposal to ask the Oakland City Council to put IRV on the November ballot.”

Coalition members quickly mobilized their networks. Oaklanders telephoned, emailed, wrote, spoke to city council members at street fairs, attended meetings, and filled out speaker cards. Everyone urged the city council to put IRV on the ballot and “let the voters decide!”

One council member, a pivotal fence sitter, stated wearily, “I’ve gotten all your calls and emails.” Finally, at 2:00 A.M., at the last city council meeting before summer recess, the fence sitter grumpily agreed, and IRV was placed on the November ballot.

With three months to go, the team met almost weekly to develop messages, choose colors, strategize for endorsements, raise funds, and run a full-fledged campaign of parties, presentations, mailings, phone-banking, and precinct-walking. Key figures from all political parties and many diverse community organizations endorsed IRV, followed by the vital endorsement of Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s four weeks before the election.

Election day brought a big win, with 69% of the voters calling for “Yes on Instant Runoff Voting” for Oakland.

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Laura Wells served on the executive committee of the “IRV for Oakland” campaign while running as a Green Party candidate for State Controller. She will continue working with the coalition, both to ensure that the Alameda County Registrar of Voters implements IRV, and to see what democracy improvements can be stirred up next.

*Suggested resources are websites www.oaklandirov.org, and www.fairoote.org/irov/, and the classic manual *The Candidate’s Handbook* by Harvey Yorke.*

Another World is Possible

By Jean Hayes

With much music, dancing and drumming the 7th World Social Forum began Jan. 20 in Nairobi, Kenya. Last year, Forums took place in Caracas, Venezuela, Mali, and in Karachi, Pakistan. Opening ceremonies in Nairobi were held in Uhuru Park in the heart of the city and, with the Nairobi skyline in the background, people were treated to the sounds of Bob Marley’s “Get Up, Stand Up” as well as the music of Brasil, Kenya, and many other countries. Speakers included a Palestinian woman who asked the audience to remember the 10,000 of her people in Israeli jails, an Italian man who asked forgiveness for what Europe did to Africa, and the keynote speaker, the former president of Zambia, whose talk centered around eradication of poverty and the hope of food on every table. He also urged Africans to say no to all forms of exploitation, and that no debt can be said to be fair. Punctuating the time between speakers was more music and chants of Viva Kenya!, Viva Cuba!, Viva Ghana!. Notably absent was Viva United States! Flags of many countries waved wildly in the mosh pit as participants danced to world music at the conclusion of the speeches.

The Forum was originally planned to take place in Uhuru Park, but then moved to Kasarani, a very large sports stadium on the outskirts of the city when it became apparent that it had outgrown the first venue. Only the opening and closing ceremonies remained in central Nairobi, a city designed for 300,000 people and now bursting with 3 million.



Opening ceremonies for the 7th World Social Forum were held at Uhuru Park in Nairobi, Kenya. Photo by Jean Hayes

Day 2 of the Forum gave participants a chance to attend many different sessions centered around this year’s theme, “People’s Struggles, People’s Alternatives”. Noted presenters included Dr. Vandana Shiva, who spoke on the broken promises of the Green Revolution and the hope in the return of bio-diversity in some of India’s farming regions where the crop yields are twice or three times as much as fields where pesticides and chemical fertilizers are used.

Other notable presentations included a panel on Human Rights moderated by Mary Robinson, former

president of Ireland, and human rights crusader. Also of note was an afternoon presentation by the Kenya Debt Relief Network entitled: Cut funding to the World Bank - How to bring about radical reforms. It was pointed out that the landing of Columbus’s three ships in 1492 in the Americas brought about much negative change, and that the three “ships” named the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO were a real danger to Africa.

All around the outside of the massive Kasarani Stadium, grassroots organizations set up booths with in-

Continued on page 12

2nd Central California Valley Journey for Justice

By Gloria Hernandez

April 13-21, 2007
Kick off in Sacramento to Bakersfield.

The original idea for the California Central Valley Journey for Justice was to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the United Farm Workers march on Sacramento. The Journey for Justice is a network of people, organizations, and unions working together in a unified movement for health care. The Journey is a unity in spirit, a living, breathing relationship between common people with goals with plans to build committees in every area, leave literature, educate the leaders, and help empower the communities to fight their battles more effectively. Last year’s journey kick off was on April 17 and continued throughout the week from Reedley to Sacramento. 1,000s of people participated at local events going from town to town, held meetings, marches, talking circles, public forums and rallies. This year we will carry forward the fight for health care for all. Our goal is to strengthen and unify our movement on a state-wide level.

The Governor has released a plan to “make more health care accessible to all, more affordable”. What we aren’t being told is that his offer is to mandate individuals to purchase their own health insurance, and to make us bear more of the cost of getting sick through high deductibles-thus shifting the cost of care onto individuals and families. His plan does little to address the true cost drivers in the industry. Many uninsured families live sicker, die younger, delaying treatment, avoiding needed health care, including screening and preventive care, treatment for chronic conditions, and emergency care. Many families will go without food to meet the mandated requirements of the governor’s plan.

The Journey for Justice demands:

- QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR ALL, in particular for the uninsured estimated to be over 46 million Americans, 7 million in California alone.
- STOP THE INSURANCE COMPANIES from setting policy as to who does and who does not received quality health care.
- STOP BLAMING THE UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE for the increase of health care,
- SUPPORT THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH INSURANCE RELIABILITY ACT that would created a statewide universal health care that is publicly financed, provides coverage for all medically necessary services and controls costs by eliminating insurance company overhead and using purchasing power to negotiate better prices,
- SUPPORT PROPOSALS TO SET A STANDARD FOR HEALTH BENEFITS ON THE JOB, just like the minimum wage for pay
- SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTH HEALTHY KIDS

CAN WE COUNT ON YOU FOR THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE?

CAN YOU OR YOUR OGRANIZATION ENDORSE THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE?

If so please contact the steering committee:

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Join us at the next meeting will be February 3, 2007, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM meeting will be in Merced — call 209 631-6461 for location.

Peace Fresno

By Bill Simon

Peace Fresno continues to meet at the Peace Corner, Blackstone and Shaw, on the First Friday of the month from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Come join us on February 2 and March 2. A large turnout will help to convince our Congressmen and Senators to follow the will of the people to quit funding the Iraq War, as mandated in the November elections.

Once again we must hold the annual Rally In The Valley: Bring The Troops Home Now. President Bush has completely disregarded the results of the November elections and the recommendations of the Iraq study group. He continues to link the imperialistic war in Iraq with 9/11 and the war on terror. He continues to deny the real needs of the people here at home and around the world.

The Rally is set for Sunday, March 18. By the time this is published we will hopefully have secured permits to hold the Rally at the new Eaton Plaza downtown, near the library and water tower. If so, the Rally will be from 1:30 to 4:30 with a march to the Federal Building. To end this war, we need a really large turnout at this and other demonstrations. Speakers and other details will be announced later.

To contact Peace Fresno call 487-2515, email president@peacefresno.org , or visit our website www.peacefresno.org

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Bill Simon is President of Peace Fresno

The Movies’ Annual Top 20 List

By Jeff Booth

The Movies’ Annual Top 20 List of Overlooked Films on Video viewed in 2006. In no particular order, here goes.....

- Speak
- Murderball
- The Beat that My Heart Skipped
- Thumbsucker
- Separate Lies
- The Take
- Tony Takitani
- State of Mind
- The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio
- Popaganda
- Find Me Guilty
- The Wobblies
- Kinky Boots
- Blossoms of Fire
- Short Films
- Intimate Stories
- Cape of Good Hope
- After Freedom
- Crossing the Bridge:The Sound of Istanbul
- Who Killed the Electric Car?

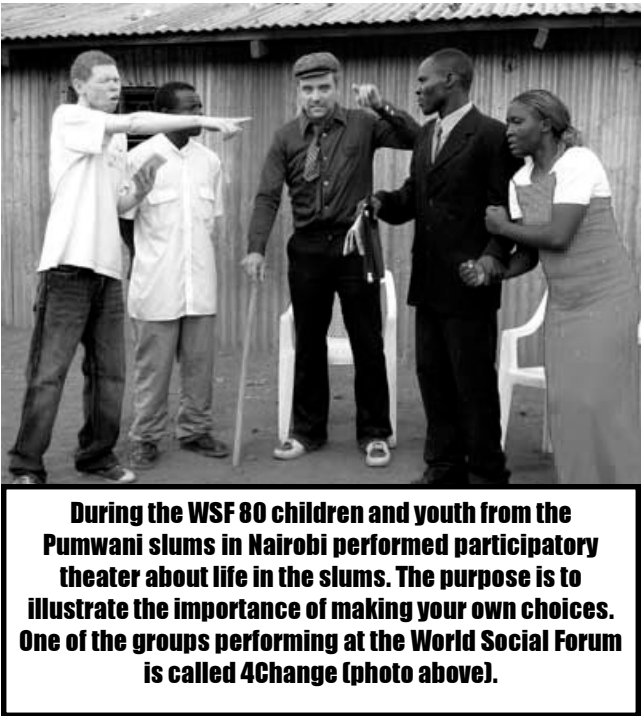
Now please note that these are not necessarily the best films we viewed in 2006. However they were all very good but overlooked for various reasons. Also “Short Films” is a collection of Oscar nominees & winners from 2005. I believe they may have all been shown at the most recent Fresno Filmworks International Film Festival. I know that anyone who viewed “Six Shooter” will probably like to see it again. This is an excellent collection that contains both live and animated films.

...Questions or comments?
...Anyone want to know what the runner-ups were?

Better world continued from page 11

formation on such things as organic farming, AIDS education, labor unions, Kenyan women’s groups, and a host of other social justice organizations.

Looming behind the progressive activities at the Forum were other issues that are difficult for many Kenyans to overcome. Although they were addressed at this world gathering, only time will tell if they can be turned around. A case in point is the booming flower industry, roses in particular, that sends a huge volume of flowers to the world’s largest market in Amsterdam each day. This industry is centered in the Rift Valley region of Kenya, occupying huge numbers of acres, all of which are owned mostly by Europeans. Since flowers must look good, chemicals are used in abundance to kill pests in the giant greenhouses, and the demand for water for irrigation is great. Much of this water comes from either the two rivers that empty in to Lake Navaisha, close to the flower farms or from the lake itself which is slowly drying up. The ecosystems here are damaged and, unless measures are taken soon to solve the environmental problems, the land will be unfit for any farming. These issues and others like them were




addressed at the Forum in the hope that the innovative thinking here can produce a solution though the problem is rooted in colonialism and the fact that Europeans still own this land in the Rift Valley. Some attempts are being made to organize unions on the farms but the idea has a long way to go.

On the brighter side, Kenya is home to many progressive women’s groups who are working for positive change. They organize community gardens, do AIDS education, and offer themselves as support groups when needed. One especially powerful group is the Daughters of Mumbi, who had a visible presence at the World Social Forum with their well-stocked information booth and food court. These women and other similar groups such as the women of the Greenbelt Movement seem to be the catalyst for change in the country. The groups have a chant they do at meetings and presentations to emphasize a point when one of them is speaking. All chant “Wa Sa Su!!” meaning, “A woman is speaking!”

On January 26 the 7th World Social Forum concluded and those attending returned to their home countries having had the rich experience of being with like-minded people who believe that another world is possible. All this taking place in a rich emerging nation whose people realize the value of self-sufficiency and not dependance on promises made by the WTO, the IMF, or the World Bank.


For more information about the World Social Forum, see: http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/index.php?cd_language=2&id_menu=



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Further adventures of the Hydraulic Brotherhood: Westlands Update

By Lloyd G. Carter

In the past few years public and media attention in the San Joaquin Valley have been focused on the long court battle over restoring a fishery flow in the San Joaquin River and the alleged impacts it would have on East Side agriculture.

Meanwhile, the Westlands Water District, the nation’s largest and most politically powerful federal irrigation district, has been operating below the radar to both lock up a 50-year water supply worth billions of dollars and to get the government to pay for an expensive drainage system that could cost American taxpayers upwards of \$2 billion with no guarantees it will work. All for 400 or 500 growers operating on marginal soils with toxicity problems.

Westlands, which sprawls across 600,000 acres in western Fresno County and a small portion of Kings County, ran into trouble 25 years ago when it was discovered its drainage water contained selenium, a trace element inherent in the western valley soils which is toxic to birds and wildlife. In the early 1980s, Westlands’ polluted shallow groundwater, loaded with salts, including selenium, was pumped from the ground and funneled via a cement drainage canal to evaporation ponds at the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge in Merced County 85 miles to the north.

The selenium in the stored drainage water quickly moved into the wildlife refuge food chain, killing thousands of federally protected birds outright and triggering grotesque deformities in bird embryos nesting around the evaporation ponds.

The story of the toxic ag drainage killing a national wildlife refuge exploded in newspapers around the country and was featured on CBS’ “60 Minutes.” The Reagan Administration ordered the Kesterson ponds closed in 1985, cutting off the possibility of a drainage canal through the Delta to the Pacific Ocean.

Without drainage, the alkaline soils of the Westlands could not be farmed. This crisis was followed by the lengthy drought of the late 1980s and early 1990s in which water supplies for the Westlands were cut back because of the drought and the growing ecological crisis in the Delta, location of the massive pumps which push north state water uphill to the corporate farms of the western valley. A much smaller portion of this water goes over the Tehachapis to ever thirsty Southern California.

But the Westlands growers are resilient as well as clever. They filed lawsuits to get the drainage system completed and bided their time during the Clinton years. When the Bush Administration took power in 2001, Westlands was able to again gain a sympathetic ear. It didn’t hurt that the former lobbyist for the Valley federal water districts, Jason Peltier, became a top official at the Department of Interior, parent agency of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, providing western water “advice” to then Interior Secretary Gale Norton.

In 2002, some Westlands growers who had filed a suit in the early 1990s to complete the drainage, negotiated a settlement with Interior official Bennett Raley, a Norton protege, over the wishes of Justice Department attorneys who wanted to fight the lawsuit. A handful of Westlands growers, including former California Secretary of State Bill Jones, were given \$140 million from Interior and their own water district in exchange for idling 32,000 acres of land.

Negotiations continued on an overall drainage plan for the west side of the Valley as well as Westlands efforts to renew its 1960s water delivery contract for just over one million acre-feet of water a year. That’s enough water to meet the annual water needs of a city of ten million people. The old contract was set to expire this year. The new contract would be for 25 years with a virtually automatic 25-year renewal for a total of 50 years. One million acre-feet of water a year is worth \$500 an acre-foot on the retail market (urban uses) making Westlands’ annual supply worth half a billion dollars, or a total of \$25 billion for the life of the new contract. Westlands’ 400-500 growers, of course, would be expecting to buy that water for less than 20 percent of its market value and any water not used for farming could be sold on the open market for very handsome profits.

Westlands wanted all that water even though the intractable drainage problem might cause it to idle 200,000 acres of land, one third of the district. This evoked howls of protest from major environmental groups who continue to insist that massive pumping from the Delta is wreaking ecological havoc on the Delta’s fishery and imperiled drinking water supplies.

Then last month, with no publicity, Westlands general manager Tom Birmingham told the Westlands board of directors that it now appears renewal of the water delivery contract will not take place until at least 2010.

Westlands has now begun negotiations on a series of one-year interim renewal contracts. What was the reason for the delaying in signing the ink on the water contract? The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, an Interior agency which provides Westlands water, was forced to reinstate more environmental studies because a federal agency overseeing commercial fisheries decided to list the Green Sturgeon as a federally protected species

The Westlands Water District, the nation’s largest and most politically powerful federal irrigation district, has been operating below the radar to both lock up a 50-year water supply worth billions of dollars and to get the government to pay for an expensive drainage system that could cost American taxpayers upwards of \$2 billion with no guarantees it will work. All for 400 or 500 growers operating on marginal soils with toxicity problems.

under the Endangered Species Act. The Bureau then reinstituted formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the way that the vast Central Valley Project is operating in the San Joaquin Valley.

Particularly regarding the volume of pumping from the federal pumps at Tracy, which has caused precipitous declines in the population of the Delta Smelt, a tiny but critical fish in the Delta fishery food chain. These actions by other federal agencies will force Reclamation to further develop a formal document known as a biological assessment and to issue a new biological opinion, an environmental study justifying the amount of massing pumping the Bureau wants to do to keep Westlands happy. This formal consultation process could take at least two years.

Reclamation officials say they will incorporate into their environmental documents the terms of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The BDCP is an effort by a number of stakeholders in the Delta, including Westlands, to restore fishery populations while protecting irrigation supplies. The draft of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan will not be available until March 2009 with a final environmental document not completed until 2010.

To further delay Westlands’ plans, the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance filed suit in Alameda County Superior Court in November arguing the California Department of Water Resources, the state corollary to the federal Bureau of Reclamation, should be required to protect Delta fish or face drastic cuts in the amount of drinking and irrigation water it sends south.

“We’re seeing a collapsing estuary. We’ve got fisheries living on the brink of oblivion,” said Bill Jennings, a longtime Delta fishery activist. If restrictions are placed on the state pumps in the Delta, similar restrictions could follow for the federal pumps, threatening Westlands’ supplies.

Westlands’ half century quest for a cheap and safe way to dispose of its toxic drainage water also continues to run into problems. Two days before Christmas, the Los Angeles Times reported bird deformities are again reappearing in Merced County from selenium-laced drainwater generated in irrigation districts just north of Westlands. These districts now use the San Joaquin River as a sewer line.

Reclamation’s current solution for the Westlands drainage problem, prompted by a federal lawsuit, is to build more Kesterson-like evaporation ponds, causing federal biologists to shake their heads in disbelief.

As part of the drainage lawsuit, the Bureau of Reclamation has committed in court documents to either signing what is known as a Record of Decision (ROD) or a settlement agreement with Westlands by February 16 of this year. Westlands’ best chance of getting what it wants is through a settlement. If the Bureau goes through with a Record of Decision, a Democratic Congress is unlikely to fund the expensive proposed drainage solution.

Westlands growers have been saying all along that what they want is a “more reliable” water delivery contract and an affordable drainage solution. (See Why Land Retirement Makes Sense for Westlands Water District at <http://www.westlandswater.org/long/200201/landretirebro.pdf>). The Westlands proposal several years ago was to retire up to 200,000 acres, reduce their full contract amount to 805,000 ac-ft per year, but make that contract 90% reliable. Under that scenario, Westlands would receive on average 70% of their current contract amount (1.15 million acre feet) which is more than they typically get now.


But if the Westlands gets a sweetheart settlement from the Bush Administration, the biggest problem in getting it funded may be the Democratic takeover of Congress. Rep. Grace Napolitano of Los Angeles County has taken over as chair of the House Subcommittee on Water formerly chaired by Rep. George Radanovich of Mariposa, who was always sympathetic to Westlands.

Napolitano, who is very interested in clean drinking water for farmworker communities in the San Joaquin Valley, is being lobbied by environmental groups to hold hearings on Westlands in the Bay Area and/or Los Angeles in order to let urban Californians know the huge amount of money that could be spent on just a handful of farmers in western Fresno County and another \$2 billion spent on a drainage “solution” that probably won’t work.

Fresno attorney Lloyd G. Carter is president of the California Save Our Streams Council and covered California water issues for many years as a reporter for United Press International and The Fresno Bee.



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Word on the Street

by Wendy Russell

Springtime peeks through the gloom of winter preparing to bust out into its seasonal glory soon. Birds sing their best to attract a mate while trees sprout blossoms to lure bees in for pollination. Toads and frogs croak in puddles and ponds calling out for union with one of their own kind. Nature is in the mood for propagation now that the days are getting longer and the winter’s cold, fog and rain are soon to slip into last season’s memories. Nature is doing its best to ensure that all living things continue on.

All this ‘love’ in the air takes me back about nineteen years ago. My best male friend had moved away. We had become good friends once we determined that he was a Run-Around Guy while I was the opposite; a Settle-Down Gal - who did not want to be just another notch on his bedpost. In those ensuing years as friends I even married someone else. So after my friend moved out of town I realized two startling facts; that I really missed his friendship and that my husband was not my Best Friend. But even then I never thought of that friend as a possible mate (since he was the Run-Around Guy that would never settle down), instead, I just knew that my husband would never be the one for me, signaling the end of that marriage.

Six months went by. It was on a rainy Valentine’s Day that I got a phone call from my old friend; “Hi Wendy! Guess what? I moved back to Fresno!” and WHAM! right then it hit me like two tons of chocolate bon bons that I loved this man. That I was going to chase him no matter what came next. And I did.

So today, the rainy cloud and sun-spattered skies, the new buds on the trees and my own thoughts of happy LOVE on our 18th wedding anniversary inspire me to play Cupid with this month’s Question:

Is there someone you have a Secret Crush on? Someone you want to ask for a date? Or ask for Another Chance? Or even propose to? And do you want to say it the first time right here, right now?

A man, wearing a cool cap and rough leather jacket, was having a steaming hot cup of coffee at a streetside table on a very cold day in the Tower District when I met up with him. When I first asked this month’s Question of the people around him he had not offered up one word, but later as I walked by his table again he quietly - hesitantly - said that he had a Secret Crush. That stopped me so I sat down to get his words:

“I’m in love but she’s too young.” I interrupted him to tell him that’s not always a problem. My own husband is eleven years older than I and treats me as if I were diamonds and gold. How much older? Are you friends? I ask. Does she know you?

“Just a few years older,” The man answers, “yes, she knows me. I do wonder if she feels the same way...” he pauses a moment - maybe inside his head he is running through two internal lists on continuous loop; Proof she love me, Proof she does not love me. When I ask to take his photo he declines, I think already regretting his momentary courage and resulting love declaration, possibly wanting to keep the fantasy forever rather than risk losing her friendship by his disclosure. Still, I ask him what he loves about her. He is quiet a few moments more. Then he repeats my question back to me thoughtfully, “Why do I love her? ...ok: the thought of her brings me warmth on these cold days.”

Not having Cupid’s wings I walk on down the street thankful that the exercise warms me up. I wonder will he ever gain the courage to take that jump into LOVE? All he has to do is just hand her this newspaper folded open to these words.

There on Olive Avenue I also caught up with ALIFAH M. ALI on her way to work and asked her the Question.

Alifah answers, “Yes, I have a Secret Crush. Well maybe it’s not a secret but it hasn’t blossomed yet. It will be up to her. I guess I don’t know her at her truest moment yet, but what I’ve felt was the presence of a unique and creative soul. She might have got the wrong impression about me - if that’s true then I’d rather she talk to me about it. If I could, I would say to K.M., ‘I see you and feel you but I want to know you. I know you’re not perfect and definitely I am not perfect by any means, but I am at that point where I want to live and die trying. I hope you are open to



Alifah M. Ali

getting to know me’.”

My next Valentine target said that he had actually been thinking about getting married at the moment that I called to ask him our Question:

Is there someone you have a Secret Crush on? Someone you want to ask for a date? Or ask for Another Chance? Or even propose to? And do you want to say it the first time right here, right now?

Twenty-eight-year-old Maya Goodman knew just what he wanted to say - he only needed time to decide which words to use:

“To Ala, the light of my life
You’re my gift to me
You’re my banyan tree
The roots and the heart of our family
You soften my shell and give me respect
I draw from your well as we take our steps
We’ve been together a while and it makes me smile
It seems that we’ve come a thousand miles
We are strong, but together, stronger still
I love you now and I always will
Let’s share the bond that can’t be broken
Take this ring as my love token
I love you forever baby, let’s get married.”



Maya Goodman

I think Maya’s plan is to buy a ring, carry it in his pocket and be ready to drop to one knee to place the ring on Ala’s third finger after someone shows Ala these printed words - so you can help play Cupid too if you wish!

Maya’s younger sister, Ariel Bird, heading off to San Francisco in the Fall to earn her second Bachelor’s Degree (this one in Psychology), told me she had her own answer so I arranged to meet her at the intersection of Linden and Olive streets:

“I have a Secret Crush on my neighbor. He lives around the corner from me. I see him walking his little dog. I’d like to ask him out but I am too shy. There’s two other people - the security guard at Veni Vede Veci is cute - he just *stands* there -” Ariel laughs. “I don’t know his name either. There is another guy that works in the Tower. He’s a scruffy boy and he’s got a nice smile. I’m too shy to approach you guys so it’s up to y’all!”

Now I’ve known Ariel since her birth but even if you do not know her you too can see that although she may be shy she is not short on confidence. That’s what it takes in life and LOVE; you must reach for it. Go for the gusto. Jump. Take the chance. Don’t miss any opportunity.

portunity.

Walking on the south side of Olive I was deep in thought. One thing I do know about LOVE is that It’s Always Wrong Until It’s Right. That is a simple statement that can usually answer whatever a lovesick person pours out in the anguish of somehow-spoilt love. It might not be what the sad lover wants to hear but later they will know you are right. It also answers anything that a happy lover, fully caught up in the marvelously tight grip of True Love, might express. It applies either way.



Ariel Goodman

Inside the Revue I asked the Question outloud; *Is there someone you have a Secret Crush on? Someone you want to ask for a date? Or ask for Another Chance? Or even propose to? And do you want to say it the first time right here, right now?*

A tall man speaks right up and when I see his face, suddenly me playing Cupid becomes serious. I could see pain all over this guy as he shows me his son’s picture. Earnestly, C.L.G. pours out his words;

“I have someone I want to apologize to for eight years of destructive behavior which resulted in our separation. Deb, I want to say how deeply I regret my past actions and the current outcome. If you can find it in your heart to forgive my... to forgive my...”

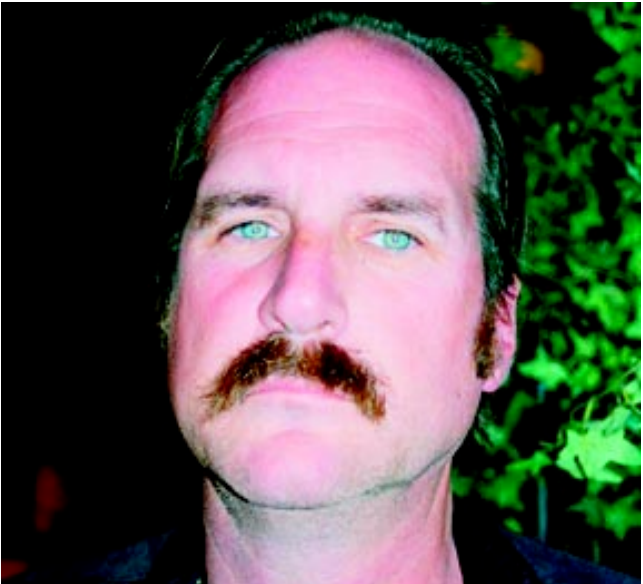
He stumbles, trying to find the word - so I take a guess - after all, we humans are all pretty much the same, right? I interject one word; stupidity?

C.L.G. continues, “Yes, stupidity sounds good. Deb, if you can find it in your heart to forgive my stupidity I would really love another chance to make it right again. I totally admit it was me start to finish. I was selfish, inconsiderate, blind - any adjective in that category.” He looks at me. “She doesn’t need to change - I do.”

I could tell he had given this much thought because usually it’s hard for some people, especially for some men - to articulate their feelings but he was doing that quite well. I asked C.L.G. what he loved about Deb.

“I love the way she is. I miss her honesty, her kindness, her generosity and loving nature. I love her mind. I want a second chance to raise our son together.”

Now I wished I really was Cupid and could just shoot an arrow to fix things. But I can’t. All I can say is to hug the ones you love and tell them so often. Treat them like diamonds and gold.



C.L.G.



The 2007 Martin Luther King Jr. march and food drive to end childhood hunger in Fresno. Marchers here are on the Tuolumne overpass on their way to Warners Theater. Photo by Howard Watkins

The Fire No Water Can Put Out

By Judith Reposo

[Editors note: The following is a speech given by Judith Reposo at the Twenty-first Annual All Faiths and Music Service on Saturday, January 13 at the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church. The event was sponsored by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Committee]

As we observe this holiday to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., there are a few other observances occurring in the Jewish community. I don't see these as coincidences, but as reminders from the Divine of the connections between the Jewish & African-American communities. Two days ago, Jan. 11th, marked the 100th birthday of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. The anniversary of his death was on Jan. 7th. If you don't recall who he was, you most likely recall seeing him in the famous photograph of Dr. King marching at Selma, arm in arm with other leaders. In that front line of leaders you see a man with a white beard, Rabbi Heschel. Rabbi Heschel & Dr. King also prayed together at Arlington National Cemetery, and stood by each other on the pulpit at Riverside Church.

In Jewish tradition we have a specific portion of the Torah, the Hebrew Bible, assigned to each week. This week's portion, again not by coincidence, is Shemot, the first portion of the book of Exodus. This Torah portion begins the story of our liberation from slavery. This includes the story of the midwives, Shifra & Puah, who non-violently resist Pharaoh's command to murder the male Hebrew infants. It also tells the story of Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. In Memphis, the night before he was assassinated, Dr. King spoke about civil rights activists as the burning bush. He said: "Bull Connor next would say, 'Turn the firehoses on.' ... Bull Connor didn't know history. He

knew a kind of physics that somehow didn't relate to the transphysics that we knew about, and that was the fact that there was a certain kind of fire that no water could put out."

In Jewish tradition each Jew is to see him or herself as having personally been liberated from Egypt by God. In Hebrew Egypt is Mitzrayim, which means 'narrow place.' We have all been in a narrow, confining place, whether as slaves in Egypt or slaves in the South, whether in our daily lives at our places of work or our neighborhoods and communities or in our own hearts. We share that experience of Mitzrayim, the narrow place.

Jews are also expected to see ourselves as having been present at Mount Sinai, when God gave the Torah to us through Moses. We made a covenant with God there, a partnership that we continue to this day. And that Torah commands us to work with God to perform acts of tikkun olam, of repairing the world. When Rabbi Heschel marched with Dr. King, he was practicing tikkun olam.

When we gather here together today to remember Dr. King, when we shelter and clothe the homeless, when we teach a child to read, when we provide healthcare to those in need, when we send money to help those who have suffered so much in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and when we speak out about the poor response of our government to their suffering, when we speak out against the genocide in Darfur, when we carpool and recycle and modify our consumptive ways to decrease our destructive effects on the environment, when we comfort a grieving friend, when we help our neighbor... we are performing acts of tikkun olam.

We remember Dr. King not only to recognize the accomplishments of a distinguished American, but also to be inspired by how he lived his life. He reminds us of that fire that burns but does not consume, that cannot be extinguished. He reminds us that together, you & I, can, and must, every day, repair the world.

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Judith Reposo is a Fresno physical therapist. She is a member of Temple Beth Israel and Fresno Chapter of Hadassah.



Photo by Howard Watkins

Black History/Social Justice

The California State chapter of The National Action Network will be having their 2nd annual Black History Social Justice program in West Fresno. The objective of the rally is to stir community awareness about the unjust activities that have taken place in our community, the disunity, the mindset that has been created by inside and outside forces and the preventive steps and proper procedures that must be revived among us to protect our community. There will be people coming from around the USA to participate in this program.

This event will start at 10:30 AM on March 3 at Justice Corner, which is at Fresno & C streets - Kearney Palm shopping center. We will rally and begin Marching to the Free AME church 806 Collins at 11:30am. The program will include activities of singing, choirs, speeches, poets, and drama and the main speaker will be our own California State President Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr. There will be vendor table for organization who would like to sell or hand out information. The cost for information tables \$20.00 per table.

For More information Please contact Mary Washington 559 477 - 2796 or Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr. 559 803 - 0286.



Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr (left), California State President of the National Action Network, marching in the Martin Luther King march. Rev. Harris will be the featured speaker at the Black History Social Justice program on March 3. Photo by Mike Rhodes.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

What you can do to Support Alternative/Independent Media

By Camille Russell

Here is a quick, simple way that each of us can help build the peace, social and environmental justice movement in our community. We can deliver the Community Alliance in our neighborhoods at the beginning of each month. Dan Yaseen and I have been putting the newspaper on our neighbors' doorsteps each month for the past three months. It's easy; we just turn a routine walk into an opportunity distribute the paper. In my neighborhood, I can deliver a bundle of 100 newspapers in slightly more than one hour. If one hundred committed progressives do the same, we are can deliver an additional 10,000 Community Alliance newspapers each month!



I'm happy to do this because the Community Alliance is "The Voice of the Progressive Movement" in this area. It reports on issues of concern from a progressive perspective. It gives advance coverage of upcoming events of interest. It lists the meeting times and locations of organizations dedicated to peace, social and environmental justice. Its advertisers tend to be like-minded people, local businesses, and purveyors of products and services in harmony with progressive values. The Community Alliance newspaper is a unique resource that is responsible, in large part, for fostering the network of groups that make our local progressive community dynamic.

As a Peace Fresno activist, I know that one of the biggest challenges facing Peace Fresno is informing the public about our actions. We would have better attendance at our marches and rallies, and be more effective, if more people learned of our events in advance. While the Fresno Bee and the network television stations often report on Peace Fresno events the day they happen, they are very stingy with advance coverage. Mike Rhodes, the Community Alliance editor, always gives Peace Fresno and other progressive groups the opportunity to publicize upcoming events.

Most people in the area don't read the Community Alliance, get the weekly Community Alliance Peace and Social Justice Calendar via e-mail, listen to KFCF (88.1FM), or receive docu-poem videos and action alerts from SunMt.org. A free copy of the Community Alliance would introduce the uninformed to all of the above. What a gift! The beauty of this distribution system is that we can cover neighborhoods all over our community. This would not take the place of the distribution system in place; it would augment it. Currently, the Community Alliance mails copies to its loyal subscribers who understand the need to pay for this outstanding resource. Volunteers place free copies in public places such as libraries, small businesses, schools, and non-profit organizations.

I have found that many small businesses are willing to place a few copies on the counter for their customers. At the beginning of the month, I take an extra 30 or so papers and give them to the businesses that I frequent and to nearby businesses in shopping centers. Small restaurants often accept papers for patrons to read, as do doctors, dentists, beauty and barbershops. The more businesses I ask to take papers, the easier it becomes.

Small newspapers like the Community Alliance with a point of view once flourished in our country, but that day is gone. Media consolidation is the norm now. We are very fortunate to have this local alternate paper. Mike Rhodes has won several awards for his groundbreaking journalism. In addition to its content, the Community Alliance is visually engaging. This paper is a loving gift to our community. Let's

honor the effort and talent that bring it to us by sharing it with our neighbors.

It's always exciting to discover a small act can make a big difference. E-mail Mike Rhodes, AllianceEditor@comcast.net, to let him know you will deliver the Community Alliance in your neighborhood.

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Camille Russell is passionate about building an effective anti-war movement. She can be contacted at camillerussell@softcom.net or (559) 276-2592.

North, South and the Forgotten!

By Ruth Gadebusch

Officially, we have North and South Dakota, as well as the Carolinas, but I think we Californians go them one better. We have three parts: North, South and the Forgotten!



Guess where the forgotten part is. It started as a joke with me but it isn't so funny these days. Just look at organizations that rotate their meeting places between North and South, or rotate their officers. Look at how the megalopolis to the north and south disregard our interests, be it the private sector or government.

The North thinks we are South and the South thinks we are North; therefore we don't exist. If we are included at all in the kooky proposals for dividing the state, it is usually as an after thought. They just pass right over us both literally and figuratively.

Then there are our prohibitively high airline rates. We can drive to the great metropolitan areas of the North or South and then fly right over Fresno; whereas, had we boarded in Fresno the cost probably would have been twice as much, adding insult to injury. Needless to say this exacerbates the problem by reducing Fresno passengers, allowing the airlines to say our numbers fail to justify better service. We can even get more appealing fares out of Sacramento, though we have no direct air service to our state capital — just as we have no direct service to Oakland, San Jose, Ontario, or Burbank. No wonder our northern and southern neighbors don't know much about our city. At least the efforts to attract additional, reasonable service have produced an international flight making our FYI designation legitimate, despite the airlines insistence on using FAT.

In the dim dark past when we had regulations, the rates were based on such things as actual miles. Now, with marketing one can fly cross country from the Los Angeles or San Francisco areas cheaper than between Fresno and these areas.

In the recent election, improvement of Highway 99 through the Valley was the only designated project in the highway bonds on the ballot, with the governor making so many trips here that we actually thought we had been discovered. Now, with his budget we are, once again, neglected. The rapid rail proposal, near and dear, to our hearts, gets nary a penny. Too many other demands.

Oh well, maybe we will get some of those prisons which "must" be built to accommodate the increasing number of citizens we are determined to keep locked up. We deplore the amount spent on education never recog-

nizing how much more productive it could be as preventive, rather than the remediation of prisons. Whoops, I forgot we don't do much rehabilitation, thereby guaranteeing the need for ever more prisons.

In bygone days, people from the SF Bay area came through with no air conditioners in their cars (they didn't need them) in July and August and thought we were a veritable furnace 13 months of the year. Now they can fly right over us, retaining that perspective and sometimes even act surprised to learn that we have indoor plumbing! We are far from the backwater they envision. They are in for a new picture as their ever increasing populations push them into our valley. After all, we have more space, better housing prices, the ability to visit their cities without living in their congestion, the possibility of visiting the coast or mountains in one day without their snow and storms, AND we grow most of their food. The time is coming when their political power must embrace the valley, instead of running roughshod over us.

Our attractions have been the best kept secret in the state. In some ways it is too bad to let the secret out, but change is inevitable and we had best plan for it. As they say, if we don't grab on, it will roll over us.

The same air and water affect the entire valley. We share our transportation woes. We need visionary elected officials willing to give up turfdom for the good of the whole. We need more citizen organizations like The Great Valley Center out of Modesto. We citizens must be active participants, not just onlookers.

Despite the ignorance of some of our friends from those other areas about the grandeur of the valley, both natural and man made, we are part of one state. The North and South need us as much as we need them. We must speak as one voice, loud and clear that we are Californians too, deserving of their attention. We will no longer tolerate being the forgotten part. We are the Great Central Valley of California.

Together, we can work on the challenges facing California as one. It is time to think about the future that we are leaving for our children, our grandchildren. Actually our accumulated debt is extending beyond these immediate generations. We can be the bellwether for pay as you go. Yes, even if it means more taxes. It is time to clean up the mess of chaotic financing, thinking only for the moment, unfair distribution of resources, and on and on by paying our way. Our progeny are going to have enough problems with the federal deficit without our compounding it.

Our constitution demands a balanced budget but we all know that games are being played with it. It is unethical. It is shortsighted. It has a long term effect on our legacy. We need complete, uncomplicated health coverage. We need assured educational funding for a system allowed to work in the best interest of its clients, our children, our leaders for tomorrow. We need honest redistricting that allows for meaningful, representative government. We need lawmakers from the smallest entity to the state level who care more about the good of the whole than their own election.

We need to abandon the provincial rivalry and become one state in more than name. Our well being is dependent on one another. Our valley has much to cheer about and we need to make it known. We are CALIFORNIA.

###

Ruth Gadebusch was born and raised on a Georgia farm. In 1977 she was elected to the Board of Education of Fresno Unified School District and served for thirteen and a half years. She continues to be active in the community while serving as Vice-President of the Center for Civic Education (promoting responsible citizenship and democratic principles internationally) and writing for the Liberal Opinion, a weekly national newspaper.

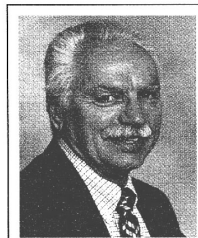
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(AEU)

COMPLEX 2030 or the Bombplex

By Ingrid Carmaen

Complex 2030 is the Department of Energy's plan to "update" its Nuclear arms. Last December 12th in Livermore and Tracy there were public comment periods on Complex 2030, two of several hearings around the country. About 25 people were present at the hearing in Tracy and about ten spoke, all against the Department of Energy policies. Complex 2030 is a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and a dangerous precedent if we expect other nations to reduce or not produce their own nuclear arms. Scientists have reported that based on information developed at the government's own labs the plutonium in these bombs is viable for 100 years and does not need to be replaced. The alliance for Nuclear Accountability's Mason Lowe stated, "This is an attempt by the Department of Energy to secure its own financial future – not secure America."

At these public hearings the Department of Energy (DOE) asked for alternative suggestions, one woman spoke of clean air, good health care, good schools and safe towns. This is certainly a viable alternative to spending the \$155 billion (or twice that) on revamping our current nuclear arms.

One speaker lives a mile from Livermore's site 300, near Tracy. At this site (take note it is upwind from Fresno) the department of energy is planning to test BSL-3 and BSL-4 bio-weapons. These bio-weapons are the most dangerous to handle. It is probable that mad cow disease and avian flu will be two of the biological agents researched in site 300. Several of the respondents reported on inaccuracies and suspicious comments by the DOE. Like: the DOE said they don't have any choice but to do what is proposed by the congress and the president. It was pointed out that the DOE lobbies in Washington D.C. for Nuclear arms. And while site 300 is often described as being ten miles from Tracy, actually there are subdivisions being built right next to site 300. It was very clear that the DOE cannot be trusted to speak the truth.

The following is part of the short presentation I gave. Most of it was written by Polly Victor whose concern about this issue alerted me to attend on behalf of Fresno.

My name is Ingrid Carmean. I am from Fresno, California. I have come here representing the concerns of several Fresno organizations. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an international organization continuously active since it was founded in 1918 by Jane Adams, Peace Fresno active since shortly after 9/11, The Fresno Center for Nonviolence, which promotes the peaceful resolution of social issues and the Fresno Friends meeting or Quakers.

I am trained in Biology, specializing in Integrated Pest Management and working to reduce the harmful effects of pesticides. I own my own pest control business which, among other clients, serves a number of California school districts. Part of my work involves protecting children from harmful pesticides.

The pursuit of nuclear arms, by whatever methods is a great danger to our county, as well as to potential enemies. The environmental effects are so vast that the U.S. signed the nuclear Non-proliferation treaty. To create up to date versions of these weapons renews the risk to those who handle the plutonium and encourages other nations to threaten us with their own nuclear weapons.

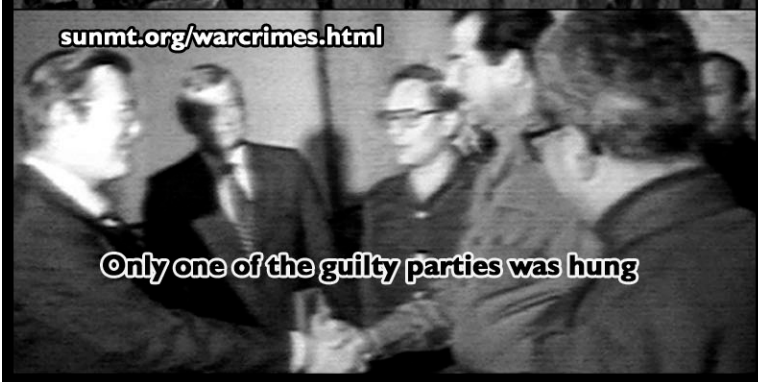
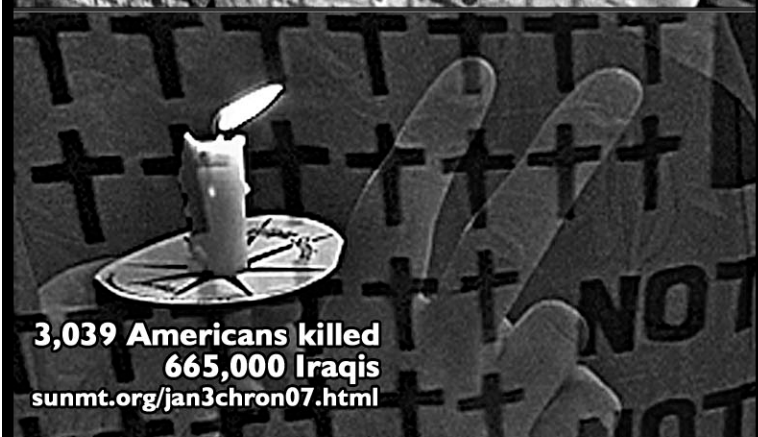
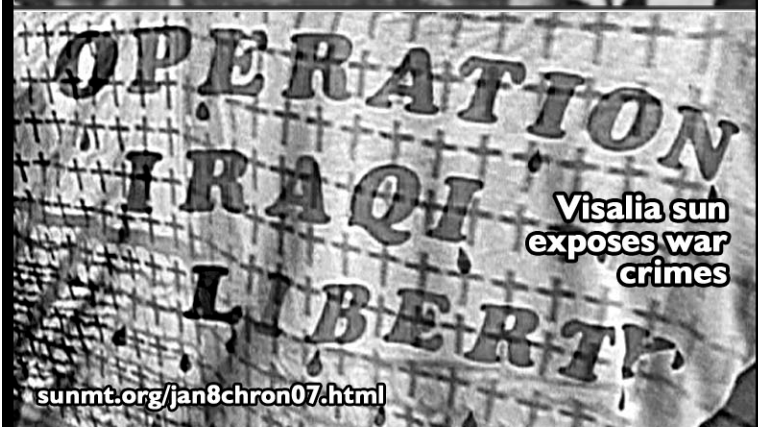
We do not have a risk free method of moving plutonium around the country. Even the problem of disposing nuclear waste has not been solved.

But most of all we object to the Department of Energy using its funds to develop further tools for atomic weapons, when our country should develop new energy resources which may be a better deterrent to war than nuclear arms, and downsize the atomic weapons we already have.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

###

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FCNV Page Editor: Brandon Hill

THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.



IS THE NEW CONGRESS TO BE BELIEVED?

"Well before Election Day the smart-money lobbyists of K Street were already shifting campaign donations to safe Democratic incumbents, greasing access to the next Congressional majority." That should be warning enough to the incoming speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and Senate majority leader, Harry Reid, to deliver quickly and credibly on their campaign vows to attack the corrupt culture of the Republican-controlled Capitol.

Yet even before the new Congress arrived, there was talk of advance compromises on what will be done, or not done. Once the new year begins any feeling of urgency will fade, replaced by a determination to acquire, and protect, whatever power and turf are available. At a minimum, the reforms must include:

1. Creation of a public integrity office to do more than merely audit lobbyists' filings. If Congress is to regain the public's respect, both houses must create an independent office to investigate the behavioral lapses of lawmakers.

2. An enforceable ban, with penalties, on all meals, gifts and travel—not just from lobbyists, but also from the organizations that hire them. Privately financed "fact-finding" junkets should at long last be banned.

3. Restraints on the revolving-door horde of Congressional alumni turned backslapping lobbyists. "Former lawmakers should be required to wait two years, not one, before cashing in on their "nice-to-see-you" privilege. "The public cannot be expected to tolerate replays of the low moment when architects of the new Medicare drug subsidy plan were secretly working to land lucrative jobs in the pharmaceutical industry while they devised the legislation."

4. Detailed disclosure of costly and undebated "earmarks"—amendments passed as pork-barrel favors to backdoor pleaders.

The new Congress must realize the ethics issue will test its mettle in the opening hours, and signal if real change is possible. "Representative Rahm Emanuel of Illinois is already warning that failure to deliver on ethics reform will be 'devastating to our standing' in the first moment of Democratic power."

(Source: Editorial The New York Times, December 3, 2006)

FOLLY'S ANTIDOTE

It is useful to remember that history is to the nation as memory is to the individual. A nation denied a conception of the past will be disabled in dealing with its present and its future. Conceptions of the past are perennially revised by the urgencies of the present. "One has only to note how in the last half-century the movements for women's rights and civil rights have reformulated and renewed American history."

We are the world's dominant military power, and a consciousness of history is a moral necessity for a nation possessed of overweening power. History verifies John F. Kennedy's proposition: "We must face the fact that the US is neither omnipotent nor omniscient—there cannot be an American solution to every world problem." Three decades ago we fought against a country about which we knew little and in which we had no vital interests. Vietnam was hopeless enough, but to repeat the same arrogant folly 30 years later in Iraq is unforgivable!

"A nation informed by a vivid understanding of the ironies of history is, I believe, best equipped to manage the tragic temptations of military power... The great strength of history in a free society is its capacity for self-correction... In the end, a nation's history must be both the guide and the domain not so much of its historians as its citizens."

(Source: Op-Ed article The New York Times, January 1, 2007 by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., historian)

Editor's Corner

While I am to use this space to give my thoughts on peace, politics, or whatever strikes my fancy at the moment, I am having a case of writer's block so horrible I cannot even manage to fill this two by five box. Instead of my words, I will fill this space with some memorable words of a legendary believer in nonviolent action, Cesar Chavez.

"Violence just hurts those who are already hurt...Instead of exposing the brutality of the oppressor, it justifies it."

"We are convinced that non-violence is more powerful than violence. We are convinced that non-violence supports you if you have a just and moral cause...If you use violence, you have to sell part of yourself for that violence. Then you are no longer a master of your own struggle."

"Talk is cheap...It is the way we organize and use our lives everyday that tells what we believe in."

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."

"When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So, it how we use our lives that determines what kind of men we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life."

FCNV Annual Retreat

at Margaret Hudson's Big Barn and Garden, 4247 N. Thorne, Fresno. (North of Ashlan) Call 237-3223 for directions to Margaret's. Everyone is welcome!

Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon; Potluck at 12 noon - 1 p.m. Retreat at 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

At this year's retreat we will talk briefly about programs for the coming year, but most of the time at the retreat will be spent on a discussion of "Coming out for peace: Facing up to our reluctance to show the depths of what we truly believe to our family, friends, neighbors and coworkers."

STIR IT UP...

with Angela Price as she interviews John Dunning, former GM engineer who worked directly on the EV1 electric car project.
Wednesday February 14th, 3 p.m.
88.1 FM

who killed the electric car?

It was among the fastest, most efficient production cars ever built. It ran on electricity, produced no emissions and catapulted American technology to the forefront of the automotive industry. The lucky few who drove it never wanted to give it up. So why did General Motors crush its fleet of EV1 electric vehicles in the Arizona desert?

WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR? chronicles the life and mysterious death of the GM EV1. Followed by a discussion led by John Dunning, former GM employee working directly on the EV1 electric car project.
(93 Minutes)

Wednesday, February 14

Noon: FCNV

6:30 pm Downtown Library(Doors open 6)
(2420 Mariposa)

For more information call : 237-3223





WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755
WILPF page for February 2007 Compiled and edited by Rick Petinak

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 7th: Noon-1, Women in Black silent vigil. Wear black, bring a sign, women only. Courthouse Park, downtown Fresno. Info call 278-4593.

Thursday, February 8th: 7:00PM, Chris Eacock on California Water Policy. Geography, Science, Distribution, Projects, Agribusiness. Unitarian Universalist Church 4144 North Millbrook. Info call Lydia: 435-7360 Co-sponsored: WILPF * UU.

Thursday, February 15th: 1:00PM, Women in Black silent vigil. Wear black, bring a sign, women only. Free Speech Area, speaker's platform at CSU Fresno. Info call 278-4593.

Thursday, February 15th: 7:00PM, WILPF monthly meeting. Fresno Center for Nonviolence. 1584 N. Van Ness Ave.

Wednesday, February 28th: 3:00PM, WILPF Stir It Up. KFCF Radio 88.1 FM.

SAVE THE DATE!!! April 28th: WILPF Spring Cluster. Stay tuned for more info

No Peace Without Freedom: Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1975 explores how black women, fueled by the desire to eradicate racial injustice, compelled the white leadership of the WILPF to revisit its own conceptions of peace and freedom. Blackwell offers a renewed examination of peace movements in American history, one that points out the implications of black women's participation for the study of social activism, African American history, and women's history. This new perspective on interracial and black female global activism helps redefine the often-covert systemic violence necessary to maintain systems of social and economic hierarchy, moving peace and war discourse away from its narrow focus on European and European-American issues.

Blackwell looks closely at the reasons why white women organized their own peace group at the start of World War I and assesses several bold steps taken by these groups in their first ten years. Addressing white peace activists' continuous search for the "perfect" African American woman, Blackwell considers when and why black women joined the WILPF, why so few of them were interested in the organization, and what the small number who did join had in common with their white counterparts. She also shows how the WILPF, frustrated at its inability to successfully appeal to black women, established a controversial inter-

Grannies Lobby Senate to Stop War By Marilyn Byrne

January 18, 2007 - Grandmothers Against War, Raging Grannies, and other grandmother group came in force to Washington D.C. from some 31 States to see their Congressional Leaders to lobby for their support in ending the Iraq War. These Grannies came armed with appointments, talking points, and voting records and with the hope of forming long-term relations with these Senators; these ladies presented their facts, asked pointed questions like what each Senator envisioned as a plan for stopping Bushes planned escalation. The Grannies brought gifts of the book entitled Out of Iraq: A Political Plan for Withdrawing Now and a small bouquet of white Roses symbolic of the Fascist Resistance whose slogan "we will not be silenced" which was printed on a large card attached to their flowers and on black Tee shirts worn by the Grannies. Nancy Marsh and Marilyn Byrne represented the WILPF Raging Grannies from Fresno. They both agree it was a great experience and are looking forward to returning to Washington D.C. to continue the lobbying process. With over 70% of the public against the new surge of troops, and the mandate dictated from the last election, the grannies pressured their Senators to act on their behalf to find an immediate solution to this disastrous war.

Birthday Celebration for Margaret Hudson

Many Fresno WILPF members joined the overflow crowd of admirers and friends of Margaret Hudson in her studio on January 4 to honor her on her 80th birthday. Margaret's Gallery was also part of Art Hop that evening and a reception was held to honor her with lots of birthday cakes and music by different people including the Raging Grannies. Jean Hayes presented her a bouquet of flowers and announced that Fresno WILPF was giving her a lifetime membership to WILPF (that is \$500 to national WILPF). A wonderful time was had by all.

Greetings from Africa (sent by WILPFer Jean Hayes, currently in Kenya)

Greetings from Nairobi...

The trip here was LONG but worth the wait. The first day we went to an outlying community to visit a co-op farm run by twelve widows and their children. All the food was grown organically. We arrived at the farm in the back of a pickup truck and were greeted with much singing. Today, we took a walk around town and were shown various places where protests were held. These women are amazing! Unstoppable! A lesson for us all. More later.

Paz,
Jean

Black History Month Featured Reading

No Peace Without Freedom
Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1975

Joyce Blackwell
July 2004

(From the *Southern Illinois University Press*):

Just as women changed the direction and agenda of the peace movement when they became progressively more involved in an all-male club, black women altered a cause that had previously lacked racial diversity when they were first granted admission to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1915. As Joyce Blackwell illustrates in this first study of collective black peace activism, the increased presence of black women in the WILPF over the next sixty years brought to the movement historical experiences shaped by societal racism.



WILPF members participated in the 2007 Martin Luther King Day march. Photo by Howard Watkins.

racial committee to deal with the dilemma of recruiting black women while attempting to maintain all of its white members.

Tracing the black activists' peace reform activities on an international level from World War I to the end of the Vietnam War, *No Peace Without Freedom* examines the links black activists established within the African American community as well as the connections they made with peoples of the black Diaspora and later with colonized people irrespective of race. The volume is complemented by eighteen illustrations.

Joyce Blackwell is the chair of the history department at Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Quote of the month:

"No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people, and as long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you might otherwise." - Marian Anderson

Our condolences to Bette Peterson, long time WILPF member, on the death of husband Bob Billings (April 8, 1921 - November 24, 2006). We've lost one of our heroes, but we remember him well for his kindness, his generous spirit, and his encouraging words. As chair of the CSUF English Department, he was my teacher and mentor. After I received my MA in English he encouraged me to teach freshman English, and we later shared an office. He never failed to give me encouragement and confidence. Robert Billings lived most of his first twenty-two years in the small New Hampshire town of Dover. He served in WWII and took part in the Normandy invasion. His interest in American Literature and History, especially military history, led him to eventually receive a PhD at Iowa State University. He taught at CSUF for more than 30 years, serving for 10 years as chairman.

He was a prolific writer including radio scripts, books, and many letters to "The Bee" on controversial political issues. The paperback edition of, *Task Force Lone Bandit*, is available from Poppy Lane Publishing Company, P.O. Box 5136, Fresno, CA 93755.

Cuba Shows us What is Possible

By Rose Ana Dueñas

They are perhaps one of the largest groups of young people from the United States to visit Cuba this year. They are Chicano, Mexican, Puerto Rican, African-American, Asian, and white, many from working-class families. Coming from nine U.S. states, the 48 members of the Venceremos Brigade traveled to Toronto, Canada to fly together to Cuba, publicly stating their intention of violating the U.S. ban on travel to the island, a component of the imperialist blockade that has been intensified by the Bush administration.

"I feel very strongly about the right to come here, because it's such an amazing place," said "brigadista" Priscilla Bassett, a 15-year-old high school student from New York. "I think it's despicable that we call ourselves a democracy and have this blockade."

The Venceremos ("We shall Overcome") Brigade was created in 1969 when radical students in the United States "decided to support Cuba's Revolution and travel to Cuba," explains Kathe Karlson, 57. A social worker at a New York City public high school, Karlson herself has been on the brigade nine times, one of 9,000 people — most of them young — who have gone to the island with the group.

THERE'S A REASON WHY OUR GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT US TO COME HERE

Of the 48 brigade members this year, about 30 were under 30 years old, and nine were 19 or younger. Some are politically active in the United States, like Melanie Willingham-Jaggers, 24, who works in youth development in California, says she first learned about the "VB" when she read Angela Davis' autobiography. "I feel that there is a legacy of internationalism; it is something Black revolutionaries have been doing for 40 years. And for Black people in the United States, it is one of the greatest crimes: we are taught we're not part of something bigger. I work with young people who have been locked up in prison, and I explain to them that (coming on the brigade) is a meaningful way of breaking the law. I'm traveling for them, too."



Venceremos Brigade crossing the bridge in Buffalo, New York in 2005

"There's a reason why our government doesn't want us to come here," the young woman adds. "Cuba shows us what's possible. And as long as capitalism and white supremacy rules in our country, things aren't going to change." During their two-week visit, the group traveled through several provinces with the help of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples. They weeded cornfields in the Camilo Cienfuegos City-School in Bartolome Masó, Granma province, in the shadows of the Sierra Maestra Mountains, working side-by-side with veteran combatants of the Revolutionary War and Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola to defeat apartheid. They learned about the work of the National Center for Sexual Education and met with Ricardo Alarcón, president of Parliament, along with members of the Pastors for Peace Friendshipment Caravan.

SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO OFAC'S SANCTIONS PROGRAMS

On previous occasions, brigadistas returning to the U.S. have received threatening letters from the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC),

the agency charged with enforcing U.S. trade and travel restrictions. Violators face the possibility of a \$10,000 fine and/or 10 years in prison. Although the courts at some point could try to enforce the Trading with the Enemy Act, a criminal offense, the travel challenges are currently civil offenses and thus do not carry jail time as a consequence, she explained.

When this year's brigade returned on July 17, they crossed from Toronto into Buffalo, New York, walking over the Peace Bridge, and holding demonstrations and press conferences before and afterward. They were searched and routinely questioned, but not harassed the way Pastors for Peace members were.

"Crossing the border is just the first step of the travel challenge," explains Bonnie Massey, 25, of New York. It is during this drawn-out, two-pronged, legally and

politically organized campaign that we expect to win; that is, to overturn the travel restrictions and eventually do away with the blockade."

Bienvenidos
37 CONTINGENTE
Brigada Venceremos
¡LIBERTAD PARA NUESTROS CINCO COMPATRIOTAS!

Friday, February 9 6 PM

Venceremos Brigade community report back will be held at the SEIU-UHW Office at 1279 Wishon Avenue in Fresno. This event is a great opportunity to learn more about what is going on in Cuba and find out how you might be able to go this summer. The purpose of this trip is cultural exchange, work and civil disobedience.

Friday, February 9 9 PM

Venceremos Brigade fundraiser will be held at Tokyo Gardens 1711 Fulton St. Please come out and support the Venceremos Brigade in giving local residents the opportunity to extend our international solidarity by visiting Cuba.

Jacob M. Weisberg Attorney at Law

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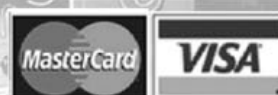
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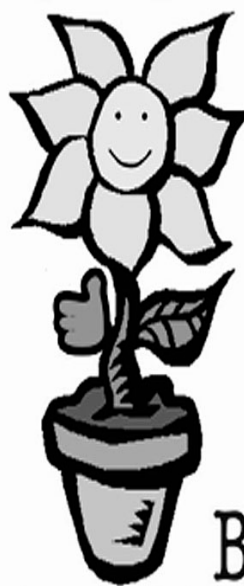
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PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, February 1 • 7:30 PM

The Fresno Poet's Association presents Philip Levine at the Fresno Art Museum, 2233 N First. For more information see www.fresnopoets.org for further information or call 226-1528.

Friday, February 2 • 5:15 PM

Short films regarding racial profiling. Sponsored by Black Students United, Dr. Malik Simba (Professor in Depts. of History and Africana Studies), and Francine Oputa (Director of the Central Valley Cultural Heritage Institute)

Cineculture continues to be a film series provided as a service to the Fresno State campus students, faculty, and staff at no charge. However, anyone interested in taking Cineculture for academic credit for the Fall semester, please sign up through Continuing and Global Education: tel. 278-0333. For further info., contact Dr. Denise Blum dblum@csufresno.edu. This film will be shown in McLane 121 on the CSUF campus.

Friday, February 2 • 5:30 PM

Introduction to Meditation at the Politi Branch Library (Fruit and Dakota), 431-6450. Learn the basics of meditation with an instructor from the Fig Garden Yoga Studio.

Friday, February 2 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents: Julia Reimer and Shelly Robertson and a small drama troupe from Fresno Pacific University will bring an evening of performance art, poetry, and readings.

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

Thursday, February 8

Reception 4:30 - 6 PM • Program: 5:00 PM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Art Exhibit, Essay and Speech Winners Reception. ADMISSION IS FREE. Fresno County Office of Education 1111 Van Ness Ave., Fresno. Artwork created and displayed by students from Fresno Unified, Clovis Unified and other Fresno County School Districts at the museum on Tuesday, January 30, 2007 through Sunday, February 21, 2007. Contact: Thomas Russell (559) 327-9353 or Shirley Hargis (559) 265-3060.

Thursday, February 8 • 7 PM

With the media only presenting a particular aspect of a topic, it behooves us to become pro-active and educate ourselves. At present Agribusiness uses a greater portion of water. However, our government officials are not protecting us. Agribusiness is allowed to contaminate the water with their processes. The Judicial system allows them to postpone reduction of pollutants. This creates poor air and water quality. Chris Eacock works for the Bureau of Reclamation and will teach us the basics of water. California has a huge system and it is interconnected. Both Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom co-sponsor this free event. The presentation will take place at the UU Church of Fresno, 4144 North Millbrook Avenue, 1/2 block south of Ashlan. It is open to the public. Child care provided upon request. Information: Lydia Flores 435-7360

Thursday February 8 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Steve Ono's Jazz Workshop & Jam.\$5.-cover. 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Friday, February 9 • 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "Family Law" at the Tower Theatre. This tender-hearted comedy about parenting is Argentina's official entry for the Academy Award's Best Foreign Language Film. In Spanish, with English subtitles. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., WineStyles in Fig Garden Village, and at the door, for \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to www.fresnofilmworks.org

Friday, February 9 • 6 PM

Venceremos Brigade community report back will be held at the SEIU-UHW Office at 1279 Wishon Avenue in Fresno. This event is a great opportunity to learn more about what is going on in Cuba and find out how you might be able to go this summer. See page 20 for more information about the Venceremos Brigade.

Friday, February 9 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents: Speaker: Tesfa

Dallelew, co-director of Mennonite Central Committee's Africa Section. Topic: HIV/AIDS – The violence of this pandemic has devastated peoples lives, communities and degraded the quality of life. Unless there is world community's cooperation, Africa is not able to overcome this pandemic. He will also speak about MCC work in Africa in peace making and peace education.

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

Friday, February 9 • 9 PM

Venceremos Brigade fundraiser will be held at Tokyo Gardens 1711 Fulton St. Come out and support the Venceremos Brigade in giving local residents the opportunity to extend our international solidarity by visiting Cuba. See page 20 for more information about the Venceremos Brigade.

Saturday, February 10 • 9:30 AM

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence board meeting and annual retreat will be held at Margaret Hudson Big Barn and Garden, 4247 N. Thorne. Board Meeting will be from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon; Potluck at 12 noon -1 p.m.; Retreat at 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. At the retreat we will be talking briefly about programs for the coming year, but most of the time will be spent on a discussion about "Coming out for peace: facing up to our reluctance to show the depths of what we truly believe to our family, neighbors and coworkers." Call 237-3223 for more information and directions to Margaret's if you need them. The public is invited to attend.

Saturday, February 10 • 3:30 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC meets at the Center for Non Violence, 1584 North Van Ness at Mc Kinley. The newly elected officers will be introduced. They are listed on our CVPPAC website. Time will be allowed to discuss the local issues more thoroughly – Housing, the Nuclear Plant, Local Prisons, and Air Quality. Where shall we place our efforts? More and more it is important that we have informed and committed members to make a difference. CVPPAC invites Margaret Mims to the meeting to discuss the measure she and Reynolds are proposing on the ballot. For more information www.cvppac.org or Lydia Flores 435-7360.

Wednesday, February 14 • 12 noon and 6:30 PM

The film "Who Killed the Electric Car?" will be shown. The 12 noon showing will be at Fresno Center for Non-violence, 1584 N. Van Ness; the 6:30 p.m. showing will be at the Fresno Central Library, 2420 Mariposa Street (488-3195) (doors opening at 6 p.m.)

Dr. John Dunning, one of the inventors of the electric car worked with General Motors for 30 years, will be introducing the film both at mid-day and in the evening. He will lead a discussion after the evening showing. The film is 93 minutes long. Call 237-3223 for more information.

This story couldn't be more relevant or important. The foremost goal in making this movie was to educate and enlighten audiences with the story of this car, its place in history and in the larger story of our car culture and how it enables our continuing addiction to foreign oil. This is an important film with an important message that not only calls to task the officials who squelched the Zero Emission Vehicle mandate, but all of the other accomplices, government, the car companies, Big Oil, even Eco-darling Hydrogen as well as consumers, who turned their backs on the car and embrace embracing instead the SUV. The documentary investigates the death and resurrection of the electric car, as well as the role of renewable energy and sustainable living in our country's future; issues which affect everyone from progressive liberals to the neo-conservative right.

Thursday, February 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the March, 2007 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Thursday, February 15 • 12 Noon - 1 PM

For Justice. Against War. Please join us for a silent vigil Protesting all forms of militarism! CSUF Free Speech Area, Speakers' Platform. Wear black, bring a sign, women only. Co-sponsored by: Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition, POWER & WILPF, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. Please call 278-4593 for more information.

Thursday February 15 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Inner Ear Poetry Jam.

\$5.-cover. 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Friday, February 16 • 5:15 PM

Life and Debt
Stephanie Black. 2001. Jamaica/USA. 80 min. Spanish w/ English subtitles. This film will be shown in McLane 121 on the CSUF campus. Set to a beguiling reggae beat, Life and Debt takes as its subject Jamaica's economic decline in the 20th century. The story has reverberations in the plight of other third-world nations blindsided by globalization, like Ghana and Haiti. After England granted Jamaica independence in 1962, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) stepped in with a series of loans. These loans came with strings attached—the kind that would eventually plunge the country \$7 billion into debt, stranded without the resources to dig themselves out. The soundtrack features some of the "imports" with which this island nation remains mostly closely associated: Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, and Mutabaruka, who performs the title track. Audience Award at the Prague One World Film Festival 2002. Post-screening discussion facilitated by Tanya Crabb (CSUF staff, University Outreach Services).

Saturday February 17 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Songbirds & Spoken Word a women's collaborative. \$5.-cover 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 www.fullcirclebrewing.com

Tuesday, February 20 • 4 PM

The Homelessness Marathon is broadcast nationwide from Fresno California. For more information see: <http://www.homelessnessmarathon.org/>. See page 3 for more information.

Friday, February 23 • 5:15 PM

Surviving Abyssinia
Liz Jackson. 2000. Ethiopia. 57 min, No Rating.This film will be shown in McLane 121 on the CSUF campus. The film chronicles life in Ethiopia and the tumultuous events following years of war and revolution, especially its impact on women. Jackson spent a year in Ethiopia, researching, interviewing, and filming, under extraordinary conditions. Surviving Abyssinia was named Best Documentary Film at the Hollywood Black Film Festival 2000. Post-screening discussion by Dr. Elizabeth Jackson (film director/TV & video producer/professor from CSU Bakersfield).

Saturday, February 24 • 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM

The Third Annual Unitarian Universalist legislative Ministry Conference will be held for the first time in Fresno at the UU Church of Fresno, 4144 North Millbrook Avenue, ½ block south of Ashland. The goal of the conference is to have fun, educate, and empower us to make a difference in our world. The main topics will be a global warming solutions panel, how to interact more effectively with the media , as well as marriage equality, health care issues and clean money. The special presenters are Helen Acosta, professor of Communications, Bakerfield; Jessica Rothhaar, Health Access California; Mike Becker and Mark Soma PHD, Fresno State Political science and environmental policy; Tina Stidman, UULM Cottage Conversation Trainer and Rev. Lindi Ramsden, Executive Director, UU Legislative Ministry, CA. The Sierra Nevada Alliance has agreed to come. There is a fee of \$20.00 (payable to UULM Action Network) to include the cost of lunch and the morning snack. This event is open to the public. Space is limited on a first come, first serve basis. Register online at www.uulmca.org or mail to 717 K St #514, SAC, CA 95814. Register by Monday, February 19, 2007. More information: Carolyn Nolan at 673-4659

March 1 - 10

Rogue Performance Festival 2007. For more information see: <http://roguefestival.com/>

Friday, March 2 • 5:15 PM

Peace x Peace
dirs. Lisa Hepner and Patricia Smith Melton. 2003. Afghanistan, Burundi, the United States, Argentina, and Bosnia. 86 min. No rating. This film will be shown in McLane 121 on the CSUF campus.In the past, soldiers constituted most of war casualties, but in today's conflicts, civilians comprise 90 percent of war casualties, the majority of whom are women and children. This documentary profiles women peace builders in places of conflict. For one year an all-women camera crew followed women in action in Afghanistan, Burundi, the United States, Argentina, and Bosnia. The film includes the devastating violence each country suffered, but it is suprisingly and effectively hopeful.Post-screening discussion: Jan Slagter (Professor, Women's Studies Program)

March 3 - 10
A Yellow Rose From Texas, a play written & directed by Agustín Lira, produced by Patricia Wells Solórzano.

Labor organizer and Civil rights leader Emma Tenayuca helped Mexicans achieve a sense of unparalleled confidence and group pride as racial minorities in the 1930s. Her legacy is that she challenge an important enterprise, the power structure of San Antonio city government, called for equal pay for equal work during a difficult time of wage differentials - the Depression era, an she articulate the integral issue of Mexican American identity.

Writer/ director Agustín Lira an producer Patricia Wells tell Emma's story through drama, music and narrative. Join us as we, the actors & musicians of 'Teatro Inmigrante - Immigrant Theater', take you through a journey about the life of an extraordinary woman: a firebrand for social justice, Emma Tenayuca defended the people and community that she loved, against all odds and all enemies.

Saturday, March 3 • 6 PM
Big Red Church (1st Congregational) 2131 N Van Ness Blvd

Sunday, March 4 • 4 PM
Unitarian Universalist Church at 4144 N Millbrook

Friday, March 9 • 6 PM
Big Red Church (1st Congregational) 2131 N Van Ness Blvd

Saturday, March 10 • 6 PM
Big Red Church (1st Congregational) 2131 N Van Ness Blvd

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 in Horsley Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno. 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

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 liza.apper@sbcw.org ; or visit their Web site: 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

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 it 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 . 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 or visit the officialNB website 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

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.

1st Sunday of every month • 3 - 5 PM
Fresno Stonewall Democrats meeting at Java Wava, 1940 North Echo across from Fresno High is open to the public. Stonewall Democrats' focus is on social and political issues of interest to progressives in general and progressive and liberal Democrats in particular. For more information contact Jay Hubbell at (559) 292-4905, e-mail fresnostonewall@mangen.com , or visit the Web site www.mangen.com/stonewall/

3rd Sunday of every month • 10 AM-12 Noon
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 meditation followed by discussion and light refreshments. Call Veena Kapoor, (559) 435-2212, for more information.

3rd Sunday of every month • 1 PM
Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meet in Room 1 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. For info visit their Web site at www.fresno.humanists.net

2nd Monday of every month • 1 PM
The Living Wage Committee will meet at the SEIU 250 office, 1279 N Wishon. For further information see: www.livingwage-fresno.org

3rd Monday of every Month • 6:30 PM
California Prison Moratorium Project meeting. Call for meeting location. Everyone is invited to attend this meeting. The discussion "Uncaging the Valley" mobilizing a valley wide coalition an exclusive valley focused project. Potluck is encouraged but not required. Upcoming, speakers from the anti prison movement are being scheduled. Call Deb Reyes at 559-916-4370 for more info.

3rd Tuesday of every month • 7 PM
The Fresno Free College Foundation (owner and operator of KFCF 88.1 FM) Board of Directors meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno. The public is invited. For more information call (559) 233-2221, e-mail kfcf@kfcf.org , or visit 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 or Jay Hubbell, Secretary - 292-4905 / jayhubbell@comcast.net for more information.

1st Wednesday of every month • 7:30 PM
Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno.

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).

1st Thursday of every month • ART HOP
For more nformation contact Maria Franco at mfranco@fresnoarts.org or call (559) 237- 9734.

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 for more information.

2nd Thursday 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

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.

4th Thursday of every month • 7 PM
FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meeting. For more information e-mail frescamp@sbcglobal.net or call (559) 227-6134.

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

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 • 9:30 AM
Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley meets at Denny's Restaurant at Abby and Divisidero. Call 439-8140 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 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.



QUEER EYE

Of Fresno's Christmas Tree and of Christmas Tree Lane

by Dan Waterhouse

My boyfriend and I invaded Fresno mayor Alan Autry's Christianist political event thinly disguised as the lighting of Fresno's official Christmas tree in early December and gleefully created a stomach-churning "moment" for Bubba. I expect he'll view our appearance at the event and my comments here as another "liberal plot" directed specifically against him as he does the homeless lawsuit or, I'm sure, Rev. Floyd Harris' very public comments that "the Ku Klux Klan have taken off their white sheets and put on blue suits" to march in Fresno's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. walk.

Before he lit what he claimed to be a \$100,000 tree, Autry addressed the crowd of roughly 1,000 people. Almost immediately, he brought up the "O'Reilly Factor"—created mythical "War on Christmas," saying "there are people who feel this tree or this event should not be" at City Hall, adding "while separation of Church and State is great, God should never be separated from State." As Autry spoke, murmurs of "you're right Brother!" and "those f—king liberals!" could be heard coming from the crowd.

Given that Bubba considers himself "blacker" than Rev. Harris, it must follow he thinks he's queerer than I am!

County planning commissioner Sarah Woolf created quite a stir when she posited that the historic Christmas Tree Lane event was taking the neighborhood down a path to commercialism. Woolf made the comment at a late November commission hearing. An Old Fig Garden resident wanted to expand her daycare operation and the Fig Garden Homeowners Association expressed some worries about it. "I found the Association's opposition to the daycare expansion really inappropriate—that's what prompted the comment," Woolf said.

The Homeowners Association found Woolf's comment to be a mite over the top. "The Homeowners Association was not opposed to the daycare," according to vice president Tony Pings. "We were concerned about traffic safety and parking. We (the Homeowners Association board) are probably the largest source of

clients; we refer people all the time."

Pings continued, "Fresno has little to identify itself as a community. The Lane does that. Where else in Fresno do 20 thousand people come together (including many members of Fresno's queer community!), to celebrate the holiday season?" He added that the Lane is organized by volunteers and is not for profit. It's financed entirely by donations. Pings said if it was for profit, the Lane could no longer exist. "If the Lane is seen as a commercial enterprise, the costs would triple."

Pings explained the vendors that were trying to sell stuff during this season's event "were illegal. Vendors aren't allowed because we're not for profit and because of safety issues with them dodging in and out of traffic."

I asked him what would happen if the planning commission attempted to use the Lane event to justify zone changes to allow commercial development in the heart of Old Fig Garden. He replied, "if that came to pass, the Lane would shut down. In addition, we support the many non-profits that hold fundraising events in the neighborhood. Those events would also have to end."

Pings explained, "Old Fig Garden is one of the two largest continuous residential neighborhoods in the United States (the area is roughly two miles in length and a mile wide). Its charm is also one of its dangers. Most of the parcels are large enough that a viable commercial development could be sited on just one, unlike in the city where it commonly takes two or more parcels."

Freedom to Marry

Freedom to Marry Panel & Community discussion "Putting a Face on the Issue: Then & Now," is being sponsored by Central California Alliance (CCA) an LGBT not for profit group. This event will be held Saturday, February 10 from 6 - 9 PM and is being hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Go to www.ccafresno.org for more information.

The panel will include representatives from many community groups from Fresno and throughout California and they will be discussing the varied aspects of marriage equality. Some of the groups represented will be FORGE which will discuss the relevance of marriage for same sex senior couples and Shelly & Ellen will be sharing how it felt to be married the first day of the weddings at San Francisco city hall and then later have them invalidated by the courts; Belinda (from Wales) and her partner Wendy from Out 4 Immigration will discuss the ramifications of immigration issues for bi-

national same sex couples; Blue Riggs will be discussing the issues facing transgender individuals and marriage; other issues to be addressed are those of gay soldiers and how the denial of marriage, and one soldier's coming out story changed her military career; and Laura will share her experiences growing up gay in the hispanic culture both in Mexico and the US.

Dolores from Spectrum will be discussing issues related to race and discrimination and her experiences in marrying couples at San Francisco city hall, many panelists will discuss the issues surrounding children and same sex marriage; Ellis Vance will be representing Lambda Letters Project, and Rev Carroll will be there to discuss the UU churches position on supporting the union of same sex couples. We plan to have the panelists share their perspectives and then open this up for a community discussion.

The panelists are dedicated grassroots activists, many involved in multiple social justice groups on varying issues. Nine of the panelists traveled on, helped organize, and raised over \$100,000 to fight for their rights

and to sponsor the 2004 Marriage Equality National Caravan that traveled from San Francisco to Washington DC, carrying 44 Freedom Riders, for 8 days, stopping in many cities from San Francisco, Sacramento, Reno, Laramie, Cheyenne, Denver, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Columbus, Akron, OH, Pittsburgh and onto Washington, DC to hold protests, panels and other events. CSPAN covered their National Marriage Rally in DC on Oct 11, 2004. It was a time when the country was in an intense debate over same sex marriage, something very personal and intimate to each of them, the Constitutional Amendment, and all of it concerned their rights... "Then & Now". These folks were in the thick of it and not backing down for a minute! See their photos and hear their stories.

www.ccafresno.org
www.uulmca.org/main.html
www.uufresno.org
www.out4Immigration.org
www.lambdaletters.org
www.spectrummarin.org

Poetry Corner

Untitled
by Myava Escamilla

Are we destined to end in Fire or Ice? Will
desire or hatred fuel our demise?

In the tepid water, my overcooked noodles
grew fat and tasteless. I emptied the pasty
water and threw the useless noodles away.

If I had to perish thrice, I think I know too
much of apathy to say that neither are
needed to suffice

To what boiling point is it necessary to
properly motive a noodle? The boiling point,
that catalyst of change, is easily calculated by
chefs but not be chiefs of nations.

A MEMORY IS FOREVER
by Diane Corbin

I've seen you wallking
down the sidewalk
mornings when the air
is sharp and blows
your well-worn sweater
away from your
body making you feel
as though it
will take flight

You shiver some
in early morning frost
and walk a little faster,
causing rhythmic
clicking sounds from
your worn-out shopping cart.
You push it fast and faster
and carry it full of
bags and cans and bottles
you hope to trade
for food and perhaps
one small piece of
broken chocolate
candy.

A child's picture, its frame
half-buried in a bunch
of plastic bags, shows
a little girl shyly
smiling, hiding the
toothless hole between her teeth, the one
the tooth fairy
never paid for.

The little girl is grown
and gone from you now
but still you can close
your eyes and feel again
the little arms around
your neck, the goodbye kiss.
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The Urgent Task of Media Reform

A speech by Bill Moyers

The veteran broadcast journalist Bill Moyers spoke on Friday before 3,500 at the opening of the National Conference on Media Reform in Memphis. He announced his return to the airwaves and outlined his vision of media reform. “As ownership gets more and more concentrated, fewer and fewer independent sources of information have survived in the marketplace; and those few significant alternatives that do survive, such as PBS and NPR, are under growing financial and political pressure to reduce critical news content and to shift their focus in a mainstream direction, which means being more attentive to establishment views than to the bleak realities of powerlessness that shape the lives of ordinary people.”

Thirty five hundred activists, journalists and concerned citizens gathered in Memphis, Tennessee this weekend for the third National Conference on Media Reform. Speakers called for the preservation of a free and open Internet, the end of media consolidation and a more democratic and diverse media system.

Among those who spoke were Helen Thomas, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Phil Donahue and Jane Fonda, to name a few.

But it was veteran journalist Bill Moyers who opened the conference on Friday with a stirring address. A longtime journalist, Bill Moyers has produced many groundbreaking series on public television over the years. He is the winner of more than 30 Emmy Awards and the author of three best-selling books.

BILL MOYERS: Benjamin Franklin once said, “Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for dinner.”

“Liberty,” he said, “is a well-armed lamb, contesting the vote.”

My fellow lambs — it’s good to be in Memphis and find you well-armed with passion for democracy, readiness for action, and courage for the next round in the fight for a free and independent press in America. I salute the conviction that brought you here. I cherish the spirit that fills this hall, and the comradeship that we share here. All too often, the greatest obstacle to reform is the reform movement itself. Factions rise, fences are erected, jealousies mount, and the cause all of us believe in is lost in the shattered fragments of what once was a clear and compelling vision.

Reformers, in fact, often remind me of Baptists. I speak as a Baptist. I know whereof I speak. One of my favorite stories is of the fellow who was about to jump off a bridge, when another fellow ran up to him crying, “Stop, stop, don’t do it.”

The man on the bridge looks down and asks, “Why not?”

“Well, there’s much to live for.”

“What for?”

“Well, your faith. Your religion.”

“Yes?”

“Are you religious?”

“Yes.”

“Me, too. Christian or Buddhist?”

“Christian.”

“Me, too. Are you Catholic or Protestant?”

“Protestant.”

“Me, too. Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian?”
“Baptist.”

“Me, too. Are you Baptist Church of God or Baptist Church of the Savior?”

“Baptist Church of God.”

“Me, too. Are you Original Baptist Church of God or Reformed Baptist Church of God?”



So if we need to know what is happening, and Big Media won’t tell us; if we need to know why it matters, and Big Media won’t tell us; if we need to know what to do about it, and Big Media won’t tell us ... we have to tell the story ourselves.

“Reformed Baptist Church of God.”

“Me, too. Are you Reformed Baptist Church of God Reformation of 1879, or Reform Baptist Church of God Reformation of 1917?”

“1917.”

Whereupon, the second fellow turned red in the face and yelled, “Die, you heretic scum,” and pushed him off the bridge.

Doesn’t that sound like a reform movement? But by avoiding contentious factionalism, you have created a strong movement. And I will confess to you that I was skeptical when Bob McChesney and John Nichols first raised with me the issue of media consolidation a few years ago. I was sympathetic, but skeptical. The challenge of actually doing something about this issue beyond simply bemoaning its impact on democracy was daunting. How could we hope to come up with an effective response to any measurable force? It seemed inexorable, because all over the previous decades, a series of megamedia mergers have swept the country, each deal bigger than the last. The lobby representing the broadcast, cable, and newspapers industry was extremely powerful, with an iron grip on lawmakers and regulators alike.

Both parties bowed to their will, when the Republican congress passed and President Clinton signed the Telecommunications Act of 1996. That monstrous assault on democracy, with malignant consequences for journalism, was nothing but a welfare giveaway to the largest, richest, and most powerful media conglomerations in the world. Goliaths, whose handful of owners controlled, commodified, and monetized everyone and everything in sight. Call it “the plantation mentality.”

That’s what struck me as I flew into Memphis for this gathering. Even in 1968, the Civil Rights Movement was still battling the plantation mentality, based on race, gender, and power, that permeated Southern culture long before, and even after the ground-breaking legislation of the 1960s.

When Martin Luther King came to Memphis to join the strike of garbage workers in 1968, the cry from every striker’s heart, “I am a man,” voiced the long-suppressed outrage of people whose rights were still being trampled by an ownership class that had arranged the world for its own benefit. The plantation mentality is a phenom-

enon deeply insinuated in the American experience early on, and it has permeated and corrupted our course as a nation.

The journalist of the American Revolution, Thomas Payne, envisioned the new republic as a community of occupations, prospering by the aid with which each receives from the other and from the whole. But that vision was repeatedly betrayed, so that less than a century after Thomas Payne’s death, Theodore Roosevelt, bolting a Republican Party, whose bosses had stolen the nomination from him, declared, “It is not to be wondered at, that our opponents have been very bitter, for the lineup in this crisis is one that cuts deep to the foundations of democracy.”

“Our democracy,” he said, “is now put to a vital test, for the conflict is between human rights on the one side, and on the other, special privilege asserted as property rights. The parting of the ways has come.”

Today, a hundred years after Teddy Roosevelt’s death, those words ring just as true. America is socially divided and politically benighted. Inequality and poverty grow steadily along with risk and debt. Too many working families cannot make ends

meet with two people working, let alone if one stays home to care for children or aging parents. Young people without privilege and wealth, struggle to get a footing. Seniors enjoy less security for a lifetime’s work. We are racially segregated today in every meaningful sense, except for the letter of the law. And the survivors of segregation and immigration toil for pennies on the dollar, compared to those they serve.

None of this is accidental. Nobel laureate economist, Robert Solow, not known for extreme political statements, characterizes what is happening as “nothing less than elite plunder,” the redistribution of wealth in favor of the wealthy, and the power in favor of the powerful. In fact, nearly all the wealth America created over the past 25 years has been captured by the top 20% of households, and most of the gains went to the wealthiest. The top 1% of households captured more than 50% of all the gains in financial wealth, and these households now hold more than twice the share their predecessors held on the eve of the American revolution.

The anti-Federalist warning that government naturally works to fortify the conspiracies of the rich, proved prophetic. It’s the truth today, and America confronts a choice between two fundamentally different economic visions. As Norman Garfinkel writes in his marvelous new book, *The American Dream vs. the Gospel of Wealth*, the historic vision of the American dream is that continuing economic growth and political stability can be achieved by supporting income growth and economic security of middle-class families, without restricting the ability of successful business men to gain wealth.

The counter-belief is that providing maximum financial rewards to the most successful is the way to maintain high economic growth. The choice cannot be avoided. What kind of economy do we seek, and what kind of nation do we wish to be? Do we want to be a country in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, or do we want a country committed to an economy that provides for the common good, offers upward mobility, supports a middle class standard of living, and provides generous opportunities for all?

In Garfinkel’s book, “When,” Garfinkel says, “the richest nation in the world has to borrow hundreds of billions of dollars to pay its bill, when its middle class citizens sit on a mountain of debt to maintain their living standards, when the nation’s economy has difficulty producing secure jobs, or enough jobs of any kind, something is amiss.”

You bet something is amiss, and it goes to the core of why we are here in Memphis. For this conference is about a force, the media, that cuts deep to the foundation of democracy. When Teddy Roosevelt dissected what he called “the real masters of the reactionary

forces” in his time, he concluded that indirectly or directly, they control the majority of the great newspapers that are against us. Those newspapers, the dominant media of the day, choked — his words — the channels of the information ordinary people needed to understand what was being done to them.

And today, two basic pillars of American society, shared economic prosperity and a public sector capable of serving the common good, are crumbling. The third pillar of American democracy, an independent press, is under sustained attack, and the channels of information are choked. A few huge corporations now dominate the media landscape in America. Almost all the networks carried by most cable systems are owned by one of the major media common conglomerates. Two thirds of today’s newspapers are monopolies.

As ownership gets more and more concentrated, fewer and fewer independent sources of information have survived in the marketplace; and those few significant alternatives that do survive, such as PBS and NPR, are under growing financial and political pressure to reduce critical news content and to shift their focus in a mainstream direction, which means being more attentive to establishment views than to the bleak realities of powerlessness that shape the lives of ordinary people. What does today’s media system mean for the notion of an informed public cherished by democratic theory? Quite literally, it means that virtually everything the average person sees or hears outside of her own personal communications, is determined by the interests of private, unaccountable executives and investors whose primary goal is increasing profits and raising the country’s share price. More insidiously, this small group of elites determine what ordinary people do not see or hear. In-depth coverage of anything, let alone the problems real people face day to day, is as scarce as sex, violence, and voyeurism are pervasive.

Successful business model or not, by democratic standards, this is censorship of knowledge by monopolization of the means of information. In its current form, which Barry Diller happily describes as “oligopoly,” media growth has one clear consequence. There is more information and easier access to it, but it’s more narrow and homogenous in content and perspective, so that what we see from the couch is overwhelmingly a view from the top. The pioneering communications scholar, Mary Edelman, wrote that opinions about public policy do not spring immaculately or automatically into people’s minds. They are always placed there by the interpretations of those who most consistently get their claims and manufactured cues publicized widely. For years, the media marketplace for opinions about public policy has been dominated by a highly disciplined, thoroughly networked, ideological noise machine, to use David Brock’s term. Permeated with slogans concocted by big corporations, their lobbyists, and their think tank subsidiaries, public discourse has effectively changed the meaning of American values. Day after day, the ideals of fairness and liberty and mutual responsibility have been stripped of their essential dignity and meaning in people’s lives. Day after day, the egalitarian creed of our Declaration of Independence is trampled underfoot by hired experts and sloganeers, who speak of the “death tax,” “the ownership society,” “the culture of life,” “the liberal assault on God and family,” “compassionate conservatism,” “weak on terrorism,” “the end of history,” “the clash of civilizations,” “no child left behind.” They have even managed to turn the escalation of a failed war into a “surge,” as if it were a current of electricity through a wire, instead of blood spurting from the ruptured vein of a soldier.

The Orwellian filigree of a public sphere in which language conceals reality, and the pursuit of personal gain and partisan power is wrapped in rhetoric that turns truth to lies, and lies to truth, so it is that limited government has little to do with the Constitution or local economy anymore. Now it means corporate domination and the shifting of risk from government and business to struggling families and workers. Family values now mean imposing a sectarian definition of the family on everyone else. Religious freedom now means majoritarianism and public benefits for organized religion without any public burdens. And patriotism has come to mean blind support for failed leaders.

It’s what happens when an interlocking media system filters through commercial values or ideology, the information and moral viewpoints people consume in their daily lives. And by no stretch of the imagination can we say today that the dominant institutions of our media are guardians of democracy.

Despite the profusion of new information platforms on cable, on the Internet, on radio, blogs, podcasts, YouTube, and MySpace, among others, the resources for solid, original journalistic work, both investigative and interpretative, are contracting, rather than expanding.

I’m an old-fashioned — I’m a foggy at this, I guess, a hang-over from my days as a cub reporter and a newspaper publisher. But I agree with Michael Schudson, one of the leading scholars of communication in America, who writes in the current *Columbia Journalism Review* that while all media matter, some matter more than others. And for the sake of democracy, print still counts most, especially print that devotes resources to gathering news.

“Network TV matters,” he said. “Cable TV matters,” he said.

But when it comes to original investigation and reporting, newspapers are overwhelmingly the most important media.

But newspapers are purposely dumbing-down, “driven down,” says Schudson, by Wall Street, whose collective devotion to an informed citizenry is nil and seems determined to eviscerate those papers.

Worrying about the loss of real news is not a romantic cliché of journalism. It’s been verified by history. From the days of royal absolutism to the present, the control of information and knowledge had been the first line of defense for failed regimes facing democratic unrest. The suppression of parliamentary dissent during Charles I’s eleven years of tyranny in England rested largely on government censorship, operating through strict licensing laws for the publication of books.

The Federalist infamous Sedition Act of 1798 in this country, likewise, sought to quell republican insurgency by making it a crime to publish false, scandalous, and malicious writing about the government or its officials. In those days, our governing bodies tried to squelch journalistic information with the blunt instruments of the law: padlocks for the presses and jail cells for outspoken editors and writers. Over time, with spectacular war time exceptions, the courts and the Constitution have struck those weapons out of their hand.

But now they have found new methods in the name of national security and even broader claims of executive privilege. The number of documents stamped “Top Secret,” “Secret,” or “Confidential” has accelerated dramatically since 2001, including many formerly accessible documents which are now reclassified as “Secret.” Vice President Cheney’s office refuses to disclose, in fact, what it is classifying. Even their secrecy is being kept a secret. Beyond what is officially labeled

“Secret” or “privileged” information, there hovers on

“Big Media is Ravenous. It Never Gets Enough. Always Wants More. And it Will Stop at Nothing to Get It. These Conglomerates are an Empire, and they are Imperial.”

the plantation a culture of selective official news implementation, working through favored media insiders to advance political agendas by leak and innuendo and spin, by outright propaganda mechanisms, such as the mis-named public information offices that churn out blizzards of factually selective releases on a daily basis, and even by directly paying pundits and journalists to write on subjects of mutual interest.

They needn’t have wasted the money. As we saw in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, the plantation mentality that governs Washington turned the press corps into sitting ducks for the war party, for government, and neoconservative propaganda and manipulation. There were notable exceptions, Knight Ridder’s bureau, for example, but on the whole, all high-ranking officials had to do was say it, and the press repeated it until it became gospel. The height of myopia came with

the admission — or was it bragging? — by one of the beltway’s most prominent anchors that his responsibility is to provide officials a forum to be heard, what they say more newsworthy than what they do.

The watchdog group FAIR found that during the three weeks leading up to the invasion, only 3% of U.S. sources on the evening news of ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox, and PBS expressed skeptical opinions of the impending war, even though a quarter of the American people were against it. Not surprisingly, two years after 911, almost 70% of the public still thought it likely that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the terrorist attacks of that day.

One Indiana school teacher told the *Washington Post*, “From what we’ve heard from the media, it seems what they feel is that Saddam and the whole al-Qaeda thing are connected.” Much to the advantage of the Bush administration, a large majority of the public shared this erroneous view during the build-up to the war, a propaganda feat that Saddam himself would have envied. It is absolutely — I’m doing a documentary to air this spring called *Buying the War* on this period, leading up to the invasion — it is absolutely stunning, frightening how the major media organizations were willing, even solicitous, hand puppets of a state propaganda campaign, cheered on by the partisan ideological press to go to war.

But there are many other ways the plantation mentality keeps the American people from confronting reality. Take the staggering growth of money in politics. Compared to the magnitude of the problem, what the average person knows about how money determines policy is negligible. In fact, in the abstract, the polls tell us, most people generally assume that money controls our political system. But people will rarely act on something they understand only in the abstract. It took a constant stream of images — water hoses, and dogs and churches ablaze — for the public at large finally to understand what was happening to black people in the south. It took repeated scenes of destruction in Vietnam before the majority of Americans saw how we were destroying the country in order to save it. And it took repeated crime scene images to maintain public support for many policing and sentencing policies.

Likewise, people have to see how money and politics actually worked and concretely grasped the consequences for their pocketbooks and their lives before they will act. But while media organizations supply a lot of news and commentary, they tell us almost nothing about who really wags the system and how.

When I watch one of those faux debates on a Washington public affairs show, with one politician saying, “This is a bad bill,” and the other politician saying, “This is a good bill,” I yearn to see the smiling, nodding, beltway anchor suddenly interrupt and insist, “Good bill or bad bill, this is a bought bill. Now, let’s cut to the chase. Whose financial interests are you advancing with this bill?”

Then there’s the social cost of free trade. For over a decade, free trade has hovered over the political system like a biblical commandment striking down anything: trade unions, the environment, indigenous rights, even the constitutional standing of our own laws passed by our elected representative that gets in the way of unbridled greed. The broader negative consequences of this agenda, increasingly well-documented by scholars, gets virtually no attention in the dominant media. Instead of reality, we get optimistic, multicultural scenarios of coordinated global growth. And instead of substantive debate we get a stark formulated choice between free trade to help the world and gloomy-sounding protectionism that will set everyone back.

The degree to which this has become a purely ideological debate, devoid of any factual basis that people can weigh the gains and losses is reflected in Thomas Friedman’s astonishing claim, stated not long ago in a television interview, that he endorsed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) without even reading it. That is simply because it stood for “free trade.”

We have reached the stage when the Poo-bahs of punditry have only to declare that “the world is flat,”

for everyone to agree it is, without going to the edge and looking over themselves. It's called reporting.

I think what's happened is not indifference or laziness or incompetence, but the fact that most journalists on the plantation have so internalized conventional wisdom that they simply accept that the system is working as it should. That documentary I told you about, *Buying the War*, I can't tell you again how many reporters have told me that it just never occurred to them that high officials would manipulate intelligence in order to go to war. Hello?

Similarly, the question of whether or not our economic system is truly just, is off the table for investigation and discussion, so that alternative ideas, alternative critiques, alternative visions never get a hearing. And these are but a few of the realities that are obscured. What about this growing inequality? What about the resegregation of our public schools? What about the devastating onward march of environmental deregulation, all examples of what happens when independent sources of knowledge and analysis are so few and far between on the plantation?

So if we need to know what is happening, and big media won't tell us; if we need to know why it matters, and big media won't tell us; if we need to know what to do about it, and big media won't tell us, it's clear what we have to do. We have to tell the story ourselves. And this is what the plantation owners feared most of all. Over all those decades here in the South, when they used human beings as chattel, and quoted scripture to justify it, property rights over human rights was God's way, they secretly lived in fear that one day, instead of saying, "Yes, Massa," those gaunt, weary, sweat-soaked field hands, bending low over the cotton under the burning sun, would suddenly stand up straight, look around, see their sweltering and stooping kin and say, "This ain't the product of intelligent design. The boss man in the big house has been lying to me. Something is wrong with this system." This is the moment freedom begins, the moment you realize someone else has been writing your story, and it's time you took the pen from his hand and started writing it yourself.

When the garbage workers struck here in 1968, and the walls of these buildings echoed with the cry, "I am a man," they were writing this story. Martin Luther King came here to help them tell it, only to be shot dead on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. The bullet killed him, but it couldn't kill the story, because once the people start telling their story, you can't kill it anymore.

So I'm back where I started with you, and where this movement is headed. The greatest challenge to the plantation mentality of the media giants is the innovation and expression made possible by the digital revolution. I may still prefer the newspaper for its investigative journalism and in-depth analysis, but we now have it in our means to tell a different story from big media, our story. The other story of America that says, free speech is not just corporate speech. That news is not just what officials tell us. And we are not just chattel in the fields living the boss man's story. This is the great gift of the digital revolution, and you must never, never let them take it away from you. The Internet, cell phones and digital cameras that can transmit images over the Internet makes possible a nation of story tellers, every citizen a Tom Payne. Let the man in the big house on Pennsylvania Avenue think that over, and the woman of the House on Capitol Hill. And the media moguls in their chalets at Sun Valley, gathered to review the plantation's assets and multiply them, nail it to their door. They no longer own the copyright to America's story. It's not a top-down story anymore. Other folks are going to write this story from the ground up. And the truth will be out that the media plantation, like the cotton plantation of old, is not divinely sanctioned. It's not the product of natural forces. The media system we have been living under for a long time now was created behind closed doors where the power brokers met to divvy up the spoils.

Bob McChesney has eloquently reminded us through the years how each medium — radio, television, and cable — was hailed as a technology that would give us greater diversity of voices, serious news, local programs, and lots of public service for the community. In each case, the advertisers took over.

Despite what I teasingly told you the last time we were together in St. Louis, the star that shines so brightly in the firmament the year I was born, 1934, did not, I regret to say, appear over that little house in Hugo, Oklahoma. It appeared over Washington when Congress enacted the 1934 Communications Act. One hundred times in that cornerstone of our communications policy, you will read the phrase "public interests, convenience, and necessity."

I can't tell you reading about those days: educators,

Benjamin Franklin once said, "Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for dinner. "Liberty," he said, "is a well-armed lamb, contesting the vote."

union officials, religious leaders, parents were galvanized by the promise of radio as a classroom for the air, serving the life of the country and the life of the mind — until the government cut a deal with the industry to make sure nothing would threaten the already vested interests of powerful radio networks and the advertising industry. And soon, the public largely forgot about radio's promise, as we accepted the entertainment produced and controlled by Jell-O, Maxwell House, and Camel cigarettes. What happened to radio, happened to television, and then it happened to cable; and if we are not diligent, it will happen to the Internet. Powerful forces are at work now, determined to create our media future for the benefit of the plantation. Investors, advertisers, owners, and the parasites who depend on their indulgence, including many in the governing class.

Old media acquire new media and *vice versa*. Rupert Murdoch, forever savvy about the next key outlet that will attract eyeballs, purchased MySpace, spending nearly \$600 million, so he could, in the language of Wall Street, monetize those eyeballs. Goggle became a partner in Time Warner, investing \$1 billion in its AOL online service. And now Goggle has bought YouTube, so it would have a better vehicle for delivering interactive ads for Madison Avenue. Viacom, Microsoft, large ad agencies, and others have been buying up key media properties, many of them the leading online sites, with a result that will be a thoroughly commercialized environment, a media plantation for the 21st century, dominated by the same corporate and ideological forces that have produced the system we have lived under the last 50 years.

So what do we do? Well, you've shown us what we have to do. And twice now, you have shown us what we can do. Four years ago, when FCC Commissioner Michael Powell and his ideological sidekicks decided it was ok for a single corporation to own a community's major newspapers, three of its TV stations, eight radio stations, its cable TV system, and its major broadband Internet provider, you said "Enough's enough!" Free Press, Common Cause, Consumer's Union, Media Access Project, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and others working closely with commissioners Adelstein and Copps, two of the most public, spirited members of that commission ever to sit there, you organized public hearings across the country where people spoke up deeply felt opinions about how poorly the media was serving their towns. You flooded Congress with petitions and you never let up. And when the court said Powell had to back off for then, the decision cited the importance of involving the public in these media decisions.

Incidentally, Powell not only backed off, he backed out. He left the commission to become senior advisor at a private investment firm specializing in equity investments in media companies around the world. And that firm, by the way, made a bid to take over both Tribune and Clear Channel, two media companies, that just a short time ago, were under the corporate-friendly purview of — you guessed it — Michael Powell. That whooshing sound you hear is Washington's perpetually revolving door through which they come to serve the public and through which they leave to join the plantation.

You made a difference. You showed the public cares about media and democracy. You turned a little publicized vote, little publicized because big media didn't want the people to know, a little publicized and seemingly arcane regulation into a big political fight and a public debate. Now it's true, as commissioner Copps

has reminded us, that since that battle three years ago, there have been more than 3, 300 TV and radio TV stations that have had their assignment and transfer grants approved, so that even under the old rules, consolidation grows, localism suffers, and diversity dwindles.

It's also true that even as we speak, Michael Powell's successor, Kevin Martin, put there by George W. Bush, is ready to take up where Powell left off and give the green light to more conglomeration. Get ready to fight.

But then you did it again more recently. You lit a fire under the people to put Washington on notice that it had to guarantee the Internet's First Amendment protection in the \$85 billion merger of AT&T and BellSouth. Because of you, the so-called Internet neutrality, I much prefer to call it the "equal-access provision of the Internet" — neutrality makes me think of Switzerland — the equal-access provision became a public issue that once again reminded the powers-that-be that people want the media to foster democracy not to quench it. This is crucial. This is crucial, because in a few years, virtually all media will be delivered by high-speed broadband. And without equality of access, the net can become just like cable television where the provider decides what you see and what you pay. After all, the Bush Department of Justice had blessed the deal last October without a single condition or statement of concern. But they hadn't reckoned with Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein, and they hadn't reckoned with this movement. Free Press and SaveTheInternet.com orchestrated 800 organizations, a million and a half petitions, countless local events, legions of homemade videos, smart collaboration with allies and industry, and a top shelf communications campaign. Who would have imagined that sitting together in the same democratic broadband pew would be the Christian Coalition, Gun Owners of America, Common Cause, and MoveOn.org? Who would have imagined that these would link arms with some of the powerful new media companies to fight for the Internet's First Amendment? We owe a tip of the hat, of course, to Republican commissioner Robert McDowell. Despite what must have been a great deal of pressure from his side, he did the honorable thing and recused himself from the proceedings because of a conflict of interest. He might well have heard the roar of the public that you helped to create.

So AT&T had to cry "uncle" to Copps and Adelstein, with a "voluntary commitment to honor equal access for at least two years." The agreement marks the first time that the federal government has imposed true neutrality — oops, equality — on an Internet access provider since the debate erupted almost two years ago. I believe you changed the terms of the debate. It is no longer about whether equality of access will govern the future of the Internet. It's about when and how. It also signals a change from defense to offense for the backers of an open net. Arguably the biggest, most effective online organizing campaign ever conducted on a media issue, can now turn to passing good laws, rather than always having to fight to block bad ones. Just this week Senator Byron Dorgan, a Democrat, and Senator Olympia Snow, a Republican, introduced the Internet Freedom Preservation Act of 2007 to require fair and equitable access to all content. And over in the House, that champion of the public interests, Ed Markey, is once again standing there waiting to press the battle.

But a caveat here. Those other folks don't give up so easy. Remember, this agreement is only for two years, and they will be back with all the lobbyists money can hire. As the Washington Post follows George Bush into the black hole of Baghdad, the press in Washington won't be covering many stories like this because of priorities.

Further caveat, consider what AT&T got in the bargain. For giving up on neutrality, it got the green light from government to dominate over 67 million phonelines in 22 states, almost 12 million broadband users, and total control over Cingular Wireless, the country's largest mobile phone company with 58 million cell phone users. It's as if China swallowed India. I bring this up for a reason. Big media is ravenous. It never gets enough. Always wants more. And it will stop at nothing to get it. These conglomerates are an empire, and they are imperial. Last week on his website, MediaChannel.org, Danny Schechter recalled how some years ago he marched with a band of media activists to

the headquarters of all the big media companies concentrated in the Times Square area. Their formidable buildings strutted with logos and limos, and guarded by rent-a-cops, projected their power and prestige. Danny and his cohorts chanted and held up signs calling for honest news and an end to exploited programming. They called for diversity and access for more perspectives.

“It felt good,” Danny said, “but it seemed like a fool’s errand. We were ignored, patronized and marginalized. We couldn’t shake their edifices or influence their holy business models. We seemed to many like that lonely and forlorn nut in a *New Yorker* cartoon carrying an ‘End of the World is Near’ placard.”

Well, yes, my friends, that is exactly how they want you to feel. As if media and democracy is a fool’s errand. To his credit, Danny didn’t give up. He’s never given up. Neither have the early pioneers of this movement: Andy Swartzman, Don Hazen, Jeff Chester. I confess that I came very close not to making this speech today, in favor of just getting up here and reading from this book, *Digital Destiny*, by my friend and co-conspirator, Jeff Chester. Take my word for it. Make this your bible, until McChesney’s new book comes out. As Don Hazen writes in his review in AlterNet this week, “It’s a terrific book. A respectful, loving, fresh, intimate conversation, comprehensive history of the struggles for a democratic media. The lost fights, the opportunities missed, and the small victories that have kept the corporate media system from having complete *carte blanche* over the communication channels.”

It’s also a terrifying book, because Jeff describes how we are being shadowed online by a slew of software digital gumshoes, working for Madison Avenue. Our movements in cyberspace are closely tracked and analyzed, and interactive advertising infiltrates our consciousness to promote the brand-washing of America. Jeff asks the hard questions: Do we really want television sets that monitor what we watch? Or an Internet that knows what sites we visit and reports back to advertising companies? Do we really want a media system designed mainly for Madison Avenue?

But this is a hopeful book. “After scaring the bejeezus out of us,” as one reviewer wrote, “Jeff offers a policy agenda for the broadband era. Here is a man who practices what the Italian philosopher Gramsci called the ‘pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will.’ He sees the world as it is, without rose-colored glasses and tries to change it, despite what he knows”

So you’ll find here the core of the movement’s mission. You’ll agree with much and disagree with some. But that’s what a reform movement is about. Media reform — yes. But the Project in Excellence concluded in its State of the Media Report for 2006, “At many old media companies, though not in all, the decades-long battle at the top between idealists and accountants is now over. The idealists have lost. The commercial networks are lost, too, lost to silliness, farce, cowardice, and ideology.” Not much hope there. You can’t raise the dead.

Policy reform, yes. “But,” says Jeff, “we will likely see more consolidation of ownership with newspapers, TV stations, and major online properties in fewer hands.” “So,” he says, “we have to find other ways to ensure the public has access to diverse, independent, and credible sources of information.” That means going to the market to find support for stronger independent media. Michael Moore and others have proven that progressivism doesn’t have to equal penury. It means helping protect news-gathering from predatory forces. It means fighting for more participatory media, hospitable to a full range of expression. It means building on Lawrence Lessig’s notion of the “creative common” and Brewster Kahle’s Internet Archives with his philosophy of universal access to all knowledge.

It means bringing broadband service to those many millions of Americans too poor to participate so far in the digital revolution. It means ownership and participation for people of color and women. And let me tell

you, it means reclaiming public broadcasting and restoring it to its original feisty, robust, fearless mission as an alternative to the dominant media, offering journalism you can afford and can trust, public affairs of which you are a part, and a wide range of civic and cultural discourse that leaves no one out.

You can have an impact here. For one thing, we need to remind people that the federal commitment to public broadcasting in this country is about \$1.50 per capita, compared to \$28 to \$85 per capita in other democracies.



Photo credit: Courtesy of NOW with Bill Moyers. Photo by Robin Holland. © Public Affairs Television

But there is something else I want you to think about. Something else you can do. And I’m going to let you in here on one of my fantasies. Keep it to yourself, if you will, because fantasies are private matters, and mine involves Amy Goodman. But I’ll just ask C-SPAN to bleep this out and... Oh, shucks, what’s the use. Here it is. In moments of revelry, I imagine all of you returning home to organize a campaign to persuade your local public television station to start airing *Democracy Now!*

I can’t think of a single act more likely to remind people of what public broadcasting should be, or that this media reform conference really means business. We’ve got to get alternative content out there to people, or this country is going to die of too many lies.

And the opening rundown of news on Amy’s daily show is like nothing else on any television, corporate or public. It’s as if you opened the window in the morning and a fresh breeze rolls over you from the ocean. Amy doesn’t practice trickle-down journalism. She goes where the silence is, and she breaks the sound barrier. She doesn’t buy the Washington protocol that says the truth lies somewhere in the spectrum of opinion between the Democrats and the Republicans.

On *Democracy Now!* the truth lies where the facts are hidden, and Amy digs for them. And above all, she believes the media should be a sanctuary for dissent, the underground railroad, tunneling beneath the plantation. So go home and think about it. After all, you are the public in public broadcasting and not just during pledge breaks. You live there, and you can get the boss man at the big house to pay attention.

Meanwhile, be vigilant about the congressional rewrite of the Telecommunications Act that is beginning as we speak. Track it day by day and post what you learn far and wide, because the decisions made in this session of Congress will affect the future of all media, corporate and noncommercial, and if we lose the future now, we’ll never get it back.

So you have your work cut out for you. I’m glad you’re all younger than me and up to it. I’m glad so many funders are here, because while an army may move on its stomach, this movement requires hard, cold cash to compete with big media in getting the attention of Congress and the people.

I’ll try to do my part. Last time we were together, I said to you that I should put my detractors on notice. They might just compel me out of the rocking chair and back into the anchor chair. Well, in April, I will be back with a new weekly series called *Bill Moyers’ Journal*, thanks to some of the funders in this room. We’ll take no money from public broadcasting because it compromises you even when you don’t intend it to - or they don’t intend it to. I hope to complement the fine work of colleagues like David Brancaccio of *NOW*, and David Fanning of *Frontline*, who also go for the truth behind the news.

But I don’t want to tease you. I’m not coming back because of detractors. I wouldn’t torture them that way. I’ll leave that to Dick Cheney. I’m coming back, because it’s what I do best. Because I believe television can still signify, and I don’t want you to feel so alone. I’ll keep an eye on your work. You are to America what the Abolition Movement was, and the Suffragette Movement and the Civil Rights Movement. You touch the soul of democracy. It’s not assured you will succeed in this fight. The armies of the Lord are up against mighty hosts. But as the spiritual sojourner Thomas Merton wrote to an activist grown weary and discouraged, protesting the Vietnam War, “Do not depend on the hope of results. Concentrate on the value and the truth of the work itself.”

And in case you do get lonely, I’ll leave you with this. As my plane was circling Memphis the other day, I looked out across those vast miles of fertile soil that once were plantations, watered by the Mississippi River, and the sweat from the brow of countless men and women, who had been forced to live somebody else’s story. I thought about how in time, with a lot of martyrs, they rose up, one here, then two, then many, forging a great movement that awakened America’s conscience and brought us closer to the elusive but beautiful promise of the Declaration of Independence. As we made our last approach, the words of a Marge Piercy poem began to form in my head, and I remembered all over again why I was coming and why you were here:

*What can they do to you?
Whatever they want.
They can set you up, they can bust you, they can break
your fingers, they can burn your brain with electricity,
blur you with drugs till you
can’t walk, can’t remember, they can
take your child, wall up
your lover. They can do anything
you can’t blame them
from doing. How can you stop
them? Alone, you can fight,
you can refuse, you can
take what revenge you can
but they roll over you.*

*But two people fighting
back to back can cut through a mob, a snake-dancing file
can break a cordon, an army
can meet an army.*

*Two people can keep each other
sane, can give support, conviction,
love, massage, hope, sex.
Three people are a delegation,
a committee, a wedge. With four
you can play bridge and start
an organisation. With six
you can rent a whole house, eat pie for dinner with no
seconds, and hold a fund raising party.
A dozen make a demonstration.
A hundred fill a hall.
A thousand have solidarity and your own newsletter;
ten thousand, power and your own paper;
a hundred thousand, your own media;
ten million, your own country.
It goes on one at a time,
it starts when you care
to act, it starts when you do
it again after they said no,
it starts when you say We
and know who you mean, and each
day you mean one more.*