



A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Progressive Culture, Politics, Art And Entertainment Since 1996

07

**Central Valley Community
Halls Building of Toxic Plant**

14

**More Copyright Chemicals
For Fresno**

08

**Fresno's Hip-Hop Nightclub
Crowd Gets Left Out in the Cold**



TURN TO

VILLAGE OF HOPE? 13

4 Profiles of Local Activists

His “day job” is with an organization that provides loans to small minority businesses, but his passion is using the media to educate and inform his community of South-east Asian Americans.

5 The Voice of Silence

When three-time candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, emeritus Bishop of Chiapas, Mexico, Samuel Ruiz, visited Fresno on November 19, only a handful of reporters covered the event.

7 Central Valley Community Halls Building of TOXIC PLANT!

“They’ve been planning to build a toxic factory in my neighborhood, and I just found out about it?”

10 “The Language of Anarchy”

Anarchy is freedom; freedom is self-direction; self-direction requires imagination and responsibility.

11 Nurses Strike In Fresno

The company is offering a 2% salary increase, but the nurses want at least 5%. A standardized pay scale and an improved pension plan are also being sought by striking workers.

12 Peace, Love & Anarchy in Madeslo

Direct Action Anti-Authoritarians (DAAA), based in Modesto, is an affinity group that focuses on anti-hierarchical community building.

14 OF PROFIT AND HYSTERIA:

More Copyright Chemicals For Fresno

18 All Dressed Up With No Place to Go

Fresno’s Hip-Hop Nightclub Crowd Often Get Left Out in the Cold

21 My Life

A CSUF Student from the Middle East Reflects on his Life In America

24 BOOK REVIEW

DEMOCRATIZING THE GLOBAL ECONOMY:
The Battle against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (2001)

26 COMMUNITY ACTION CALENDAR

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“You are all ministers of God’s justice.”

Fresno mayor Alan Autry, at a swearing-in ceremony for Fresno police officers, November 2004



Recent

Chronicles

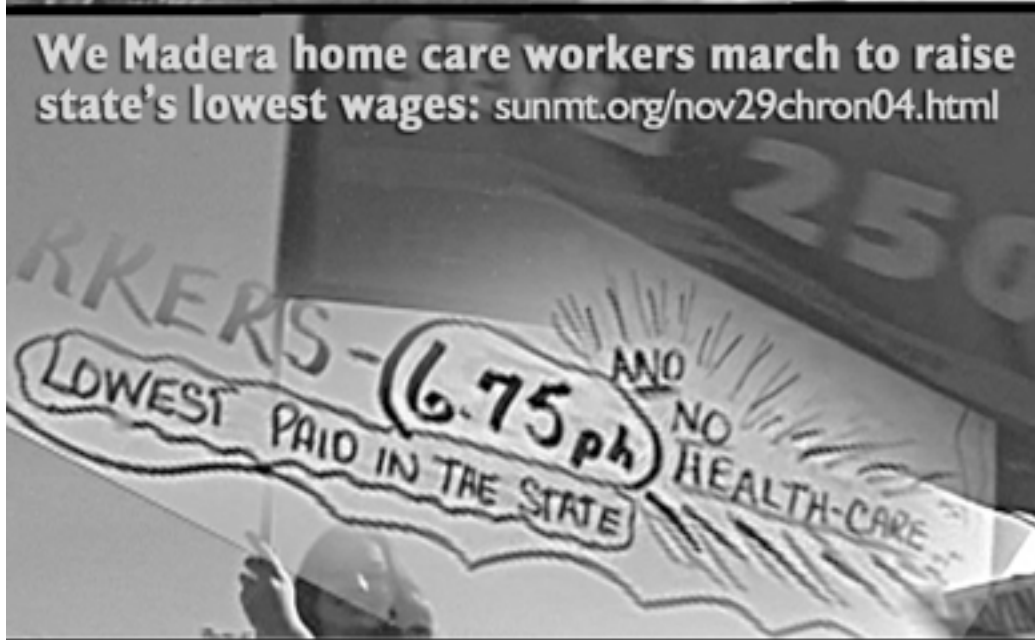
Peace
Justice
Big Mama



100s of reports & links to
nationwide stories of election fraud:
sunmt.org/votingquestions.html



We ex-braceros want our \$1 billion:
sunmt.org/nov24chron04.html



We Madera home care workers march to raise
state’s lowest wages: sunmt.org/nov29chron04.html



We demand human rights:
sunmt.org/dec12chron04.html

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

EDITOR:

Mike Rhodes

CO-EDITOR:

Stephen Gamboa

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Carol Bequette

Diane Corbin

Eduardo Stanley

Floyd Harris

Janet Slagter

Pam Whalen

Richard Stone

LAYOUT/DESIGN:

Frank Sanchez

CIRCULATION AND**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR:**

Dan Yaseen 559.243.7483

COPY EDITOR:

Barbara Price

Teresa Hele

PROOFREADER:

Carol Bequette

TO SUBSCRIBE:

send \$35 (regular)

or \$10 (low income)

to:

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**MAGAZINE****PO BOX 5077****Fresno, CA 93755****(559) 978-4502 (voice)****(559) 226-3962 (fax)****email:****AllianceEditor@comcast.****net****web site:****www.fresnoalliance.com/**

public comment

Wow! Great paper!

A. Stuart

The new format is great! Keep up the good work.

Keith Jackson

Volume 1 Issue 1 is great! I love the newspaper and the extended arts/cultural coverage.

Burnis (Gene) Tuck

Just wanted to let you know that I saw the revamped Community Alliance magazine at the WILPF crafts fair today and I think it looks fantastic. When I saw that you planned to move to newsprint

instead of the harder paper stock, I thought it would allow you to do so much more, and I am very impressed with what you have done—more content, very cool graphics and use of color (and clean color separation!). Congratulations on the redesign. I honestly think this edition ranks there with the best alternative-press papers I have seen in cities like SF and LA. Well done.

Debbie Speer

Just writing to say that I am most impressed with the Community Alliance news. It sure does not look like a parish newsletter. It is

so snazzy. And these days presentation is where it is at . . . thanks for being there.

Frances Sivak

Joan's and my compliments on the new look of Community Alliance. All of it looks very professional, totally appropriate for the Fresno area's alternative source of news and comment.

Werner Lipton

I'm sure you will get lots of feedback on this new format, so let me be one of many to say congratulations on making this big leap into change; I'm sure it is not without some struggle and trepidation.

I just finished reading the entire issue (and now have black fingers) and I must say I enjoyed the range of articles and the overall layout of the newspaper. In the past few months, I've just been skimming much of the Alliance and with the new advertisers and new voices, my interest in reading everything increased. I feel like I'm in a big city reading the San Francisco Guardian or the San Diego Reader, and I find the changes exciting and refreshing.

Kenley Neufeld

BLACKSPOT SNEAKER

ORGANIC HEMP

WORKER-FRIENDLY
UNION SHOP

VEGETARIAN
LEATHER

HAND-DRAWN
ANTI-LOGO

1 PAIR = 1 VOTE IN THE
ANTI-CORPORATION

DESIGN: JOHN FLUEVOG

RED TIP
(FOR KICKING PHIL'S ASS)

While giant corporations run roughshod over our lives, we whine and complain, protest and boycott. In vain, we even ask our governments for help. But the one thing we've never done is fight the corporations head on.

For too long we've ignored the market, written it off as enemy territory. Yet, what do mega-corps like Walmart and Coke fear most? Competition. Let's start putting our creative juice and energy into building real alternatives. We're talking about a new breed of bottom up enterprise that does things differently: promotes ethics over profit, values over image, idealism over hype. Imagine a chain of restaurants serving only locally-sourced food. Or an artist-controlled radio network. Or a consumer co-op for organic clothing.

At Antipreneur, we're looking for your thoughts on a brand of grassroots capitalism that deals in products we actually need – and believe in. No sweatshops. No mind-fucking ads. Just sustainable, accountable companies. Run by us. Instead of Nikes? Blackspot Sneakers. Instead of McDonald's, Warner Music and Microsoft? You tell us.

CAN ACTIVISTS HARNESS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT? IT'S TIME WE TRY.

BEN VUE WAS BORN IN LAOS and came to the United States in 1979. His “day job” is with an organization that provides loans to small minority businesses, but his passion is using the media to educate and inform his community of Southeast Asian Americans. He currently produces two shows through the Asian Media Group: Hmong Community Radio airs Wednesdays and Thursdays nights from 6 to 8 PM on KBIF, 900 AM radio; Hmong Today has been airing Saturday nights since 1993, from 8 to 9 PM on KNXT, channel 49, the station of the Catholic diocese.

Meeting Ben it is easy to underestimate him, lacking as he does the angular stature and forwardness we Euro-Americans tend to associate with determination. But even a brief conversation reveals a man of intelligence and dedication. Ben has not only mastered this difficult language of ours, he has created a mission for himself and steadfastly followed its directives for twenty years, with little external support.

Starting in the early 1980s, Ben began volunteering as an instructor of English as a second language (ESL) for Hmong newcomers given entry to the United States for their help in the Vietnam War. Seeing a need for more than language skills, Ben helped create a program to include literacy, survival skills in this vastly different culture, and citizenship. It was during this time that he saw the power of radio and TV to teach and disseminate information.

“Our elders were often illiterate, and there is no cultural tradition of reading the morning paper. Radio and TV just work better.” After graduating with a degree in business administration from CSUF, Ben started Hmong Today as a forum for issues and to promote civic responsibility.

Ben speaks of the audience of his shows as the real inspiration and support for his work, but he expresses special gratitude to Marv Harrison of Channel 49 for providing opportunity, encouragement, and technical assistance. He also acknowledges the James Irvine Foundation, which has provided some funding, and several organizations that cooperate in bringing information and services to his core constituency: Lao Family, Fresno Center for New Americans, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministry (FIRM), and Stone Soup.

Asked what keeps him going, Ben’s quick response is,

Profiles of Local Activists

BY RICHARD STONE



On the set of Hmong Today with Ben Vue: Show airs Saturday Night 8-9p.m. on KNXT Channel 49

“The people I meet through the shows, and the people who tell me they depend on the shows.” He says that being told that the work has kept some kids from joining gangs, or that they have helped a small business to succeed, is strong motivation to continue.

The current focus of the Asian Media Group is the challenge of the influx of new refugees. Ben sees the need to revive the survival-skills component of the shows, which was prominent when he began. He also is working on outreach to those under 18 years of age, which comprise two-thirds of his community. The aim is to foster youth leadership and alternatives to gangs.

Ben’s long-range vision includes nightly broadcasts especially aimed at youth and an independent production facility that could participate in a national satellite network for Southeast Asian Americans. His request to our readers is, “Watch the shows, call in, give input. Get to know us, tell us what you think.”

Ethnicity—Hmong American
Political Affiliation—According to interests, not fixed
Area Most Frequented—Southeast Fresno
Inspirational Figures—His brother (“He raised me”); Martin Luther King
Personal Motto—“We are born to do something to make life better.”
Non-political Interest—Playing board games with his children
Unlikely Pastime—Watching foreign language TV (learning about other cultures, enjoying the sounds of other languages)

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Web site: www.asianmedia.biz
e-mail: benvue@asianmedia.biz



Black Justice

BY THE REV. FLOYD HARRIS

TO RESPOND TO THE HEADLINES IN THE FRESNO BEE: “THREE FROM Gateway Academy Arrested,” is a joke. The number-one thing to remember is that Khadijah Ghafur, Kehinde Solwazi, and Naazim Hamed are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

African American people have awakened to see that the American school system has failed our community and its children generation after generation. We as people of color will not stand for less anymore when it comes to our children’s education.

When you are black living in Fresno County, you have to conduct business three times better than a white person. Blacks never made the laws. Blacks are made to obey laws while whites can break laws and get away with it. Gateway Academy is run by people who love our children and their community, and they would never do anything to harm the children or to deprive them of what they need.

The justice system treats blacks and whites differently when it comes to getting fair treatment in the court system. Fresno Unified had a huge shortfall of public funds, and the treatment Fresno Unified received in the media and criminal system was very different from the treatment received by Gateway Academy.

When will the people in Fresno County and the United States Of America see that Fresno has major racism problems? I have known brother Kehinde Solwazi: He is a leader in the African American community and we in the black community will stand boldly by him and his coworkers. We will not be moved by unsubstantiated charges. We want equal treatment and equal justice.

The Rev. Harris is the California State President of the National Action Network: (559) 288- 0828.

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

The Voice of SILENCE

FRESNO, CA—When three-time candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, emeritus Bishop of Chiapas, Mexico, Samuel Ruiz, visited Fresno on November 19, only a handful of reporters covered the event.



THIS 80-YEAR-OLD HAS the energy and intellectual clarity envied by many recent college graduates; his enthusiasm stems from his dedication and commitment to the communities he has worked for during the span of his life. His face blushes when he analyzes the situation of indigenous people and the richness of their cultures, which the so-called western civilization attempted to erase from the land.

"Some people used to say they want to give a voice to the voiceless, but indigenous people talk—the problem is that most people don't listen to them!" said Ruiz with his calm but firm voice. He was invited by the Binational Oaxacan Indigenous Front (FIOB, in Spanish), and was awarded the "Xini Nuu" (Leader of the Community) prize. Last year, this organization brought Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, and artist Lila Downs for a similar event.

Mr. Ruiz's visit to Fresno started at noon with a meeting at Casa San Miguel, a neighborhood occupied by indigenous families from Oaxaca. This neighborhood was built four years ago to relocate families living in a precarious area south of Fresno, which was highly contaminated due to toxic dumping. FIOB played an important role in the collective effort to relocate these residents.

There, Mr. Ruiz chatted with neighbors, showing interest in their working and living conditions in California. "Governments should help eliminate the economic problems that create the conditions for migration," said Ruiz. American perception does

not, however, consider this as a global phenomenon in which the economy dictates the rules. For example, the "unequal and combined development" between societies where one provides cheap labor to the other; more "developed" country is the case between the United States and Mexico. "Nevertheless, immigrants don't come here empty-handed; they bring their culture, their traditions, and their skills."

Samuel Ruiz was born in Guanajuato, Mexico, in 1924, and became a priest in 1949. Ten years later, he was named Bishop of Chiapas, a region characterized by its extreme poverty. In 1992, he presented Pope John Paul II with his Pastoral Letter, "In This Hour of Grace," where he summarized part of the social situation of Chiapas. A year later, the Mexican ecclesiastical bureaucracy asked him to quit, but thousands of indigenous people supported him.

The rise of the National Liberation Zapatista Army (EZLN, in Spanish) in 1994 produced a radical change in Mexico's political-social landscape. Because of his leadership and trust, Mr. Ruiz, who speaks three indigenous languages, played a crucial role during the peace talks. In 1998, he quit his position as peace mediator in an act of protest against the Mexican government for its aggressive behavior in the area. A year later, he renounced his role as Bishop of Chiapas. Nevertheless, he continues to remain active at different levels, favoring peace and the defense of indigenous rights.

Mr. Ruiz firmly believes that the social system, which generated the current social inequalities, has reached its limits. "The voracity of this system needs to despoil and to eliminate communities." This situation is also expressed in the language. "For indigenous people, the relation with mother

earth comes from within. Western culture, instead, values it as legal property and [for] its economic value."

Mr. Ruiz mentions the importance of recovering the language to create new concepts expressing dignified values absent in the dominant individualistic culture. "For example, the concept 'citizen' for indigenous cultures is translated as 'one who has the right to walk on the land that belongs to him or her.'" He added that human rights should also include community's rights and not just individual ones. Regarding the so-called melting pot, which basically means the cultural disappearance of one social group into another, Mr. Ruiz proposed cultural inclusion.

A cultural change benefiting society as a whole could be decision-making by consensus and not by imposing ideas or interpretations, including those of religious groups. The year 1992, during the celebrations of the 500 years of the conquest, was a turning point for the collective indigenous conscience, which rejected such celebrations and sought to reevaluate the history and concepts associated with that conquest.

However, Mr. Ruiz showed optimism about a new, more just social level. "It amazed me the human creation of computer viruses to destroy data and hard drives. We need to create an antivirus, a social vitamin shot to affect the establishment's hard drive, to change it in a positive way." And such a vitamin, said Mr. Ruiz with a smile, would come from the socio-cultural values of the indigenous people.



Democracy Now! is a national, daily, independent, award-winning news program airing on over 225 stations in North America. Pioneering the largest public media collaboration in the U.S., Democracy Now! is broadcast on Pacifica, community, and National Public Radio stations, public access cable television stations, satellite television (on Free Speech TV, channel 9415 of the DISH Network), short-wave radio and the internet.

LISTEN LOCALLY AT

88.1
KFCF
FRESNO FREE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

Mon-Fri

6:00am & 9:00am



Why I Support Peace Fresno

BY LISA SOLOMON

The following is from a letter sent to Peace Fresno in November 2004:

"Like most people who do not work in law enforcement, I first became aware of your organization through the film Fahrenheit 9/11 . . . I work with handicapped children at the local junior high school. The kids at my school constantly surprise me in every way. They read far more than teens of my generation did, they are far more accepting of gays, blacks, and foreign cultures, and they are more socially active and aware. The thought of these kids, of any kids, being possibly drafted and sent to die for nothing makes me literally physically ill. It's this terrible pain in my heart that never goes away . . . For the past three years. I have listened to otherwise rational adults calmly explain how 'the sand niggers' need to be exterminated, because they 'are

always starting wars' . . . Our school is losing teachers, as more and more of them are called up by the National Guard. These are men and women who have spent years, and many thousands of dollars, being trained to teach our children, but our president thinks they can better serve our country by being cannon fodder in a war that appears to have been planned by idiots that even I could beat in a game of Risk. I cannot describe the incredible sense of sheer waste that I feel: wasted people, wasted money, wasted education. People in their twenties and thirties whose lives are just being thrown away. And soon, they will come for the teenagers . . . Thoreau once wrote, 'There are thousands hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the roots.' From what I have seen, you are striking at the roots." It was signed by "Closet Peacenik."

The video release of Michael Moore's movie made many people more aware of the hazards of the Patriot Act, an issue not lost on many of those who are active with, and recently joined, Peace Fresno. Like other actions taken by our president, it scares and horrifies even the most rational people that their own government could track their movements, their reading material, their lives. Many people have expressed the concern that such surveillance will only continue (and/or worsen) during the coming four years. This concern has been heightened with the president's choices to replace more than half of his cabinet.

We must remember, however, that this is not the first time in our history that our government has restricted civil liberties and has used those restrictions to squelch dissension. The Alien and Sedition Acts were established in 1798 in large

part to limit political opposition to the administration of John Adams. In 1917 and 1918, the government passed the Espionage and Sedition Acts. Enforcement focused not on those who expressed sympathy for our German enemies, but on pacifists and labor leaders.

Those measures were overturned, in large part because of the vocal and consistent protests made by the people. It is that thought that we must hold to now, to continue our protests against the use of the Patriot Act and other socially inappropriate actions by the Bush administration.

Join us—protest is protected, and it is patriotic.

Lisa Solomon is a board member of Peace Fresno.

PEACEfresno
A place for anti-war justice and dialogue to win

Peace Fresno meets Tuesdays at 7:00 PM at the Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness in Fresno. The 2nd and 4th Tuesdays are business meetings and the 1st and 3rd are for discussions and presentations.

PLEASE JOIN US.

First Friday of Every Month, 4:30 PM–6:30 PM. Peace Fresno returns to Shaw and Blackstone Avenues to protest the occupation of Iraq and other harmful domestic and foreign policies of the Bush administration. We advocate social and environmental justice and alternatives to war.

For more information see <www.peacefresno.org>.

BY KEVIN HALL

CITY COUNCIL CAVING, SUPERVISORS CONFUSED

Zoo President Tells County Board that State Law Will Not Apply to \$95 Million in Measure Z Allocations



"We don't need agreement by anyone. It's supposed to be a private process."

-- Zoo Society President Mike Woods, speaking to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERVISORS recently learned they are of little importance to Chaffee Zoo "leaders" now that Measure Z has passed. Mike Woods, president of the Zoo Society, appeared before the supervisors on November 30 and asked them to move quickly to appoint three people to the board of the private nonprofit corporation now being formed to run the zoo.

Several of the supervisors appeared ignorant of the plan to create a nine-member corporate board. Supervisor Judy Case asked for clarification as she didn't understand the difference between the seven-member tax authority described on the ballot to voters and this unmentioned nine-member private corporation board.

Woods explained that an "act of faith" between the zoo society, the City of Fresno, and "the campaign" calls for dissolution of the existing Chaffee Zoological Society and formation of a new corporation to oversee all zoo operations. He cited the Chaffee Zoo Committee Report, the same report repeatedly cited by the Save Roeding Park campaign in its criticisms of the Measure Z zoo expansion and privatization plan.

Case and other supervisors were further surprised to learn these three "initial" appointments are only temporary. Future appointments will be made by the nonprofit board itself. The supervisors' initial three appointees will serve staggered terms of one, two, and three years, respectively.

When the board began to balk, Woods pushed them by saying for the second time in his presentation that as soon as he had at least five board members in place (a majority of the nine), they would move ahead with corporate bylaws, zoo Master Plan, and a nationwide search for a new director. "We're going to move forward," he said.

Supervisor Juan Arambula, in his final meeting before heading off to the State Assembly, said he wouldn't even know what to tell an appointee they'd be doing and asked if bylaws are available. Woods said they're not, but it's impossible to believe bylaws haven't already been drafted by Woods, an attorney, who indicated his firm would be writing them.

STATE LAW CIRCUMVENTED

Case cited concerns about "commitments" made to the public during the campaign and wanted assurances that at least half of the zoo board would be county residents who live outside of Fresno. She pointed out these constituents represent half the taxpayers. Woods responded that commitments made by the campaign were not committed to by the zoo society or city, but that Case shouldn't worry. The real goal, he explained, is to get at least five people with

a business background willing to commit 20-60 hours per month regardless of residence.

"We've got to get government out of the operation of the zoo," emphasized Woods. He proudly pointed out this new body will "chart the course of the zoo for a decade" and, as a private corporation, will not be subject to the requirements found in "state law" regarding open public meetings by governmental bodies (The Brown Act), payment of prevailing wages (to construction workers), and an open bidding process.

Woods said the supervisors should make their appointments soon if they want to have a voice at the table, but added their absence wouldn't slow it down. "We don't need agreement by anyone," he said. "The whole purpose is . . . to go private. It's supposed to be a private process."

Can this be legal? The zoo board is taking money from the government, yet seeks to avoid the rules crafted to protect the public interest. More than 80 percent of the zoo's operating budget will come directly from taxpayers. If Woods & co. want to take government out of the zoo "business," then they shouldn't take \$9.5 million per year from the government—you know, that's where our Measure Z taxes will go—to government.

Given that the ordinance enacted by Measure Z's passage dictates that all of the tax revenue must be spent at the Chaffee Zoo, this directed movement of public money seems no more than a step-transaction using the authority as a shell to create the illusion of public control and oversight of tax dollars.

Board Chair Susan Anderson told her fellow supervisors they were making the discussion "too complicated." Anderson asserted that because the county board will get to appoint six of the seven tax authority board members who will oversee the zoo corporate board, the supervisors will

by extension have adequate control of the process.

Woods totally toadily agreed, not wanting to point out Anderson was overstating the authority's discretionary powers. The ordinance enacted by Measure Z specifically describes and limits the tax authority's responsibilities. Its main duty will be to see that at least two-thirds of the \$95 million raised through the new tax be spent on capital improvements and to use future tax revenue to secure loans for multi-year construction projects. There is no veto power over the private corporation's business practices, expansion plans, bylaws, or board composition.

GRAVY TRAIN

The freedom to ignore state laws, such as the Brown Act and competitive bidding requirements, could play well for financial backers of Measure Z.

For example, Mike Woods's brother Dennis Woods is president of United Security Bank. The bank

loaned the pro-Z campaign \$100,000 and donated another \$20,000. According to City of Fresno documents, the zoo's new private corporation will soon be seeking at least \$20 million in loans and pay out an estimated \$3.3 million in interest. It could easily be much, much more as those initial estimates were based on only \$54 million in anticipated tax revenue, now up to \$95 million. That \$20,000 donation could turn out to be a small investment toward a very large return for the bank.

The Woods brothers are very well respected in our community and are no doubt men of integrity, but any government official in Woods's position would have to recuse himself from the decision on which lender to use. The as-yet-unseen corporate bylaws might require that, too, but how much will it matter if there's only one bid?

And that's a relatively minor example of what's to come. The really big money will be made through construction and paving contracts, with as much as \$100 million to be doled out during the next decade. Future comparisons between contract recipients and campaign donors should be easy to anticipate.

A multi-million-dollar advertising contract will also be awarded. Will local Republican Party bastion Panagraph take the lion's share (or should that be "elephant's share")? The company, which recently sent former executive Mike Villines to the state assembly in place of disgraced Steve Samuelian, landed \$100,000 in Pro-Z campaign work.

ALL TO BE DONE . . . BEHIND . . . CLOSED . . . DOORS.

It remains to be learned if supervisors will go to work behind the scenes to argue for bylaws that at least grant them continued power to appoint zoo board members. That should at least put some lipstick on the corpse.

In the end they voted unanimously to accept applications through December 31 from people wishing to serve on the zoo corporate board; appointments will be announced in January. Applications for the tax authority can be submitted anytime, and the board has not announced a cutoff date, but appointments must be made no later than March 31 and will likely come much sooner.

Editor's Note:

The final section of last month's "Measure Z Stampedes to Victory" article was accidentally left out. To refresh your memory, the story stopped abruptly after summarizing the pro-Z campaign efforts and corporate media campaign. Sorry about that. Here's the rest of it.)

Measure Z Stampedes to Victory, Part II: Political Accountability by Kevin Hall

An energetic opposition arose to fight for Roeding Park with dozens of volunteers jumping into the effort in late September and early October. It was a six-week, \$10,000 grassroots effort versus a year-long, \$1.3 million blitz.

The pro-Z message was polling at higher than 80% approval before the opposition began. Through a combination of independent media, extensive precinct walking, media events, cable TV ads, and support from an impressive list of progressive organizations, the opposition pulled down support by 8 or 9 percentage points.

Despite the loss at the polls, the Save Roeding Park campaign succeeded in turning the spotlight on zoo-backers' expansion plans. The pro-Z campaign and local politicians were forced to disavow the zoo society's master

plan for growth. Fresno's mayor and city council members Duncan, Sterling and Castillo (now, there's a team!) stood at the zoo entrance in mid-October along with city staff and zoo society leaders to proclaim the zoo would never occupy more than 25% of Roeding Park.

The challenge for park lovers will be to hold these people accountable. The definition of "zoo" will be debated, believe it or not. In their initial estimate of zoo space, the city staff counted only animal exhibit space and failed to include the amphitheater and parking lot. They estimated the zoo's impact on park space at 17 acres when it's actually more than 30 acres.

Those who stood up for the park are to be commended and thanked for their efforts. Now the real work begins.

Two quasi-governmental bodies are to be formed. A nine-member zoo nonprofit board with appointments of three each from the City of Fresno, County Board of Supervisors and zoo society. They will be overseen by the Fresno County Zoo Authority, which will be a seven-member body consisting of the Fresno mayor and six people appointed by the county supervisors. Each supervisor will get one appointment and the sixth appointee must be an expert in zoo matters.

LIMIT ON EXPANSION?

Meanwhile, over at City Hall that same Tuesday, there were two zoo-related items on the agenda. The first was a resolution from Councilmember Mike Dages, who represents southeast Fresno, calling to limit zoo expansion to 25 percent of Roeding Park's 157 acres. He yanked it, however.

According to Save Roeding Park volunteer Nick DeGraff who was in attendance, Dages explained by saying, "I met with the zoo society...we decided to wait for the full board to be established before we bring forward this resolution." Met with the "zoo society," you say. All 7,000 of them at once?

The resolution, which may or may not return, is critically flawed by its description of the Chaffee Zoo as being only 17.2 acres in size. The zoo occupies at least 30 acres of Roeding Park right now.

Of course, the more obvious point is that the city is already retreating from the 25 percent limitation commitment made during the campaign by city officials and the zoo society.

At the very least the city council is signaling its willingness to consider a greater expansion. The July 2004 update of the Master Plan, presented publicly in July and

which Woods praised in the September issue of the zoo society newsletter, shows 78 acres of animal pens, parking lots, amphitheater, equipment yard, and landlocked perimeter park grounds. That's half of Roeding Park.

CLEAR AS MUD

The second item on the agenda was the same request made to the county supervisors for three appointments to the zoo corporation board. Assistant City Manager Andy Souza made the presentation, making no mention of the city council's one-time-only role in making appointments. However, Councilmember Henry T. Perea raised the issue and expressed concern over the city's diminished role in overseeing the zoo it owns.

In response, Souza went into an odd soliloquy: "The purpose for that is balancing the independence of the board from the county and from the city and not binding into the bureaucracy and other things that come with being city appointments." Huh?

That "bureaucracy" would be the one described above by Woods, which would require open meetings, competitive bidding, and payment of prevailing wages to workers.

City Attorney Hilda Cantu-Montoy chimed in a

little later, saying, "It was contemplated during the ballot process—and the voters understood—that the city would be appointing, possibly, the founding members of the non-profit." Of course, none of this was even on the ballot and certainly wasn't being contemplated by voters. Even some county supervisors didn't know it was coming.

City Council President Brad Castillo had some advice for his fellow council members. "At any time any member of the council can appear before that board with suggestions . . . on items they're going to be discussing," he said, obviously unaware this body would not be subject to the Brown Act.

The only real debate at the council meeting was whether or not the mayor should pick all three board members. Duncan, Calhoun, and Dages liked the idea. The other four council members decided the mayor could have one pick and the council the other two. They agreed to close applications on December 10 and directed staff to issue a press release. The release appeared in the Fresno Bee on December 9, one day before the deadline. The selections were to be made on December 21.

For its part, the Zoo Society named its three board appointments shortly after the election: Woods, developer David Cowin (praised by Woods for his work on the Master Plan update completed this summer), and Tom Templeton who heads the zoo's docent group.

Central Valley Community Halts Building of

TOXIC PLANT!



BY EDUARDO STANLEY

TRANSLATED BY ELENA SHORE
PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE, NOV. 30, 2004

HANFORD, CA—

“THEY’VE
BEEN PLAN-
NING TO BUILD
A TOXIC FAC-
TORY IN MY
NEIGHBOR-
HOOD, AND I
JUST FOUND
OUT ABOUT
IT?”

EXCLAIMED AN INDIG-
nant neighbor of Hanford,
a small town 45 miles south
of Fresno, whose population of
just over 40,000 people is 39 per-
cent Latino, according to the 2000
Census.

This was one of many
concerns voiced at a November
15 town hall meeting of nearly 60
people, including residents, official
representatives, business owners,

and activists.

For months, the group
Kings County Residents United
for Health has pressured the com-
pany Plastic Energy to explain the
environmental and health conse-
quences of installing a fuel-gener-
ating plant that would utilize plas-
tic as its primary material.

What could have been a
simple bureaucratic procedure has
transformed into a struggle to clar-
ify the health effects for residents of
California's Central Valley, already
known for its dangerous level of air
pollution, primarily due to the ex-
cessive use of pesticides.

According to Plastic En-
ergy, the process consists of "re-
turning [plastic] to its sources" and
transforming it into fuel in a
practice known as catalytic crack-
ing. The company has assured the
community that the process is safe
and has no toxic emissions, based
on two existing factories in Poland
and South Korea. However, the
company could not provide any
statistics to support this claim.

Curiously, the San Joa-
quin Valley Air Pollution Control
District, based in Fresno, had al-
ready granted the necessary per-
mit to the King County Planning
Agency in Hanford for a construc-
tion space. Everything was going

along smoothly until someone
noticed. Activists from the orga-
nization Greenaction, reviewing
newspaper articles on the subject,
discovered in January of this year
that Plastic Energy had already
obtained a \$2 million estimate to
construct the factory in Hanford.

They decided to look for
more information in the Public In-
formation Act and later contacted
local activists to analyze a similar
situation that took place in 2003.

That year, the North
American Power Company so-
licited a permit to build a power
plant utilizing medical waste as its
primary material in Chowchilla, a
small community 35 miles north
of Fresno that is home to just over
11,000 people, 29 percent of them
Latino. When Greenaction asked
the company to present statistics
on toxic emissions and an analysis
of the environmental impact, the
company literally disappeared.

"Hanford is a similar case:
there are no statistics supporting
the claim that the planned factory
isn't toxic," said Bradley Angel,
director of Greenaction, whose
participation was crucial in chal-
lenging the plant's construction.
According to Angel, the claim that
the factory will not
produce toxic emissions is hard to
believe. He said European activists

have discovered that the plant in
Poland does in fact produce toxic
emissions and that, confronted
with this information, the compa-
ny responded that it will use a new
design for the plant in Hanford.
But, Angel said, "We didn't see the
original design or the new one."

"During the process of
transforming the material, gases
and highly toxic waste are pro-
duced when the prime material is
something like plastic," said Jane
Williams, a Los Angeles resident
and specialist in the subject. Plas-
tic, she said, has high components
of chlorine and metals that could
produce dioxin, which is known
for being carcinogenic. "Even if
the emissions were minimal, the
air quality in the Valley is so bad
that building these factories should
be completely banned."

San Joaquin Valley Air
Pollution Control District rep-
resentative Rick McVaigh said
that a permit effectively had been
granted without knowing the sta-
tistics about emission control but
that given pressure from citizens,
the permit had been revoked. The
original permit, however, did not
constitute final approval, which
requires another review before the
construction can begin.

The company reiterated
that the process is safe. "It's melting
plastic to convert it into fuel," Plas-
tic Energy representative George
Larson told a skeptical audience.
"If toxic emissions like chlorine
got into the fuel, we wouldn't be
able to sell it, so we use special
filter systems." Larsen added that
the industrial plant would help to
eliminate a large percentage of the
plastic that now lies in toxic dumps
in the Valley.

The most significant de-
velopment of the meeting was the
company's admission that it had
not followed the necessary steps
to keep the community informed.
"Now we've lost the permit and we
have to start from square one, and
when we do, we'll come here and
keep you informed and present
you with the information you ask
for."

"Official agencies get
money from our taxes and it both-
ers me that this money is used to
approve projects that compromise
our health," said a visibly upset
Deborah Weaver. At the end of the
meeting, the crowd's collective in-
dignation turned into satisfaction
in having achieved a great victory,
now that both the company and
the official agencies involved must
present their cases before a vigilant
community.

CHANGE IN 2005

BY GARY DENNIS

THE HOLIDAY PARTY
was fun and enjoyable, and
the guests felt like they were part
of a family. There were gifts, and
prize drawings, adding that holi-
day touch to this gathering. There
was plenty of food and a good mix
of people—clients, advocates, and
community partners. Hopefully
this was a preview of the wonder-
ful connections that can be made
in 2005.

And speaking of 2005,
CHAANGE plans to continue its
billboard campaign. These bill-
boards, in English and Spanish,
provide a much-needed message
of HIV/AIDS awareness for this
city. Our "Course of Action"
meeting will be January 14, 2005,
from 1 PM to 3 PM at our office.
Community advocates and mem-
bers will discuss ways CHAANGE
can improve and make the best
use of its time, knowledge, and
information. This is a good time
to get on board the CHAANGE
train and help make a positive im-
pact on HIV/AIDS issues in this
city.

On January 21, 2005,
from 10 AM to 12 noon, Sheryn
Todd, a member of CHAANGE
from Jahmai Ministries, will be
hosting "Words of Power," the first
of many alternative healing work-
shops presented by CHAANGE
in 2005. In April, we'll be having
our annual Advocacy Day trip up
to Sacramento.

We plan to make it an
overnight trip so that we will be
relaxed and ready to take on state
legislators and advocate on behalf
of those affected by HIV/AIDS.
Without these efforts, funding for
different programs in the Valley
may be lost. That is why it's so
important for us to come together
and make our presence known!

All meetings take place
at our office on 1584 N. Van Ness
Ave, inside the Fresno Center for
Nonviolence, just south of Fresno
City College. We are always look-
ing for volunteers, so if you would
like to help out, call (559) 268-
1969. Donations are welcomed!
Donations of \$50 or more should
be made out to the Fresno Center
for Nonviolence for a tax-deduct-
ible receipt. Please make sure to
write CHAANGE on the check.
For donations under \$50, make
the check out to CHAANGE. See
you all on January 14.



The Berryman's Come to Fresno

Lou and Peter Berryman began their musical partnership in high school in Appleton, Wisconsin, way back in the 1960s. By the 1980s, they had established themselves as a prominent feature of the song-writing subculture of Wisconsin's capital, playing their original material every week for almost ten years in the run-down but trendy music room of Madison's Club de Wash. Gradually expanding their circuit, they began crisscrossing the continent and gaining national attention with appearances on such programs as Public Radio's Prairie Home Companion and NPR's Weekend Edition. Regular appearances at festivals and folk music clubs all across the country now serve as venues for the songs contained in their twelve recordings and three songbooks, which have been performed by everyone from Garrison Keillor to Peter, Paul, and Mary. The popularity of Lou and Peter Berryman is a testament to their intelligent and wickedly funny material, which is rich with wordplay and witty images. This duo is not to be missed.

WHO: Lou and Peter Berryman
WHAT: In Concert LIVE!
WHY: Because they are a fine, folk, and funny musical treat
WHEN: Friday, January 28, 2005, 7:30 PM
WHERE: Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook Ave., Fresno (Millbrook between Ashlan and Dakota)
TICKETS: SUGGESTED DONATION \$20. TICKETS IN ADVANCE OR AT THE DOOR.
 Concert info: Larry Bassman, (559) 244-0562.
 Childcare available.

Tom Paxton:
 "When it comes to being funny, I think I've spent the first thirty years trying to be as funny as Tom Lehrer and the last part will be trying to be as funny as the Berrymans. They don't come any funnier than that..."
 The San Francisco Bay Chronicle:

Once in a while a song comes along that so successfully crystallizes familiar thoughts that you feel you could have written it yourself. . . . A lot of people feel that way about [Lou & Peter's] "Why Am I Painting the Living Room?"

VICTORIA (BC) TIMES COLONIST:
 . . . Quirky, wry, ironic humor. Peter's highly literate lyrics and skewed perspective are unique. When enhanced by Lou's soundscapes, the duo makes magic. By the time the Berrymans encoored with their wistful, fumbling love song "We Strolled on the Beach" I was in love too. I'm a fan of this clever duo now.

THE BOSTON GLOBE:
 Lou & Peter Berryman write very eccentric, very funny satirical songs . . . delightful Wisconsin performers. . . . If Tom Lehrer had grown up in America's Dairyland, his songs might sound like theirs.

PETE SEEGER:
 Lou and Peter Berryman! Long may they wave. Their F-Word song, "A Chat with Your Mother" is one of the great American folksongs of the twentieth century.

ROBERT J. LERTSEMA, WGBH, BOSTON:
 It is very rare that I ever put on a recording for the first time and actually break out in audible laughter. I thought Lou & Peter's Double Yodel was fantastic.



(559) 264-MEAD (6323)

**Hand Crafted Beers, Meads
Root Beer & Specialty Wines**

**Come by for a Taste,
Stay for a Pint &
take a Growler home**



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT FRI & SAT

FRIDAY JANUARY 7th

Murcury Blues Band

Chicago Blues
8:00 pm \$5.-Cover

FRIDAY JANUARY 14th

"Good Medicine" Refreshingly Non-Trendy

18:00 pm \$5.-Cover

FRIDAY JANUARY 21st "Garra Flamenca"

Gypsy Flamenca Dance
Featuring Gloria Verdugo
8:00 pm \$5.-Cover

FRIDAY JANUARY 28th

Steve Ono & Eddie Gordon

Guitars & Harmonicas
8:00 pm \$5.-Cover

SATURDAY JANUARY 8th "Lord Loves the Workin' Man"

Soul Music
Plus! JEM BLUESTEIN
8:00 pm \$5.-Cover

SATURDAY JANUARY 15th

An Evening of Guitars

with
Roger Perry-Mike Smith
Jim Roast & Brad Rogers
\$5.-Cover 8:00 pm

SATURDAY JANUARY 22nd

"DRUMAGIC"

Ancient Rythm In
A New World
8:00 pm \$5.-Cover

SATURDAY JANUARY 29th BellyDancing

**CORY ZAMORA
& Friends**

featuring
GLORIA VERDUGO
\$5.-Cover 8:00 pm



Thursday
January 20th

Inner Ear Poetry Jam

Poetry-Art-Music-Fun
8:00 pm - 100:00 pm
\$3.-Cover

ART-HOP
RECEPTIONS

THURSDAY JAN 6th

"Intuition"
The Art of Lisa Reeves
5:00-9:00
plus
"ZAMBRA"
world Fusion
6:00-9:00

LAW OFFICES OF WAGNER & JONES

*SPECIALIZING IN
PERSONAL INJURY & DISCRIMINATION CASES*



**NICHOLAS "BUTCH" WAGNER
&**

**ANDREW B. JONES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW**

1111 EAST HERNDON AVENUE
SUITE 317
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93720
(559) 449-1800

"The Language of Anar-



THE HEADLINE SAID IT ALL: "Haiti Descends into Anarchy." The only actual aspect of anarchy in that statement is that the letters are black. A person or a community can only ascend into anarchy, because anarchy is the best of humanity: individual freedom and responsibility, consensus-based decision making, small-scale economic exchange, and mutual aid. But nearly all of our language is burdened by profit-taking and war.

We are trained to equate anarchy with chaos and violence. Reverse the terms, and you approach the truth: corporate capitalism and proto-fascism are chaotic and violent. Sure, the suburbs and the gated communities of the super-rich are not violent (at least not outwardly), but the violence of poverty in First World ghettos, the continuing genocide against indigenous communities, and the total annihilation of cities like Fallujah are the essence of violence and chaos. Anarchy has never existed in Haiti; we hope it will someday. But corporate exploitation of cheap labor, numerous US invasions, and support for clients like the Duvaliers—all have continually plagued Haiti with chaos and violence. Imagine the chaos and violence that would exist in Venezuela today if the US-supported coup against Chavez had succeeded. Anarchy is a solution to chaos and violence, not a cause of it.

An important corollary of the principles of anarchism is respect for all life. There can be no respect and dignity among humans if humans disdain and destroy animal, plant, and mineral life. But we are taught to believe that anarchy is destructive. Reverse the terms: Corporate capitalism is a systematic assault on the earth.

Bhopal is destructive. Mountaintop-removal strip mining is destructive. Cutting down majestic, thousand-year-old redwoods for profit is destructive. Turning California's mightiest rivers and Central Valley plains into a wasteland of corporate farms and endless suburban sprawl is destructive.

Anarchists understand that the right to life is first in the order of rights for a reason. Anarchy affirms the right of all life and advocates liberation of all life from corporate capitalism. By contrast, corporate capitalism is inherently destructive because it places the property rights of a few above the right of life for all beings.

But of course, we have been trained, and when people hear "anarchy" they stop up their ears. Think, instead of blindly responding to your training, and act accordingly. Disregard anarchy at your own risk. After all, whose side are you on when you say you oppose the war in Iraq and then blithely drive your car? Who profits from the car's sale? its fuel? its insurance? its financing? "But how else can I get around?" you ask. Anarchy is freedom; freedom is self-direction; self-direction requires imagination and responsibility. Can you really think of no other way to get from point A to point B except using the state-sanctioned, corporate capitalist mode? And remember it is corporate capitalism that breeds chaos, violence, and destruction: cars kill 50,000 people and injure 3,000,000 more each year in the United States alone; an estimated 1,000,000 pets and wild animals are killed; many millions more are injured; water, soil, and air are polluted—all so that a few corporate CEOs in the oil and automobile sectors can take home millions annually.

Or perhaps you have been trained to say

"Anarchy doesn't work—show me an example of anarchy." Decentralized power, considerable individual autonomy, and expansive leisure existed in hunter-gatherer communities for 100,000 years before farming. Historically, anarchy has existed only under overwhelming pressure.

From the Cynic school in ancient Greece and Rome to the Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit in the medieval period to Thomas Morton's Merrymount in colonial America to the Paris Commune of 1871 to the anarchists in Spain before and during the Civil War to the Zapatistas today, autonomous communities were condemned by the mainstream as being subject to an uncertain and risky fate . . . and still these communities flourished. These are communities of light, compared to the darkness of corporate capitalism.

Yes, our language has been taxed to the breaking point by war and economic exploitation. Instruments of the war machine are called Black Hawk, Apache, and Chinook—a disgrace of the memory of noble fighters who died resisting the assault on their people and their culture. Policies of the state machine are called Healthy Forest, Enduring Freedom, and Patriot—even as this same state levels trees, kills hundreds of thousands that it claims to liberate, and trashes personal liberties. A new line of cars introduced by the corporate machine is called "An American Revolution," making a mockery of real American revolutionaries like Tom Paine and Sam Adams. Anarchy is a call to life outside the machine. It is possible. It is happening right now among individuals and anarchist collectives throughout the world.

**When you hear anarchy
and think "violence":
stop, think, and then act.
Stopping the real violence
begins with you.**

Fresno RaNCor is a collective dedicated to the ideals outlined above: affirmation of all life; opposition to escalating corporate control; and dedication to stopping the neo-colonial war in Iraq. While not all RaNCor activists consider themselves anarchists, we work as a collective, making consensus-based decisions, and we share our resources, time, energy, and creativity. Now we need your help.

At least twenty RaNCor activists will be representing Fresno progressives in Washington, DC, during the JA20 counter-inaugural protests. RaNCor will join hundreds of thousands in the ongoing resistance movement against the Bush junta. We are asking you to help us defray the travel costs to Washington, DC.

Please join us on Friday, January 14, at H Street Studio, 7 PM, for a Fresno RaNCor benefit. Premier local bands, after-hours DJs, video of the movement against globalization and war, Food Not Bombs vegan fare, and fresh home-baked desserts are on the bill. All of these great musicians and activists are bringing this to you for only a \$4 donation; the money is for a worthy cause. Please join us.

Also, for an \$8 donation, we'll send you a copy of RNC Not Welcome, Fresno RaNCor's raucous, humorous, and inspiring video documentary of the massive protests against the Republican National Convention in New York City last August. Contact <www.rancor.info> for information on the DVD.

Bush cheated in the debates; he cheated his way to the White House, twice; he continues to cheat the world. RaNCor is among the many refusing to accept this. Help RaNCor activists get to the streets of DC for JA20. Thanks in advance for your generosity, and see you on January 14.



HOME CARE WORKERS MARCH FOR A LIVING WAGE

By Mike Rhodes

Home care workers and their allies marched in Madera for something every hardworking person deserves: a living wage and health benefits. Margarita Adame worked at the IRS in Fresno until her mother became sick and needed full-time help. Leaving a full-time job that paid \$11 an hour and included health benefits was not easy, but Adame's mother needed care. Adame says she now makes \$6.75 an hour, which is exactly what her starting salary was at the IRS 15 years ago. To make matters worse, "I only get paid for four or five hours a day, even though this is a twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a-week job," Adame said. That is why home care workers were marching today: they want a living wage and health care benefits for more than 1000 home care workers who are members of SEIU Local 250.

Madera home care workers voted to join the union in March 2003 and have been negotiating with the county ever since. They are angry that the Madera County Board of Supervisors voted themselves a raise this year while refusing to increase the wages and benefits of home care workers. Adame says that the workers are asking for \$8.50 an hour with benefits and that the county has countered with a \$.25 an hour raise with no benefits.

"How am I supposed to take care of myself when I am sick," Adame asked. She says that she has not seen a doctor since 1998 and she "prays to God to keep me strong."

Today's march started at the Madera County Social Services department and headed downtown on Yosemite Street. The workers sang and chanted as they headed for the Board of Supervisors chambers. "We are the union, the mighty, mighty union / Everywhere we go, people want to know, who we are, so we tell them 'We are the union, the mighty, mighty union.'" Chanting in both English and Spanish the workers shouted out, "The people united will never be defeated."

When the march arrived at the Madera County Government Center, a rally was held. Three home care workers, who are on the union negotiating team, gave a report on the progress being made at the table with the county. According to Adame, "They tell us that they understand what we are going through." She adds that "the supervisors just got a big salary increase and now earn \$58,000 a year." Adame says she is not sure that the supervisors really understand the home care workers' situation.

Other speakers at the rally included Randy Ghan, secretary-treasurer of the Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings Central Labor Council. Ghan said that the 60,000 union workers in the Valley support the home care workers struggle for a living wage and understand

the value of the work they do. Several speakers from the Madera Democratic Party told the crowd of their support for organized labor. Retired teacher Ray Ensher said that "Madera County Supervisors should be ashamed of themselves for taking a salary increase without taking care of home care workers first."

The home care workers and their allies then filled the Board of Supervisors chambers and demanded the county bargain in good faith. Testimony was presented by several home care workers calling on the supervisors to find the money to pay a living wage and provide health care benefits for those who provide health care to others. Adame was not optimistic that today's march and rally had changed the minds of a majority of supervisors to support home care workers on this issue. "We are going to have to keep fighting and keep up the pressure so we can get a good contract," Adame said.



KMJ Talk-Show Host Advocates Burning of Local ACLU Office

BY MIKE RHODES



LAST MONTH, LOCAL KMJ talk-show host Jaz McKay called on his listeners to burn down the local American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) office because he disagrees with their politics. KMJ is the most-listened-to station in Fresno and perhaps the most conservative. In addition to McKay, KMJ also gives a voice to the People's Church, Rush Limbaugh, and Ray Appleton, while offering no time for liberal or left talk-show hosts.

Assuming that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) would have an interest in a talk-show host who is making what sounded to me to be a terrorist threat, I decided to contact them and see what they could do about the situation. You had better believe that if someone with an Arabic-sounding name had called on listeners of a radio station to burn down a military recruiting station, that person would be spending the night in jail. Right?

My first stop was the FCC Web site, where their complaint process was explained: www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html. Unfortunately, when you go to this Web site, it is not immediately obvious where to go next. If you use the option to file a "general complaint," then you go into FCC form 475 about telephone slamming. The only other option is to click on the form for obscene, profane, or indecent broadcasts. Would calling on the ACLU office be obscene, profane, or indecent? Perhaps all three?

Then I saw that the FCC has a hotline number: (888) CALL-FCC (225-5322). I decided to call them directly and ask how to file a complaint about the talk-show host on KMJ. The representative from the FCC told me that the only thing they were interested in was obscene, profane, or indecent broadcasts. If it wasn't obscene, profane, or indecent, they did not want to hear about it. I said, "But the host of this show is calling on his listeners to burn down the local American Civil Liberties Union office. Don't you care?" She said, "Sir, that would be a matter for local law enforcement."

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Since we know that law enforcement officials closely read every issue of this publication, we are sure they will learn about this injustice and bring the criminal to justice. Right? Well, just in case local law enforcement does not see it as their responsibility to stop terrorist threats, there is a Plan B. Since KMJ is granted a license by the FCC, they are required to operate in the public interest. If you believe that allowing their talk-show hosts to rant terrorist threats is not in the public interest, you can challenge their license when it comes up for renewal in December 2005. If you believe this community deserves "fair and balanced" reporting, you might want to visit the Media Alliance Web site at www.media_alliance.org/article.php?story=20040714040649686 and learn how to bring this monster to its knees.



NURSES STRIKE IN FRESNO

BY MIKE RHODES



NURSES FROM UNIVERSITY Medical Center (UMC) were on strike December 23, 2004.

The one-day strike was called by nurses who are members of the California Nurses Association (CNA) to pressure management to bargain in good faith. The company is offering a 2% salary increase, but the nurses want at least 5%. A standardized pay scale and an improved pension plan are also being sought by striking workers.

Don Nielsen, CNA director of arbitration in the Central Valley and the lead negotiator at UMC, said "This strike is about fairness and getting justice for the nurses that work at UMC." Nurses at UMC have been working without a contract for seven years. Nielsen says that "when Fresno County privatized the hospital in 1996 all of the nurses were told to re-apply for their jobs. That is when the new owner, Community Hospital, refused to recognize the union." CNA filed unfair labor practice complaints with the National Labor Relations Board and fought for seven years for recognition. The NLRB ruled in favor of the nurses and their right to be represented by CNA. Registered

Nurse Vi Valdez, who has worked at UMC since 1975, was one of the nurses forced to re-apply for her own job. Valdez says "nurses at UMC are underpaid and there is a high turnover rate." She said that five nurses on the fourth floor just quit because of low wages and disrespectful managers. Many of the workers on the fourth floor are foreign-born workers with work permits. Nielsen said that the manager on that floor has threatened those workers with deportation if they supported the union.

Community Hospital CEO Hinton visited Valdez's floor recently. He asked her how things were going and she complained about wages. Hinton offered that he has gone without a pay increase for the last 3 years. Valdez replied that "if I made \$490,000 a year I wouldn't mind going without a raise this year either."

RNs being hired today are receiving the same salary as RNs who have worked at UMC for eight years. The employees walking the picket line in the bitter cold today are fed up. They want a contract that provides a fair and equitable

salary, a pension they can retire on, and dignity and respect on the job.

Community Hospital's response has been to bring in a union-busting firm and replacement workers. The replacement workers were driven across picket lines in a bus this morning. Nielsen says they "are from out of state and are being paid for three days work, even though this is a one-day strike." Several nurses I spoke with were angry that the company can find the money to pay for these strike-breakers but plead poverty at the bargaining table.

At a noon rally, nurses and their allies heard that they were not alone. Leslie Hawkins, a nurse from Kaiser, which is the only other unionized hospital in Fresno, told the UMC workers that they supported their struggle. Speakers from Memorial Hospital in Long Beach, CNA president Debra Berger, and a hospital worker from Sacramento came to express their solidarity and support.

Community Hospital is a nonprofit institution with a local board of directors. It is also the largest private employer in Fresno County, with

three hospitals in the area. The problems at UMC began when Fresno County decided to privatize health services in the mid-1990s by selling Valley Medical Center to Community Hospital. There was massive public opposition to the plan, but Fresno County Supervisors were able to complete the privatization plan and give a \$35 million annual bailout to Community Hospital. CNA representative Nielsen says that this amounts to a "public bailout for private gain."

Valdez says "Support for the strike is strong throughout the hospital and the workers will do what it takes to win this contract." Today's strike was the second strike in a month. For more information, see the report on the earlier strike at sfbay.indymedia.org/news/2004/11/1706939.php For more information about the California Nurses Association, see www.calnurse.org/.

For information about Community Hospital, see www.communitymedical.org/.

OCCUPIED TERRITORY II: COMMUNIQUE #1

Out of the (Ballot) Box, and Into the Street!

by The Occupied Territory Collective
OCCUPIED TERRITORY
anarchist gathering 2005

ANATIONAL SOCIAL EXPERIMENT IS taking place; you are one of the subjects determining its outcome. We have before us an administration bent on expanding an ideological view that sees manifest destiny as a logical advance for the US elite. Capital has never been this homogenized, the state never been this ferocious, the spectacle never been so clear. Spray paint something on a white wall, and see how long it stays up. Critique your teacher in class, and see how long you stay in the room. Authoritarian systems can't handle critique. If it's possible to critique, then it's even more possible to come up with alternatives.

An alternative is what we're after. It's on the tip of everyone's tongue: will we give it a name? It's in the forefront of everyone's thoughts: will we create an alternative realization? Are we out to perpetuate oppression, or will people join our ranks? Are we out to create just another -ism, or will people be drawn to us as we arm ourselves alongside them on the factory floor as we head for the boss's office, zip each other's backpacks as we leave the scene of what they will call crimes, grow food with each other as we defend the earth that we call home, hold each other and catch the tears of sorrow and joy? Tears and sweat, which are watering the seeds of new life. Seattle has come and gone, San Francisco can be shut down, and Chiapas and Buenos Aires gleam in the distance. We know we can occupy, but the question is: can we sustain?

Many laughed at us when we said that voting wasn't the answer, and then they found themselves in the same streets as us, demanding, acting, breathing, abandoned, awakening, and living. In cities across the empire, people erupted in anger, not just at the presidential selection, but at the system in general. Against the sham of US democracy, where only a few powerful parties can act in the show.

The intense politicization leading up to the election left many feeling that their votes would count. Now what? When those with faith in the electoral system have realized that again they have been marginalized, they're asking: what now?

Four years from now will "Anyone but . . ." again be the battle cry? Or are we going to be so enraptured by the sight of a new dawn, embracing the freedom and connection my hand feels in yours as we give all we have to take back our lives.

Will we only look back and laugh? Now that we've left the ballot box behind, how do we approach the dream?

OCCUPIED TERRITORY II

In the summer of 2004, more than 75 people from around the country (around 15, including international travelers, were detained or stopped by police), gathered in the mountains outside of Fresno. In the forests, rocks, meadows, and streams that some of us had never seen before, we built our community. General assemblies, work groups, kitchen collectives, security teams, and spontaneous work groups gave control back to those assembled.

Anarchy never tasted so sweet, and liberation so real. We talked into the night, with words, ideas, and opinions so true and strong they disgraced Internet message boards and Web sites the world over. When all that stood between federal agents and our community was us, some flashlights, walkie-talkies, and solidarity, we knew this time we were fighting for more than a street or an intersection: we were fighting for our home.

We are asking for your presence once again to stand with us once more. To discuss and plan, organize and talk, wonder and argue. To bask in the inspiration of each other's stories, histories, struggles, and skills. To build once again.

We call you to Occupied Territory.

SF Bay Area: Presidents Day weekend, 2005

Send an e-mail to

Occupiedterritory@riseup.net

Updates and message boards: <www.Occupiedterritory.net>

Peace, Love & Anarchy in Modesto

By,
Carmella
Vargas-Peeler

Anarchism is based on the idea that organization does not require rulers—that people can get together and deal with all the problems facing them without an authority directing them. Only for those who think that the only way to organize is to have a boss giving orders, does “anarchy” mean “chaos.”

—from “Anarchists... What We Stand For”
(Direct Action Anti-Authoritarians handout)



If I were to say that Modesto, California, is a well-spring of anarchist activity, what assumptions could be drawn? One could assume Modesto is subject to vandalism and random violence. But this would only be an assumption. The fact of the matter is that these anarchist activities include support for the impoverished, labor solidarity, ethical ecology and information for the disfranchised.

Direct Action Anti-Authoritarians (DAAA), based in Modesto, is an affinity group that focuses on anti-hierarchal community building. Operating without leadership or rules, they strive to improve the quality of life for all in their community through mutual aid and education.

Given the stereotypes associated with anarchism, here are some definitions to help shed light on a rather convoluted subject. The following are quotes taken from the DAAA outreach leaflet:

Direct Action: “Direct action is about empowering people, it’s about breaking from dependency on others to run our lives. Direct action is any sort of action that works to directly stop or change something.”

Anti-Authoritarianism: “When we think about the core values of this country that we treasure and love: freedom, democracy, autonomy, it becomes clear that none of these things exist within the current capitalist landscape. There’s no freedom in renting yourself out in order to survive... The things we truly strive for: creation, love, meaning, accomplishment, community, self-worth; these things are not commodities... They are only created in a social relationship that lacks hierarchy, which lacks social class, bosses, coercion, and illegitimate authority. Since we can’t find them in authoritarian structures, we’re going to have to look elsewhere.”

Open movement toward freedom from oppressive rule. Well, there we have it. This sounds rather agreeable.

I spent a day with members of the DAAA collective: Doug Gilbert, 20 years old, Brian Robinson, 32, and the Rev. Terry Clancy, 17.

Food Not Bombs projects aid the less fortunate by gathering citizens to take action against waste and hunger (see <www.foodnotbombs.net>). DAAA has been running Food Not Bombs meals in Modesto parks, providing “a plate for the system’s waste, and a banner and platform for the poor to organize under.” FNB is a movement without central leadership or direction that feeds the poor without incentive or religious affiliation, and gives the poor and homeless a place to organize and make their needs known and harder to overlook. Food gathered by FNB is liberated from the stigma of being “trash,” taken because it was otherwise discarded by less appreciating establishments (i.e., through dumpster-diving and donations). Trash from area dumpsters is reappraised and made into hot vegetarian meals available to all.

On a Saturday, one of the days the DAAA feeds in Cesar Chavez Park in Modesto, I lent a hand and helped them prepare that day’s meal.

Carmella: “Where do you guys get the food for the

feedings?”

Rev. Terry: “Trader Joe’s dumpster. Every day’s like Christmas!”

Every day, perfectly edible food is thrown out by supermarkets and restaurants.

Doug: “And a friend of ours works in a bakery and gives us what they would normally throw away.”

One person’s waste is another person’s subsistence. DAAA hosted a “Really Free Market” and offered free food and clothing on Nov. 26 (Buy Nothing Day) at a busy intersection. Items were donated, traded, and given away: food, blankets, clothes, diapers, and toys were among the many items. DAAA counted the event a success. As indybay.org reported, “All in all, an autonomous zone, although short, was sustained beneath the trees in a corporate shopping mall, not only through the work of an anarchist collective, but mostly with the help of a community that directly saw the benefit in sharing over competition, and solidarity over class division.”

Unfortunately this sort of compassion is rare.

Rev. Terry: “We’re an oddity to [the people fed]. What church are you with? Is this community service? You’re not getting paid?”

The homeless are constantly harassed by local police and fined for numerous dubious offenses, then subsequently driven from a town because they can’t afford to pay the fines. Food Not Bombers are chased from one park to the next by cops and local establishments because no one wants to “attract more homeless.”

DAAA responded to continued harassment by police and complaints from a local church that shared space with the park they were feeding in. Someone from the church had a car broken into, and blame was instantly placed on the homeless.

Doug: The situation was that the church called the police, lied about the situation, and the police turned around and told the good samaritans to leave. They didn’t say anything directly to us, although the church did ask the police through petitions to get rid of us and other people who feed in the park.

Brian: “Because they said there was ‘too much vandalism,’ ” he scoffs.

DAAA has taken the initiative to “Reclaim the Parks” with an occupation in Tower Park complete with feedings and “Know Your Rights” education. In August of last year DAAA helped organize a protest march of homeless and activists from Tower Park to Grenada Park.

DAAA gave voice to many of the concerns of local homeless that turned to the “aid” of Modesto Mission. Thanks to Modesto bylaws, there’s no alternative shelter, despite repeated complaints of compulsory church service attendance, the strict enforcement of sex separation—men and women are kept apart from friends, family, and lovers, and being caught breaking the rules means expulsion—and repression of alternative religious views. A letter enumerating their concerns was published and sent to Modesto Mission, inviting the mission to meet with them to address the issues. (Find that letter at <www.ainfos.ca/03/jul/ainfos00131.html>.)

Sadly, some who were deterred by other homeless organizations from joining the protest were instructed to voice their grievances through “the proper channels” because it’s best not to rock the boat.

DAAA also lends its help to the organization of workers.

DAAA supports Stockton truckers organizing under Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), showing solidarity for strikers and cheering them on as they’ve gained nearly 70% of their demands. The IWW truckers demanded that the DAAA supporters stick around after a day of picketing during the strike. Unity means friendship:

Rev. Terry (to Doug): “Remember how they made us eat with them? They were really grateful.”

Downtown Modesto, like most urban areas, is full of fun-seeking youth and panhandlers trying to get by—particularly on weekends. This poses a problem when these people stand in contrast to an image that business and local government are trying to project. The police have made it a policy to intervene with their “round ‘em up, scare ‘em out” policy, and this is where Anarchist Café comes in.

Anarchist Café sets up against an empty wall in downtown Modesto between a Jamba Juice and a Starbucks. There, DAAA provides free information about injustice and self-empowerment against oppression, and conversation (about everything from anarchy to religion to neo-conservatism to pop music), and free snacks.

Brian: “Some of their customers complain [about our presence], but the employees of Jamba Juice usually defend us. They’re really cool with us. There’s this one guy that works there who raises his fist and says ‘Freedom of speech!’ He’s awesome.”

“Cool! Donuts!” comments a young passerby. “Can I get one?”

Doug: “Yeah. Everything you see here is free for you to take. The information is free, but we have to ask for a \$5 donation for the shirts.”

DAAA procured donuts discarded from the local Krispy Kreme.

Rev. Terry: “We try to have some kind of free food every week.”

The aforementioned shirts are do-it-yourself-style silk screens using stencils made by DAAA to raise awareness and revenue needed for small purchases for the group’s various causes; for instance, and most obviously, to make more shirts. The designs include stencils from <www.notmygovernment.com> and PETA. Slogans include “Oink, Oink. Stay in Line!” and “Meat = Murder.” A shirt showing unity for the Zapatista movement depicts a masked Zapatista peering over “EZLN” in block lettering.

“Copwatch” is a part of the Café and DAAA’s public activity. The group carries a video camera “just in case,” to monitor the activities of local cops, and try to record arrests and general police harassment. Kids who have gotten to know the group and what they’re about report potential harassment to DAAA.

Peace, Love & Anarchy in Modesto cont.

Rev. Terry: “Once I caught [the cops] arresting a homeless man. So, I started filming it. They yelled at me and told me I was violating Penal Code 148. We didn’t know what that was at the time. We know now that it’s interfering with an arrest. They detained me and lectured me. It was like an hour of dumb cop talk.”

After spending the day with people with whom I began to identify with personally and politically, I began to wonder what brought them to allegedly extreme conclusions and direct action.

Carmella: “So why anarchy?”

Doug: “Anarchy strives for a higher standard of living for everyone, solidarity and freedom. It advocates a horizontal structure of decision-making that includes everyone. Local solutions for local problems. Environmentalism is essential to the movement.

Rev. Terry: “I’ve always been critical. Anarchy is open and we all have a part. Most ‘liberal’ action works within a system that perpetuates what liberals are supposed to be against. Anarchy just makes sense. Mutual consensus and aid works on both large and small levels.”

Brian: “I don’t consider myself an anarchist. Well, I guess I am, but I don’t like labels. I saw what was wrong and I’m trying to do something about it. Eventually I just saw that this (anti-authoritarian) is the way I always was.”

DAAA sees the dismantling of authoritarian rule as the means to meet a higher standard of living, in opposition to the idle wishing of Central Valley towns for a Nordstrom’s or an Ikea (as if our problems will be solved through more consumer culture). The betterment of a community depends on the health and contentment of all its citizens—and DAAA Modesto is working to build a community of mutual aid and independence governed by a real social contract. They, and those like them all over the world, are working to raise the standard of living locally, and networking to cultivate



BY DAN WATERHOUSE

2004 was, in many ways, a tumultuous year for the Fresno GLBTQ community. There were, and will continue to be, moments of challenge, strife, and struggle; there were, and will be, moments of great success and surprise.

As the year began, no one could foretell that San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom would challenge California’s marriage laws. No one could foretell the court decision in Massachusetts legalizing same-sex nuptials there.

Those two events set in motion acts by extremists on the right that ultimately brought Fresno’s GLBTQ community very publicly “out.”

As the Pride parade organizers were meeting with the city cops, a rumor surfaced that KMJ 580 had called for a boycott of GLBT-owned businesses and of any business employing members of our community. Rumor was the boycott was to drive us out of Fresno and the Central Valley. KMJ management emphatically denied they were involved, saying they would not want to alienate the station’s gay and lesbian employees or advertisers.

The emotions over the same-sex marriage issue sparked in August. Citing a need to “prevent” the issue from becoming “divisive in our community,” Fresno mayor Alan Autry joined with the Rev. Jim Franklin of Cornerstone

Church to create an “affirmation of traditional marriage” event at Fresno City Hall on Aug. 29.

The mayor’s announcement that this event would be held at City Hall enraged and galvanized many in the community. To them, the mayor was giving official sanction to intolerance and to “gay bashing.”

Straight allies from the local progressive community joined us to protest what the mayor was up to. They were at City Hall with us. Wesley United Methodist Church also held an inclusive “affirmation of vows” ceremony the same day.

The community would return to City Hall two months later to mark National Coming Out Day. Mayor Autry refused to sign a proclamation acknowledging Coming Out Day and was nowhere in sight, in spite of his promise in August that he would support and speak at any GLBTQ event at City Hall.

If the mayor’s exclusive event was supposed to defuse emotions, it didn’t. It poured gasoline on the fire. Hate crimes — especially physical violence — have been on the rise since August. Several people have come to me saying they’ve been bashed but haven’t reported it because they don’t trust the local cops to do anything about it.

One of the high points in 2004 was the growth of the Gay Straight Alliance clubs in high schools up and down the Valley. This success has set the radical right’s teeth on edge. They’re aggressively marketing the “ex”-gay movement in response. During the youth day at Reel Pride in September, a group of young “ex”-gays invaded the Tower Theatre property, handing out literature until they were asked to leave. Sources tell me this bunch was linked to Cornerstone Church.

This preoccupation with the GSA may have set the stage for the Love Won Out (Focus on the Family’s) conference at People’s Church in early November. The community turned out to provide a different perspective to conference-goers — and to respond to the “spiritual violence” of such a conference.

The pastor of the Newman Center had chastising words for me recently. He considered that “the article” reporting on the People’s Church event (and by extension, the community’s response to the conference) “simply served to exacerbate the already-existing tensions over this difficult issue.” To the good Father: I was there; my article was an accurate depiction of how the community reacted to the conference. I have no apologies; as a “voice” of the GLBTQ community, I write from that perspective and no other.

The year ended on a high note when several community groups marched in the 75th annual Magical Holiday Parade for the first time ever. A city police representative approached Mike Martinez of QueerFresno.com right before Thanksgiving with an invitation for the GLBTQ community to participate. While some in the community had misgivings about the city’s invitation and chose not to participate, our involvement was generally well-received by the other groups marching, the 15,000 lining the parade route, and by the organizers. The parade announcer made a point of thanking our community for “taking part in our parade”!

What’s ahead for 2005? More high points and, I’m sure, more struggles. The community is more visible now as the result of 2004 and that ultimately can only be positive.

We’re like a genie — once out of the bottle, we can’t be forced back in.

CURB Hearing Comes to Fresno

The Prison Moratorium Project announces a Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) hearing to be held here in Fresno in late February. CURB is a broad-based coalition of more than 40 organizations seeking to CURB prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and the number of prisons in the state. Speakers and organizations interested in testifying at the hearing are urged to contact PMP organizers Debbie Reyes at (559) 916-4370 or Leonel Flores at 360-7771 or call our 24-hour line at (559) 444-2188.

Prison Moratorium Project announces the kickoff of its first monthly meetings to be held at the Center for Nonviolence on the last Saturday of each month from 10 AM to noon beginning in January 2005. Contact PMP Organizers at Debbie Reyes at (559) 916-4370 or Leonel Flores at 360-7771 for more information.

IS THIS THE BEST THIS CITY CAN DO FOR ITS HOMELESS?

The Poverello House’s tent city was recently renamed the “Village of Hope” and residents were moved into tool sheds. The vast majority of Fresno County’s estimated 16,000 homeless are without shelter, sleeping on the street at night. The Fresno Police Department’s criminalization of the poor and the Rescue Mission’s outdoor drunk tank offer no solutions. Treating each person with dignity and respect, opening up abandoned buildings in the downtown area, and providing needed services to the homeless would restore some hope and bring humanity to a problem Fresnoans have ignored for far too long.

FACTS (Families to Amend California’s Three Strikes)

FACTS group starting up in Fresno. We lost prop 66, but that don’t mean it’s over. The focus of this group is on the positive, not that ‘they’ won or are against us, but that we are committed to doing the right thing.

IF INTERESTED CALL REBECA AT CPH: 731-5129.
Next action is to carpool to statewide FACTS mtg n Bakersfield, 1/8/05, Beale Memorial Library on Truxton, 11-4pm.





OF PRO

By Nicholas J. DeGraff

CHEMICALS AND COPYRIGHTS MADE TWO big wins in Fresno in late November. As the Fresno City Council decided to take no action on challenges that a recent order all but banning medical cannabis in Fresno violates state Proposition 215, two blocks away the Fresno County Board of Supervisors voted to approve a pro-biotechnology resolution brought forward by the Fresno County Farm Bureau. To many the two issues may seem somewhat unrelated, but to those concerned with the increasing influence of corporations and government officials looking to protect their guns and butter at the cost of our health, the issue is one and the same. Both actions by elected officials came in reaction to increasing attempts to provide medicine and ban dangerous products. While this might not necessarily mean that you should worry about genetically engineered pot being sold on the street, you should still be concerned—especially if you have a box of cornflakes in your kitchen cupboard or aging loved ones.

REEFER 'EMERGENCY'!

Years after passage with overwhelming support of voters in 1996, California Proposition 215, also known as the Compassionate Use Act, still remains unclear both to the public and, as shown by the irregular application throughout the state, law enforcement and elected officials. While polling data regularly show that 66% to 75% of people polled in the United States and California, respectively, support the medical use of marijuana, patients and doctors still face numerous challenges. When set into the California Health and Safety Codes, Proposition 215 set in place many important protections for what can be prescribed and who can use medical cannabis, as well as who can provide it and prescribe its use. Possibly more important, though, is what was left out.

THE COMPASSIONATE USE ACT: POT FOR PATIENTS

Now just 389 words in the Health and Safety Code, Proposition 215 protects the rights of “seriously ill Californians”; “to obtain and use marijuana for medical purposes where that medical use is deemed appropriate and has been recommended by a physician who has determined that the person’s health would benefit from the use of marijuana.” This gives doctors the ability to prescribe medical cannabis to patients suffering from cancer, anorexia, AIDS, chronic pain, spasms, glaucoma, arthritis, migraine, or “any other illness for which marijuana provides relief.”

In addition, 215 grants patients the right to designate care providers who can legally grow and provide marijuana for patients along with putting in place protections for doctors from prosecution for prescribing cannabis to patients. What are not outlined are the minimum or maximum amount that a doctor can prescribe to patients and likewise the amount that is reasonable for a patient to obtain. While this has created a great deal of pressure on legislators to establish maximum and minimum dosages that doctors can prescribe for patients, it has also led to advances in the courts for patient rights. No matter the political pressures, the protections that are outlined under Proposition 215 constitute strong law as a ballot initiative, which can only be amended by another initiative or the courts. Not that this means that legislators from the local level to the state legislature haven’t tried, especially when it comes to the question of dosage.

MARIJUANA ICE CREAM TRUCKS

Dosage was not the issue, however, in Fresno, California. In late October, the Fresno City Council passed an “emergency ordinance” that was deemed to be necessary, “as an

emergency measure for preserving the public peace, health, and safety.” Established by the ordinance is a change to the municipal code, which limits care providers to three patients. Since then, neighboring Clovis, California, passed a similar ordinance, saying that it feared dispensaries and cooperatives moving to Clovis in the wake of the Fresno ordinance. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors then took the ban to a new level, limiting care providers to two patients and completely banning dispensaries in the rural areas of the county. There is no safe haven left for the terminally ill (much less for state law) in Fresno County. According to a Fresno care provider speaking under the condition of anonymity, “This is a hard blow. Right now, we can barely keep up with the number of patients in need; the last thing we need to [provide care] is to have a limit that lets us have fewer patients than we already do. Our neighbors are suffering. Now it may be a crime, and we have no choice.”

Cited in the ordinance were concerns that cities in California “report adverse impacts in and around” medical marijuana facilities, such as “smoking of marijuana in and around the facility, patients congregating and smoking in nearby parks,” increased crime, and adverse effects to business around facilities. Sensationalizing the issue, Chief Dyer commented on the approval of the ordinance, saying, “This would prevent someone from loading up an ice cream truck with marijuana and delivering it throughout the city.”

TERMINAL ILLNESS: A CRIME EPIDEMIC?

However, there have yet to be reports from local residents of marijuana-laden ice cream trucks cruising the streets of Fresno. In fact, since the passage of Proposition 215 and the subsequent eight years of active work by local care providers and doctors, no reports have been made of adverse effects on crime or public safety, leading many to question how much of an emergency actually exists. “We’ve had no problems of any kind over the years, we try to avoid them and stay out of the spotlight. We have a professional attitude toward what we do. This isn’t slanging drugs on the corner, this is helping those in need,” according to local care providers.

Included in the evidence to support the new restrictions, which for all intents and purposes shut down care providers, were problems reported in and around dispensaries in the City of Oakland. This, however, comes in contrast to a 2004 resolution passed by the Oakland City Council making the enforcement of laws surrounding even the illegal distribution and possession of marijuana the “lowest possible priority of the Oakland Police Department.” According to the resolution passed last February, “The Oakland Police Department shall make investigation, citation, and arrest for private adult cannabis offenses Oakland’s lowest law enforcement priority.” Cited by Oakland is the amazing cost that goes into the enforcement of cannabis-related laws, which not only fuels the politicization of the medical marijuana issue but also budget deficits in the face of a growing rash of hard drugs such as methamphetamine and opiates. Included in the reasoning was a need for the overall legalization of marijuana use so that it can be taxed, and so the criminal enterprise surrounding the sale of marijuana, which relies on marijuana remaining illegal, can be undermined. A strange opinion for a city cited as evidence of an emergency threat from medical marijuana dispensaries.

POT HOUSE PARANOIA

Shaver Lake attorney Bill McPike has expressed a belief that an ordinance passed by the Fresno City Council limiting care providers of medical marijuana had less to do with safety concerns, and more to do with his plans to license a medical marijuana dispensary in Fresno’s Tower District, expected to provide services for up to 5000 patients.

Statements by Fresno City Council members seemed to support this assertion. According to Councilmember Jerry

Duncan in an interview with the Fresno Bee, the reason he voted in favor of the ordinance wasn’t safety concerns but rather that he doesn’t “support the idea of anybody selling marijuana in the city of Fresno.” This sentiment seemed to be supported by other members of city leadership. A confused Councilmember Dages also stated to the Fresno Bee that he disagreed with the 1996 law and commented that “I have a real tough time with people with greenhouses growing marijuana for their neighbor next door because, golly gee, they don’t feel good.” In effect: “Quit whining, terminal cancer and AIDS patients.”

Care providers and patients didn’t stand still. Walking into city hall carrying a four-foot marijuana plant, his attorney at his side and patients surrounding him, James Mitchell walked into the Fresno City Council chambers and with the Chief of Police looking on, stood before the city council and challenged the ordinance under the law. Said Mitchell, “This violates my rights.” According to Mitchell’s attorney, Richard Runcie, “The city council doesn’t have the power to trim the rights that were created under Proposition 215.” According to Runcie, the ordinance creates a new “unlawful class.” By trimming the rights of care providers provided by 215, anyone providing care to more than three patients would fall into a class of offense not provided for under 215—a class of crime that may cause those covered by the stronger law of 215 to face local charges that are in conflict with state law. The Council Held Strong

COURTS DEFINE THE RULE

The position taken by the Fresno City Council may seem to be on solid legal ground from their perspective, but in the context of law and recent advances in patient rights, the confidence of city council members who have gone on record seems hasty at best. While little to no case law seems to have been created that regulates the number of patients a care provider can have other than protections, argued by Runcie, to be implied in 215; California courts have shown a steady stream of rulings that have defined the tender issue of dosages, and have shown a tendency to favor patients over law enforcement in some important decisions. According to Chris Conrad, a well-known, court-recognized expert in medical marijuana matters with Americans for Safe Access, “One of the strengths of Proposition 215 is its ambiguity.”

According to Conrad, this ambiguity, while allowing for local problems, such as the Fresno ordinance and state legislative bodies, has allowed medical marijuana advocates moving their struggle out of the political spectacle where decisions are based on lobby power and self-interested influence, and into the courts where science and justice still at times count.

In the years since the passage of 215, California courts have made a number of important rulings defining the law, often in favor of patient rights. The Trippett decision in 1997 established some guidelines on amounts that patients and care providers are allowed to possess. According to this decision, the amount is not set by local legislative bodies, but is linked to current medical need, implying that doctors and medical researchers were the better judges of dosages for patients. This, however, led to more controversy as law enforcement agencies determined amount based not on actual amount, but on the number of plants which can vary in yield from a few grams to a few pounds.

The Arbacascus decision settled this dispute, ruling that yield per plant is variable and therefore is linked more closely to amount produced rather than the number of plants. In addition, the ruling set another precedent and ruled that prosecutors could not keep refiling charges once a case had been dismissed. According to Conrad, “Prosecutors could re-file three times and at the cost to patients of \$10,000 each time in legal costs. They would end up bankrupting people, often without ever getting a conviction, or possibly adding additional fines if convicted.” While under this ruling, charges could not be refilled, many patients protected under 215 found themselves charged with intent to sell as continued pressure was put on patients by law enforcement. District Attorneys argued that patients had to prove that they didn’t have an amount greater than their need for the

DEFIT AND HYSTERIA: MORE COPYRIGHT CHEMICALS FOR FRESNO

purpose of illegal distribution.

The Mower decision advanced protections from unjust prosecution or conviction, by putting the burden of proof on District Attorneys and not patients: forcing DAs to prove that the amount that patients have on hand is greater than their need. Overall, decisions by the courts subsequent to the passing of 215 have put the burden of proof on law enforcement and prosecutors, protected patients from forms of oppressive prosecution, and have protected the transportation of marijuana within the state so that patients are free to move around the state and still have access to medicine.

NOT ALL ROSES

Seen in the actions taken by the Fresno City Council, while the courts have made some important decisions to expand rights, patients have had mixed results with their elected officials.

As Fresno and Clovis pass emergency ordinances to tie the hands of local care providers, the California Legislature has been hard at work on SB420, which is now waiting for approval by the governor. While the bill creates an ID card system, which will help patients avoid the legal hassle of arrest and which, among other benefits, provides reimbursement for care providers and a 50% Medi-cal discount, it also creates some serious issues for patients. The legislature cannot make an ID card system mandatory because it would overrule 215, which it doesn't have the power to do. It also creates a distinction between patients: those with cards and those who live in counties that don't provide ID cards or don't have them—wh will face arrest and greater suspicion.

Even more serious, SB420 also creates a default limit for municipalities of six ounces of dried marijuana, or six mature plants. These guidelines, while allowing municipalities to increase, but not decrease this limit, is not based on any scientific research. According to Conrad, "The guideline was based on public opinion polling. They wanted to know what was the amount that people felt comfortable with." This information was combined with guidelines set by other states with more, according to Conrad, "archaic" law to produce the guideline found in SB420. What wasn't considered was medical research, which suggests higher guidelines may be necessary. But why ignore medical research when establishing dosage guidelines?

'FRANKENFOOD' INVASION

As medicine found itself in the media spotlight, nearby, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors were discussing a resolution advocating an increase in the amount of bioengineered food into the 60% of the nation's fruits and vegetables that are grown in the San Joaquin Valley. The pro-biotechnology resolution was hailed as an achievement for farmers and the valley's economy, as well as a step toward providing "food to feed the world." According to Fresno County Agriculture Commissioner, Jerry Prieto, who co-introduced the resolution with the Fresno County Farm Bureau, "It's important for farmers to have the tools to be competitive. Biotechnology holds great promise." Prieto cites countries in South America and Asia, many of them Third World countries, which regularly use biotechnology with even less restriction than the few restrictions currently in place in the United States. In fact, use in the Third World has been a driving mantra behind the promotion of bioengineered foods, promising rice which not only nourishes but improves eyesight, crops that resist disease and pests, and greater yields of higher quality product. But does biotechnology really live up to the promise? Who profits even if it doesn't?

PSA FOR DNA?

Biotechnology is not new to California or the Valley. "The ordinance is a PR statement," commented Ron Cummins, National Director of the Organic Consumers Association. "There are already large amounts of GE crops in California. Six hundred thousand acres of cotton in Southern California is genetically modified." This fact seemed to be acknowledged by the Fresno County Farm Bureau. A memo to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors from the Fresno County Farm Bureau, released by Prieto, aired concern toward a growing anti-GE food voice when discussing the resolution: "Currently the counties of Sonoma, Alameda, Lake, Santa Cruz, Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Placer, and Santa Barbara have anti-biotechnology activities under way and may have anti-biotechnology ballot initiatives on the March 2005 ballot."

Prieto seemed to want to downplay the threat of anti-biotechnology resolutions—which have increased in number with each election cycle—saying, "Of the three initiatives that went to voters in the last election, only one passed," but Peggy Miars of the California Certified Organic Farmers Foundation disagrees. While nobody can dispute the numbers, "Of the three counties that had initiatives on the ballot, one lost funding before it got started, one passed, and the other in San Luis Obispo was defeated by a large amount of financial backing by the biotechnology industry. It wasn't an overwhelming voice for biotechnology."

YOU'RE IN TUSKEGEE NOW

According to Cummins, Bioengineered foods are facing a PR crisis and rightly so. While there are few products made without genetically engineered (GE) ingredients, 90% of people say that they want products made with GE foods to be labeled. When asked why, 90% say it is so they can avoid buying products with Bioengineered food. This concern isn't misplaced, as there have been documented incidents involving GE food that cause concern about the healthiness and safeness of products in the marketplace.

With no labeling to notify the consumer, GE food has flooded the marketplace, finding its way into almost every product, especially those using corn or soy. But this flood has not come without cost. In 1996, scientists nearly averted a public health disaster. Millions of acres of soybeans, which were genetically modified with transferred DNA from brazil nuts also introduced a common allergen found in brazil nuts. The product was pulled from markets before it could



be consumed; however, if the Ssoybeans had reached the market, many may have become ill and died from allergic reactions that consumers would not expect.

This doesn't mean that legislators, public safety officials, and those entrusted to protect food safety put safeguards in place to protect the public from another incident. In 1998, Starlink corn was approved only for use as animal feed after researchers were unable to determine if the gene-spliced corn would cause affects on humans such as rashes, diarrhea, and respiratory problems. However, after the genetic sequences migrated into nearby fields of corn intended for human consumption, DNA from Starlink corn, which is illegal for human use was found in products both in the United States and internationally. Unlike in 1996, the hazardous corn was consumed, and allergic reactions, some serious, were reported. According to Cummins, "people reported cases of anaphylactic shock, which can be life threatening."

Fresno County Agriculture Commissioner, Jerry Prieto isn't swayed, "If there is a case of human death that we can document, we will document that and try to prevent that in the future." According to Prieto, the evolution of biotechnology is a necessary evil akin to the development of vaccines. "When we developed vaccines, people died. Even though people had to die to perfect the science, in the end we ended up with something safe that saves lives." This may be of little comfort to consumers who, with no labeling of GE food products, are more like the unwilling subjects of modern Tuskegee experiments than willing lab rats.

JONAS SALK FROWNS?

While the Fresno County AG Commissioner may liken the development of biotechnology to the evolution of modern vaccines, biologists with the Salk Institute, named for Jonas Salk, creator of the polio vaccine; raise caution. David Schubert, a cell biologist with the Salk Institute, reported that "GM [genetically modified] food is not a safe option, given our current lack of understanding of the consequences of recombinant technology." According to Schubert, the unpredictability of genetic engineering techniques could lead to "the biosynthesis of molecules that are toxic, allergenic, or carcinogenic." While vaccines have increased life expectancy and living conditions around the world, the effects seen suggest that biotechnology may not hold the same promise.

Supporters of GE crops have lauded the positive benefits that can be obtained by the recombination of genes that defies evolution itself, but these "benefits" can be a mixed bag. One major benefit cited by ordinance proponents in Fresno was the reduction of the use of pesticides. "Sure, you

use less [pesticides] at first," commented Peggy Miars, "but studies have shown that GE crops build a resistance [forcing farmers to use more pesticide] . Research needed isn't being done, we don't know the answer to most questions." Critics also fear genetic material being incorporated into existing diseases, to produce super viruses, a possibility researchers have acknowledged.

In this way and many others, farmers are finding that GE crops cost more than they are worth. In addition to the possible increased cost in pesticides, adjacent farmers have had to pay for inspection fees and costly planting processes to avoid GE crops migrating to their fields, which can contaminate their crop. In addition to crop contamination, with copyrights on genetically modified crops put in place by the corporations that develop new varieties of plants, farmers that experience GE crop strains drifting into their fields from neighboring farms can find themselves in legal trouble for copyright infringement. "Freedom of choice is being taken away," says Cummins, "the rights of farmers and consumers are being taken away," by current biotechnology policies. Not only are consumers losing the right to choose at the checkout counter, farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to choose not to grow GE crops, if not impossible in some areas.

The global marketplace hasn't been any kinder to farmers, even those attempting not to use bioengineering. The Fresno County Farm Bureau and the Fresno County AG Commissioner contend that other places using biotechnology without any restrictions are beating out US product in the market. Indeed, the resolution passed by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors cited that,"[the] ability to use biotechnology in agriculture is a key factor by which farmers and ranchers can stay competitive in the global marketplace." However, in the wake of incidents like the Starlink corn contamination in 1998, foreign markets have started to refuse US products because of a lack of control and oversight. Many countries around the world have banned biotech crops, closing markets completely to mystery US products, creating a yearly loss to farmers and the economy.

Yet alternatives do exist. "Gene splicing is outdated," says Cummins. Instead, there are options such as Genetic Marker Assisted Breeding. In this process, scientists map but do not manipulate genetic sequences and naturally breed organically occurring positive qualities into plants. Geneticists identify and map the gene that produces the positive quality so that it can be bred into other varieties naturally. "Say you have a variety of tomato that resists disease well; you can breed those qualities with other tomato varieties," producing a better tomato. With nature doing the process of recombining genetic sequences, "it's a lot safer, and just as effective." Organic farmers have shown over time that new technology is often not as necessary as good farming techniques. "Organic farming techniques are viable on a large and small scale and people can make a living doing it. We don't need biotechnology," says Miars.

But if biotechnology is so dangerous, why isn't it banned altogether?

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY?

Recent events and controversy created by FDA whistleblowers have drawn a lot of attention to the possibility that the interest of corporations and their subsequent seat at the decision-making table have created a flawed system that may jeopardize public health. But to many, this revelation is seen as nothing new.

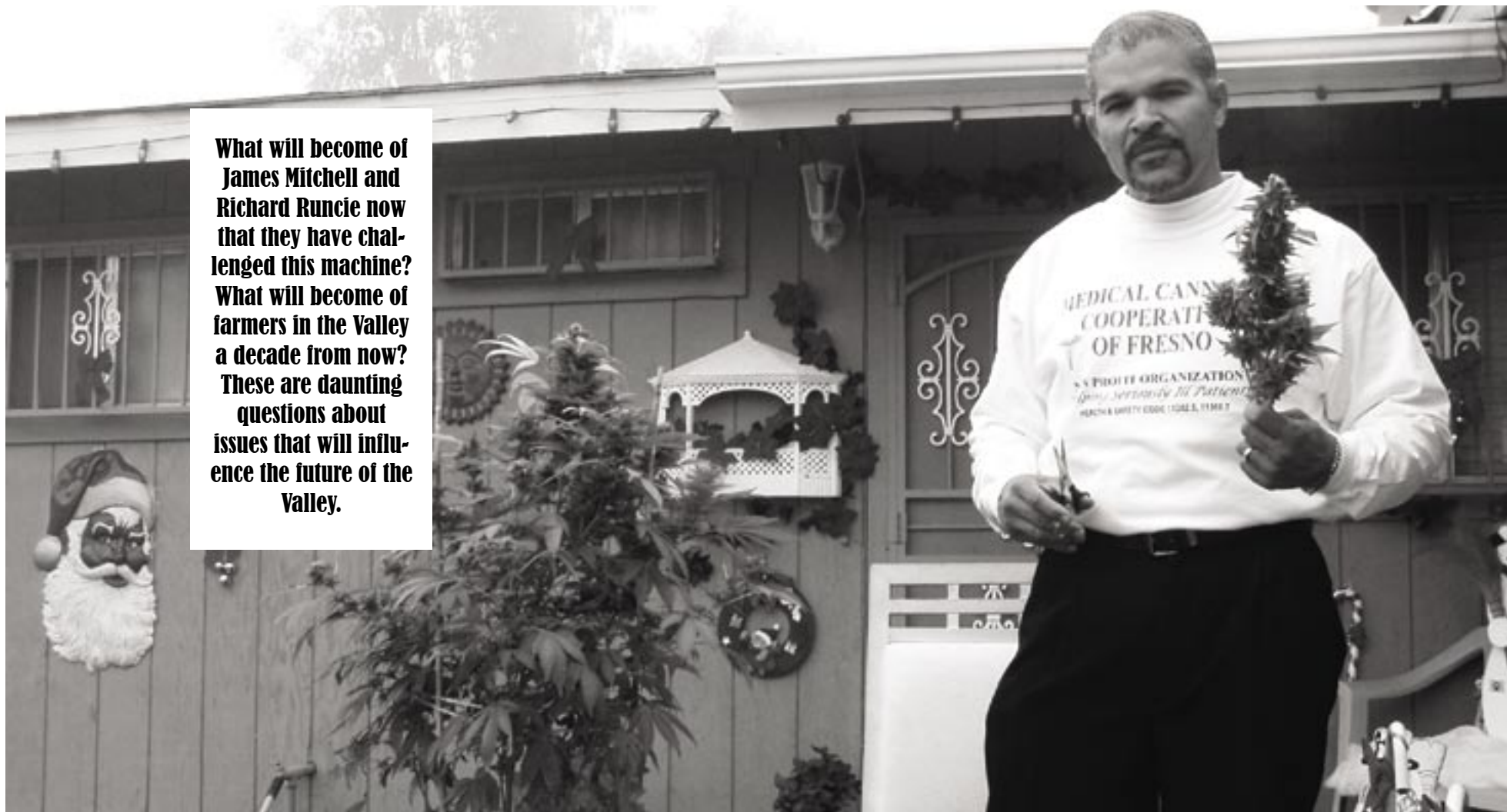
RESEARCH: BOUGHT, IGNORED, AND SUPPRESSED

While many conceptualize the prescription of marijuana ending in the days of reefer madness during the 1930s, medical cannabis didn't come under attack until the "Marihuana Tax Act" of 1941. Not ruled illegal, the medical use of cannabis was so heavily taxed that doctors were unable to prescribe its use—the intended purpose of the law. Testimony by the American Medical Association at the time advocated for the use of marijuana and against the tax that was thinly veiled as a prohibition on medical marijuana. However, the outcry of the medical community had little effect on the legislature.

This has also been the case in subsequent years. Statements by respected medical research organizations such as the New England Journal of Medicine, which stated in 1977, "Federal authorities should rescind their prohibition of the medical use of marijuana for seriously ill patients and allow physicians to decide which patients to treat," as well as the medical research that has been compiled, which overwhelmingly supports the medical use of marijuana, have fallen on deaf ears.

Physicians at the California Medical Research Center agree with the New England Journal of Medicine and re-

What will become of James Mitchell and Richard Runcie now that they have challenged this machine? What will become of farmers in the Valley a decade from now? These are daunting questions about issues that will influence the future of the Valley.



search institutes around the world. According to one physician's assistant, "We have seen great results with the prescription of medical marijuana, especially for patients where other treatments won't work." Patients with hepatitis C have had especially good results, as cannabis is easier on their weaker livers than alternative treatments. Physicians at the California Medical Research Center have also seen positive results for diabetes patients, for patients with psychological disorders such as bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress syndrome, as well as for patients with many other medical disorders. "Marijuana is cheaper, it's non-addicting, there is no tolerance built up because a patient can simply switch strains, and there are many delivery methods that can be used," says a Research Center physician's assistant to Dr. Mollie Fry. However, despite their research and experience, the medical community has not received the credence they deserve; instead, they face persecution on witness stands and they face professional repercussions as a consequence of prescribing medical marijuana.

Biotechnology research has seen a different but no less disturbing problem. According to Ron Cummins of the Organic Consumers Association, "95% of biotechnology research is funded by the industry; it's hard to get data that is independent." According to Cummins, industry funding has created a system where researchers have an interest in producing results that are favorable to the industry. Even internal warnings have gone unheeded. Dr. E. J. Matthews of the FDA Toxicology Group reported, "Genetically modified plants could . . . contain unexpected high concentrations of plant toxicants." According to Dr Suzanne Wuerthele of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "This technology is being promoted in the face of concerns by respectable scientists and in the face of data to the contrary, by the very agencies which are supposed to be protecting human health and the environment. The bottom line in my view is that we are confronted with the most powerful technology the world has ever known, and it is being rapidly deployed with almost no thought whatsoever to its consequences."

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE LUKEWARM

Advocates for both issues have not only had difficulty getting a response from federal policy makers, but have also seen a lukewarm legislative response to both scientific data and to popular opinion expressed at the ballot box. Grass-roots efforts in counties around California represent the infancy of a growing movement for national reforms. According to Cummins, initiatives put forward in counties are intended to build momentum to eventual statewide referendums that would lead national reforms on the regulation of biotechnology, most likely through congressional action. In a true representative democracy, this would not be an unreasonable expectation.

This was the expectation of medical marijuana advocates, who in 1996 passed a wave of initiatives decriminalizing medical marijuana on a state level. In all, 10 states, comprising a portion of not only the population but the electorate, opted to allow patients access to medical marijuana. But, unlike the expected legislative response that should be seen, according to Chris Conrad of Americans for Safe Access, "nothing has happened." Even in the face of a US Supreme Court ruling, saying that the issue of medical marijuana is best handled by the courts, the legislature to date has yet to react.

However, legislators may be slow to react against organizations and lobby groups that comprise the drug enforcement

industry. Police chiefs, prosecutors, and prison guard unions, spend millions each election cycle on political campaigns; a great incentive for government not to threaten the nearly 80% of drug enforcement budgets that are spent on enforcement of cannabis-related laws instead of hard drugs. The influence shown recently by law enforcement officials over municipal medical marijuana policy in the Fresno area marks an even greater advance in a legislative monkey wrench, bringing chilling action to the local level. As recent outpourings of money into elections in San Luis Obispo have shown, the biotechnology industry has the funds to influence campaigns and candidates. Advocates of organic farming have taken notice that the biotechnology industry is willing to spend funds against consumer freedom, as grim a prospect for anti-GMO advocates as it is for the terminally ill.

CURE IN THE COURTS?

Progress on medical marijuana issues through the courts has been seen in California largely "due to active challenge," according to Conrad; the same cannot be said for the status of medical marijuana in other states and in the eyes of the Supreme Court. Pacific Northwest states have not fared as well since passage of initiatives that decriminalized medical marijuana in 1996. Experts note that in large part this has to do with the amount of resources available to activists and with challenges that have been made to the law. However, this does not mean that other courts, especially the Supreme Court, have been as quick to react as those in California.

What may be more interesting is the inconsistent enforcement of the law shown by the Supreme Court. While the Court has yet to make a definitive ruling to stop the DEA from enforcing federal law over state law (such as law resulting from Proposition 215), homemade machine guns and pornography have found protection under the Supreme Court. Protecting constituencies important to the conservative court, citizens can now make homemade machine guns, pack them with porn, and are free to roam. However, patients and doctors have not seen the same protections from the nation's highest court. According to Conrad, the problem with the court lies less in legal ambiguity than it does with justice taking a second seat to ideology.

Biotechnology corporations have had similar good fortune in the courts, even internationally. The Canadian Supreme Court in 1999 ruled against Percy Schmeiser, a small farmer and former mayor of Bruno, Saskatchewan. Schmeiser was sued for copyright infringement by Monsanto after nearby GE canola crops produced by Monsanto migrated onto his nearby canola fields. While Schmeiser had proof that he had not planted the GE crops and that they had migrated from nearby GE crop fields, the court relied only on information obtained from tests performed by Monsanto, and ruled against Schmeiser.

DEBATE OVER VALLEY FUTURE

Optimism spurred by FDA scientists breaking silence to expose problems within the administration of assessing risk to food and drug safety has been moderated by many. Since Congress is expected to return to session and rush to protect corporations from private citizens bringing suit while increasing protections and privileges corporations receive from the courts and legislative bodies, for consumer and patient advocates, the battle seems to be uphill. For Fresno County, this seems to be especially so as national debates over food and drug regulation settle home in local life.

Author Blurp:

Nicholas DeGraff is a Fresno based activist who has worked on both environmental and drug policy issues and was arrested protesting a biotechnology convention held in San Francisco, June 2004. Nicholas also comes from a five-generation farming family in Upstate NY.

•To learn more, attend the screening of THE FUTURE OF FOOD, a documentary film that offers an in-depth investigation into the disturbing truth behind the unlabeled, patented, genetically engineered foods that have quietly filled U.S. grocery store shelves for the past decade. The film will show at the Fresno Art Museum on Thursday, February 17, 2005 at 7:00pm. Call Kenley at 486-1574 for more information.Fresno Art Museum

If you would like to get involved in drug policy or organic farming issues, contact:

•**California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)**

(831) 423-2263

ccof@ccof.org

•**Organic Consumers of America (OCA)**

(218) 226-4164

Información en Español: 415-271-6833

www.organicconsumers.org

•**Americans For Safe Access (ASA)**

www.SafeAccessNow.org

•**California-NORML**

(415) 563-5858

www.canorml.org

•**Compassionate Coalition**

info@CompassionateCoalition.org

www.CompassionateCoalition.org

•**Drug Policy Alliance (DPA)**

(415) 921-4987

www.drugpolicy.org

•**Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP)**

(202) 293-4414

ssdp@ssdp.org

www.ssdp.org



IT’S A HARD-KNOCK life for young aficionados of Hip-Hop and R&B looking for somewhere to go on a Friday or Saturday night in Fresno and dance to the music they love. Perhaps they should make the switch to country music...plenty of places to enjoy that, right? Maybe a dozen or so within the friendly confines of the Clovis city limits alone. Tejano or Salsa? You’ll probably find several choices each weekend. Rock? Blues? Jazz? Yup. Even in Fresno, you can find someplace to enjoy most genres of music in a nightclub setting, including, surprisingly, Reggae. But Hip-Hop is an entirely different animal. The reasons are complex. Hip-Hop seems to have accumulated a sizeable amount of baggage over the years as the problem child of the nightlife scene, but is this scarlet letter justly deserved? The Hip-Hop crowd is the crowd that owners and managers of nightclubs and concert venues in many cities, not just Fresno, see coming and run from in the opposite direction...regardless of the profit potential. Why? What are the reasons behind the stigma attached to fans of without question the most commercially successful and corporately exploited style of music in America?

Rap music and the Hip-Hop culture have gone from “passing fad” in the early 1980’s to “it’ll never last” in the early 90’s to the societal and marketing juggernaut it is today. It has either permeated or absorbed virtually all other genres along the way (i.e. the birth of Rock/Rap bands such as Korn and Rage Against the Machine, or even a recent collaboration of Top 40 Hip-Hop and Country artists Nelly and Tim McGraw). A cursory glance at the Billboard sales charts in any given week reveals the dominance of Hip-Hop and R&B in a musical landscape that once wrote rap music off as a novelty. Its influence stretches far beyond music. Def Jam Recordings founder and cultural mogul Russell Simmons hosted \$10,000 a plate fund-raising dinners for Hillary Clinton’s New York senate run. Eminem released a last-minute scathing video directed at President Bush and the Iraqi War that instantly hit the top of MTV’s rotation and seized the attention of an entire demographic of usually disenfranchised voters. Jay-Z recently fronted an investment group that purchased an NBA franchise which has been rumored to eventually be relocated to the artist’s hometown of Brooklyn, NY. Why then would an audience seeking simply to enjoy a night out on the town enjoying this music, which has been so widely embraced by everyone from ad execs looking to pawn every imaginable product to our own president “W” who recently gave Sean “Puffy” Combs a personal White House tour, be shunned? Perhaps this difficult question can best be answered by representatives of the groups who make the nightlife scene “go,” if you will: a nightclub manager, an independent promoter and a typical club-goer.

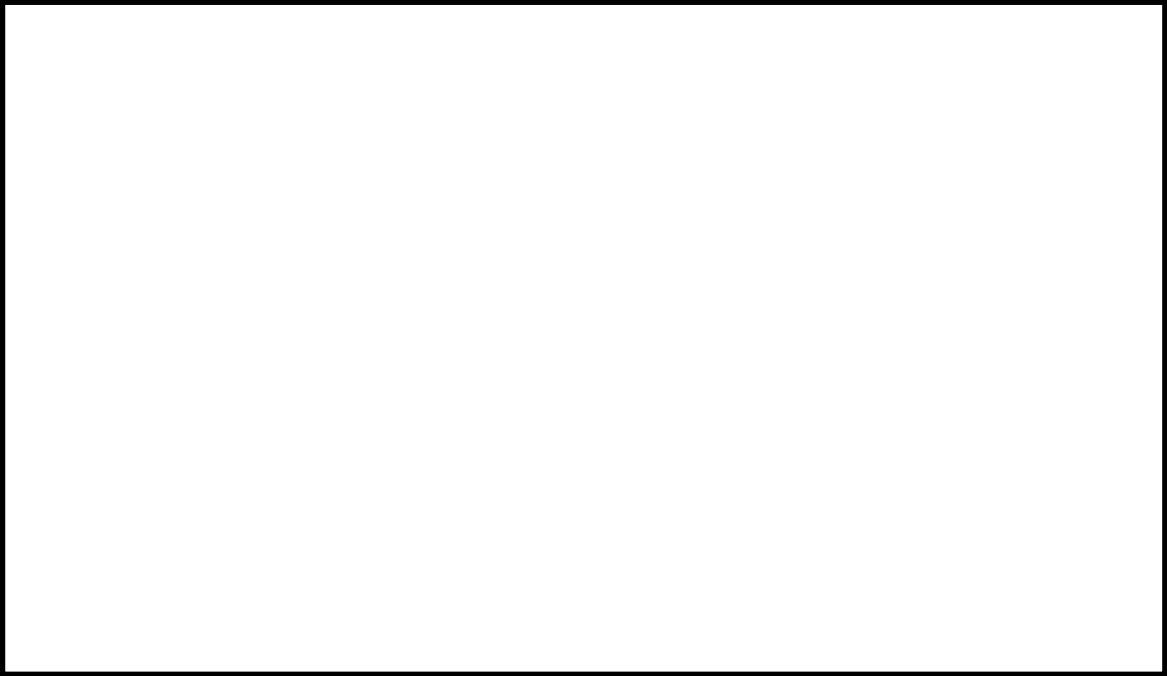
THE MANAGER

When a club owner chooses not to directly book acts and manage

All Dressed Up With No Place to Go

Fresno’s Hip-Hop Nightclub Crowd Often Get Left Out in the Cold

By Rick Petinak



the day-to-day issues of their venue, they hire a manager to perform these duties. One of Fresno’s most unique nightspots, Club Avalon, is known to many as a pool hall where you can hear some good Reggae on Thursday nights. But the club is going to great lengths to overhaul its image, both aesthetically and format-wise. Justin Weakley is the current manager at the Avalon. I asked him to share his thoughts on the subject of Hip-Hop events.

Community Alliance: How long have you been the manager at Club Avalon?

The dominant culture can’t get enough Black music, fashion and entertainment in general and gladly purchases pre-packaged doses of it before retreating to the safety of the suburbs.

JW: I have been the General Manager and Entertainment Manger of the Avalon Club since January of 2004, but I have been performing at the Avalon as a DJ since August of 2003.

CA: What type of crowd has the Avalon drawn historically? Is it representative of the “Tower” crowd, and what is the Tower crowd typically like?

JW: One of the greatest rewards to managing a club located in the Tower District is the diversity of the people. It would be hard to put a label on our target demographic or our regular crowd as the patrons of the club vary on a week to week, often day to day basis. It is only the uninformed of the Fresno area that can put a stereotype on what is such a culturally eclectic area as the Tower District.

CA: What has been your experience with the Hip-Hop crowd and Hip-Hop events? Have these events been predominantly Black, Latino or White in composition, or fairly mixed?

JW: As with any event or performance a venue engages in, there are pros and cons to the undertaking. Hip-Hop events have notoriously been regarded as “problem” events yet I have found that more problems occur during Hip-Hop events when promoted incorrectly. Some of the best and worst shows the Avalon Club has put on have been Hip-Hop shows. The Hip-Hop crowd is no different than

large percentage of mainstream hip hop lyrics are about abusing women (whether physically or sexually), fighting, drug use, and other unsavory acts in direct conflict with society. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, with artists that are using Hip-Hop as a means to educate the ignorant. Talib, Mos Def, The Streets, Deltron, Erykah Badhu, Faithless, all artists with a positive message that are unrecognizable to the average populous. Until this is known, Hip-Hop lies in purgatory.

CA: What direction would you like to see the Avalon and the Tower, respectively, move toward in the near future?

JW: The Tower District has an opportunity to be the central night-spot and cultural hub in Fresno. Multiple theatres, restaurants, night clubs, music stores, cafes and plenty of room for growth. The City of Fresno has no idea the ultimate potential of the area. All we need is a little attention and some city clean-up.

THE PROMOTER

The promoter’s job is to conceive the format for a particular night at a club and pitch it to the owner or manager. In other cases, the promoter may pitch a single event idea to the owner of a hall or concert venue and rent the facility to host the event. In either case, he or she has to convince the owner/manager that the event will be both profitable and safe. I spoke to local promoter Alif Reneau about his business experiences in the Fresno nightclub scene.

CA: How long have you been promoting nightclubs and Hip-Hop events?

Alif Reneau: I’ve been promoting clubs/parties in Fresno since 1997.

CA: How have you typically been received by club owners/managers when presenting the idea of

promoting such events at their venues?

AR: Most of the time they seem a bit nervous when I approach them about doing a Hip-Hop night. It seems that the first thing these club owners and managers think about are all the problems that come with a Hip-Hop night. It doesn’t matter that the bars have done very well at most of the clubs I’ve promoted, or that the problems that occur are typical at all night clubs.

CA: Do you see race or any other specific factors as being a part of the apprehension or opposition you’ve encountered?

AR: Of course it has. We live in a city with over 500,000 people and only a very small population of the residents are Black. And there are no Black Club Owners so it’s natural that I will be looked at differently. Hip-Hop is always associated with Black people and most club owners associate Black people with the problems in society. If there is a fight at a Hip-Hop nightclub I can almost guarantee that there will be more PD (police) on the scene than if it were at a Country & Western bar in Old Town Clovis.

CA: What problems have you personally faced at the events you’ve promoted? What do you see as the source of these problems and do you see any solutions for them?

AR: I haven’t had anything out of the ordinary. I think any problems that you’ll see at an AKR (Reneau’s production company) event can be seen at any club night in the entire world...drunk people acting out and talking crazy.

CA: In spite of the apparent challenges, you’ve been considerably successful. Has the struggle been worth it in the end, and if so, do you plan to continue? Also, do you think that Fresno will ever be accessible to the Hip-Hop crowd, which is frequently a largely Black crowd?

AR: In spite of all the bullshit I think it’s been worth it. Promoting opened up the doors for me to get on radio, which opened up the doors to the music industry. So it’s been okay. I haven’t decided how much longer I’m going to continue. The opportunities are shallow right now. If the opportunity presents itself I will be ready. As far as the Hip-Hop crowd goes, they will probably never have a permanent place to call home.

THE CUSTOMER

In the retail world, the age-old cliché dictates that “the customer is always right.” In the nightclub world, the customer is the club-goer who shells out his or her hard earned ten dollars for the chance to get inside, dance to an often less-than-memorable deejay and spend even more money on some water-downed drinks. For those looking to hand over a portion of their paychecks to dance to Hip-Hop in Fresno, the pickings are slim. I have heard from several reputable sources of two prominent local club owners who have stated a preference to not attract a “Black” crowd, although both clubs prominently feature music performed mostly by African-American artists. I spoke to a 28-year old African-American female who I’ll call Mya about her experiences on the club circuit.

CA: How long have you been going to nightclubs in Fresno?

Mya: Honestly, I’ve been “clubbing” since I was in my early teens... much before the ABC (Alcohol and Beverage Control) began enforcing under-aged drinking which translates to the early nineties.

CA: What’s the longest a Hip-Hop/R&B nightclub has lasted here, to your best recollection?

Mya: I really can’t recall any lasting longer than two years, unless it re-invents itself by just slightly changing its format.

CA: Why do you think this type of club has had problems being welcomed and surviving in Fresno?

Mya: I feel that the problems with night clubs that promote Hip-Hop can be attributed to the owners’ lack of genuine interest in the culture other than monetary profits.

CA: What different types of clubs do you go to, if any, and do you see any more or less crowd problems there? Any difference in the treatment of club-goers?

Mya: I go to all types of clubs ranging from Hip-Hop to Rock to House and Latin. Generally I see the same type of problems. However, the difference is how the Hip-Hop customers are treated.

Ultimately, the plight of the Hip-Hop crowd is a microcosmic reflection of the community who gave creative birth to its culture. Black people in America and throughout the world have long been the victims of a cruel joke. The dominant culture can’t get enough Black music, fashion and entertainment in general and gladly purchases pre-packaged doses of it before retreating to the safety of the suburbs. (As comedian Paul Mooney so eloquently put it, “Everybody wants to be a n*gga but nobody wants to be a n*gga.”) At the end of the day, however, those same Black men and women whose trends are idolized and emulated are rarely welcome to mingle in the social circles of middle America. The Hip-Hop crowd is no different... little more than unwanted guests at a private party who weren’t invited...but are still trying to figure out why.



THE ROOTS: THE TIPPING POINT (Geffen)

BY RICK PETINAK

The difficulty in compiling such a long and impressive body of work as The Roots’s is that you face the daunting task of always being measured against your best album. In the case of this Philadelphia band, exactly which album is their best is open to debate. My vote would likely be cast for 1996’s illadelph Halflife, in which lead vocalist Blackthought, then sidekick Malik B., drummer extraordinaire Amir “?uestlove” Thompson, bassist Leonard Hubbard, and keyboard player Kamal seemed to capture their most well-balanced mix of the live instrumentation and eclectic sampling they have become renowned for. The lyrics and relentless delivery also showcased on that album represented a pinnacle in both chemistry and style for the group. But please, make no mistake, you could pretty much reach into a bag filled with every album from Do You Want More? to Things Fall Apart and pull out a composition of artistic merit comparable to the greatest albums of the day in any genre. This is a truly remarkable band, yes band, (a concept rare but not foreign to hip-hop), which has continuously strived not to rest on its laurels and produce a recyclable string of identical albums, but rather to explore the vast landscapes of hip-hop, soul, funk, jazz, rock, and reggae in search of undiscovered territories.

This brings us to The Roots’s newest release, The Tipping Point, another unorthodox entry in an already unconventional discography for the Grammy-winning quintet. On this album, the group opts to go with a short lineup of only ten songs, minus any of the long-winded intros and skits prevalent on too many rap albums. They begin with “Star/Pointro,” a brilliant reworking of the classic Sly and the Family Stone’s “Everybody Wants to be a Star,” upon which Blackthought paints a bleak picture of the distorted image too many artists have of life in the limelight.



The following track is unfortunately sub-standard. “I Don’t Care” utilizes a whiny singing hook that comes across as uncharacteristically cheesy for the group. In fact, there are a handful of lackluster songs on the The Tipping Point, but what salvages it as a quality work is the strength of the remaining tracks. The first single and video released were for the Scott Storch (think Fat Joe’s “Lean Back”)-produced “Don’t Say Nuthin’,” a dark and driving anthem at the precise tempo and mood where Thought is able to command his absolutely spotless flow with unnerving ease. The group even seizes the opportunity to pay homage to two heavyweight lyricists from rap’s renaissance years of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Big Daddy Kane and Kool G Rap, on the stripped-down “Boom!”. But perhaps the highlight of this collection is “Guns Are Drawn,” which is built around several Bob Marley snippets and achieves the album’s most emotionally climactic moments.

Not unlike The Roots’s previous albums, The Tipping Point will grow on you upon repeat listening. Perhaps this can be attributed to the subtle nuances offered by a true hip-hop band of musicians, which are not always noticeable on first listen. In any case, it is another rock-solid effort from what is probably hip-hop’s most hardworking group, in an era when groups themselves are a vanishing breed among the ever-growing pool of flash-in-the-pan solo artists promised to be the “next big thing.”

ALBUM RATING
(1 lowest to 5 highest):





JIM & ANNIE COMPTON-SCHMIDT

MASSAGE THERAPISTS

CERTIFIED
SWEDISH MASSAGE / BOWEN THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUE

WHEN IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE FROM THE ORDINARY

(559) 222-6699

SOMATROPICS UNLIMITED
4932 N. CEDAR AVE.
FRESNO, CA 93726



Offline Independent Energy Systems

PHOTOVOLTAIC DESIGN, INSTALLATION & SALES


19 years of inspired service

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

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

GAIA Administrative Services

ACCESS Database Work - Regular & Bulk Mailing
Catering to the Social Justice/Progressive Community



Vickie Fouts - Owner

2954 Glacier Ct. • P.O. Box 1151
Coarsegold, Ca. 93614
(559) 658-8260 • socialjustice@sti.net



I was born in Amman, Jordan—a Middle Eastern country that is surrounded by four other Arab countries and Israel. It is the most westernized among the countries of the region. In Jordan, the political system is partly American and British. Jordan is a monarchy with a representative parliament. I was raised as a European and an Arab. My mother is Russian, and she lived in Italy for a while. My father is Jordanian. They are both archeologists: I had to learn three languages to communicate with the people I knew, and I had to learn about diverse cultures and rituals. On the other hand, I had to learn about my culture and our rituals. So I had to balance between the life I was living with my family, and the everyday life in my society and community.

There were various conflicts I had to resolve, on how to dress, eat, talk, and think. Religion was always a huge obstacle, in arguments with Jordanians and their attitudes toward America. I was raised to accept all people, whatever their nationality or religion. I was taught that stereotypes are fake and offensive. However, no one can ever escape stereotypes or stereotyping others. Growing up in the Middle East with all these political



I remember the first time I was at a bus stop. This random guy, who was waiting also, started to talk to me. It was so weird for me, because such a thing would never happen back home. He even went further, talking about his own family and what they had faced lately, in detail. He had no problem telling me, a total stranger, that his daughter got divorced a while ago. I was in real shock. In fact, I doubted if he was mentally stable. I came to know that it is not very strange to engage in deep conversation with strangers here. Wherever I went, people were smiling all the time, and greeting me with “Hi” or “How are you doing today?” and so on. It took me a while to get used to it, and to start saying “Hi” back.

I went every day back to my apartment with many questions in my head. Questions about Americans, the American society, and their rituals. Of course the most important question was, why Americans are stereotyped as bad, although they are very nice people? This question was answered after 9/11. With all the sadness and the bitterness that accompanied it, 9/11 revealed a lot of important characteristics of the American society. I noticed that public opinion does not really exist in this country: It is whatever the government says. People were mad at the Japanese in the first couple hours after the attack. Because the government was suspecting that it was a revenge for the nuclear bombs. Then it shifted to terrorist attacks, and Osama bin Laden was the major suspect. So the public opinion shifted to be mad at all the Arabs and all the Muslims. Of course, the government had a big role in accumulating and growing this hatred toward all that is Arabic or Muslim. However, my point is that there is not a solid character of the American society. It lacks strength in its personality.

Even if people are getting killed, blame it on fighting terrorism. Stop any decision that is not in accord with what the United States is planning, even if it is a decision from the United Nations.

Americans are so nice and simple—to the point of ignorance. They do not know anything about anything in the world other than what the government



My Life

A CSUF Student from the Middle East Reflects on his Life In America



and religious conflicts, one cannot escape choosing a side. Of course being with or against Israel depended on whether you were an Arab or an Arab sympathizer, or a Jew or a Jewish sympathizer.

The Arab-Israeli conflict started in the early 1920s with the Jewish immigration to Palestine. Palestine is an Arab country that was under British mandate, and it was given to the Jews to fulfill the British promise, known as the Belfore Promise. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war resulted in Palestine losing two-thirds of its territory to establish the state of Israel. In 1967 the West Bank and Gaza strip were occupied. Those areas are referred to by the UN as “occupied territories.” However, in the eyes of the Arab world, it’s all Palestine.

On this issue, I faced the most arguments. The United States is pro-Israel and the biggest supporter for its actions against Arabs and the major supplier for its weapons industry. This resulted in the Arab hatred for the United States and its foreign policies. I was taught not to hate anyone, and not to stereotype. If the US government is helping kill Arabs in the occupied territories, it does not mean that all Americans support this. People are not responsible for all acts of their governments.

My arguments with my Arab friends escalated when I decided to move to the United States. They believed that by living in the United States, I am in some way helping the government in its support of Israel, betraying Arabs and Palestinians who are getting killed every day in the occupied territories. I tried to explain that I am dealing with people, not the government, and I am here for my education. But no seemed to care and it got to me. Although I have been all over the Middle East and Europe, I never encountered nicer people than Americans. Americans in general are very cheerful, open people, and will help you if they can.

lets them know. They are not eager to know, because the society is structured on the idea that as long as they are fine in the United States, the rest of the world does not even matter. I do not throw all the blame on the public, because the government controls the media and the education system—the two main sources where the public can learn about other cultures and societies. All the time I lived outside the United States, Americans had this bad reputation, as I mentioned earlier. But after living here, I figured out that this reputation is actually the reputation of the American government, not the people.

After 9/11, I went to Jordan and asked many people how they feel about Americans: the people, not the government. Surprisingly, I rarely received a negative response. Most of the people believe that the government does not represent the people. This was a great relief to me. I felt I had a duty to let as many Americans as possible know about this. The idea that foreigners hate Americans is not true. Mostly Middle Easterners do not appreciate what the US government is doing in their countries. US foreign policies are all about what the United States can gain and where. The US government does not care about the people elsewhere, their families, or their lives.

Even in Europe, after President Bush came to office, the attitude toward the United States shifted in a negative direction—mainly because of Bush’s negative and disrespectful foreign policy. US foreign policy consists basically of using power to make money. Even if people are getting killed, blame it on fighting terrorism. Stop any decision that is not in accord with what the United States is planning, even if it is a decision from the United Nations. This ultimately enraged every country. Yet, few American people even know that this mess exists.

Americans are very nice people, but they do not know much about the rest of the world. I am not sure they actually want to know. But my point is that Americans do not, by any means, represent the American government.

Living here and trying to blend into this multiracial society taught me a lot about myself and about others. Americans taught me how to take my time doing things and how to feel good about it.

The most important value Americans taught me is to appreciate everybody and everybody’s effort, regardless of how important or influential it is. In Jordan, even in Europe, only influential efforts are appreciated, because they believe that it is what counts. However, Americans have a different approach on this issue. American believe that everything counts, every effort is influential, because if it did not change or solve a problem, it helped in finding the right solution to that particular problem.

These experiences have shaped my approach toward and ideas about Americans and their identity. Frankly, I believed it shaped my identity also. I am not the same person I was three years ago. I am more patient, more open to changes and alternatives, and I developed the ability to simplify things, and look at the positive side. Without living in the United States, I doubt I would have gone through experiences that shaped me. I owe Americans a lot. I learned from them and their society, and my experiences made me a better person.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755
Vickie Fouts, Editor, (559) 658-8260 or socialjustice@sti.net



THIS YEAR'S CRAFTS FAIRE WAS A WONDERFUL success. We had more vendors and customers than ever before. The final tally is not in, but it looks like we made well over \$2000. Everyone seemed happy with everything except the lack of heat in the building and gas for the kitchen stoves and hot water. People liked the food, the music, the crafts, the friendship. Everyone seemed to love the soups, breads, and desserts. We will try to have even more available next year and possibly a recipe book to go along with the items as a fundraiser.

Very special thanks go to the main organizers, Ingrid Carmean, Ellie Bluestein, and Joan Poss. Ingrid handled the vendor applications, arranged the tables and much, much more. Ellie and Joan worked on getting us the many volunteers. The three of them meet several times to make sure this was a successful event.

Thanks to several who headed up several areas. Julie Young and Denise Carmen handled the kitchen and food. Pat Wolk took care of the raffle while Catherine Campbell organized the silent auction. Nancy Waidtlow was in charge of the white elephant sale. Gerry Bill and Alvora Trujillo made peace cranes to sell and hung them up for display. Linda Dryden organized the wonderful musical entertainment. The Green Party showed up to help with cleanup.

Thank you to all who provided us with soups, breads, and desserts to sell along with items for the raffle, silent auction, and white elephant sale. Thank you to all those who volunteered to work different areas such as kitchen help, selling of the food, working the white elephant sale, doing the WILPF table, doing setup and cleanup, and providing us with excellent musical entertainment. A very special thanks goes to Sarah Al-Hashimi, youth coordinator for the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno,

and the several young Muslim women she brought to help with setup. Their youthful energy and hard work were greatly appreciated.

On December 15 seven of us met to critique the crafts faire. Everyone seemed happy with the turnout and all the help. Having a committee of three to work things out seemed to be a plus. Next year we hope to have a committee of at least four. We all agreed that we have outgrown our present location and will soon be checking out a couple of larger

places for next year. It was also suggested that we have the vendors go through a selection process to make sure we get the best vendors possible for our event. We talked about how to make the raffle and the silent auction more successful. If you have any further feedback, please let Vickie or one of the committee members know.

New WILPF Board Member: Catherine Garoupa has volunteered to be vice-president of the Fresno Branch. Welcome aboard, Catherine! Catherine was one of our CSUF social work interns last year and has attended most meetings since leaving the internship. The position of vice-president is new with the recent by-laws revision. Catherine will be helping Vickie now and then when there is more work than one person can handle or if Vickie is unavailable.

Make Peace a Reality Project: By now you should have received the Fall/Winter Peace and Freedom. Please check page 21 for the "Make Peace a Reality" postcard project. WILPF D.C. will hand-deliver postcards from members nationwide to Congress members every month on different issues. Please let Vickie Fouts know if you wish to be the branch contact person for this project.

WILPF's National Campaigns: The Fall/Winter Peace and Freedom has a ballot to vote for your choice for the 2005-2008 National Program Campaigns. See a brief description of each program proposal on pages 6-10 and the ballot on page 31. During our general membership meeting on January 6, we will have a discussion of the five proposals. We hope that all our members will fill in and send their program selection ballot by January 31.

WILPF Dues: If you are wondering if your WILPF dues are up-to-date, you can check your address label on the Peace and Freedom magazine. The upper right corner shows the date through which your dues are paid. If there is no date you are either not current or are no longer a member. Also, if you did not receive your issue of Peace and Freedom you are probably no longer a member. Less than 50 of our 194 members on record are current. If you are no longer current or want to rejoin, please send a check to Fresno WILPF, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

WILPF'S Anniversary: 2005 will be the 90th Anniversary of WILPF. Please start thinking of ways for Fresno WILPF to celebrate the occasion and ways you can help with the celebration. Pass on any suggestions to Vickie Fouts.

This section is paid for by WILPF, who has complete editorial control of the content.

WILPF DATES:

Wednesday, January 5, Noon: Women in Black, Fresno County Courthouse breezeway

Thursday, January 6, 7PM: WILPF General Membership Meeting 1584 N Van Ness Ave. We will discuss the 2005-2008 National Program Campaign proposals. Open to all.

Monday, January 10, 7PM:
WILPF Business Meeting 1584 N Van Ness

Wednesday, January 26, 3:30 PM: WILPF Stir It Up KFCF 88.1 FM. Hosted by Vickie Fouts

Quote of the Month: "Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."— Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Stockholm, Sweden, December 11, 1964



**THURSDAY
JANUARY 20
6:30-9:30PM**

Progressive Thursday is hosted by the GROW working group of the Fresno County Green Party. It is a free, wheelchair accessible event, and open to anyone interested in discussing topics of interest to the progressive community. This is the first of six events scheduled for a Thursday in the odd numbered months. Contact Larry Mullen (559) 227-0293 or Leah Haymond.

The event will be held at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N. First Street in Fresno (SW corner of Bullard and First). Doors open 6:30--Video 7:00--Discussion to follow. The video this month will be THE END OF SUBURBIA: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream (see <http://endofsuburbia.com>)

POETRY CORNER

Vickie Fouts got a song sheet at a Mennonite peace ceremony, and submitted it to this column. It would be good to hear the music too, and to be singing with others. But there's just so much a newspaper can do.

IF THE WAR GOES ON

If the war goes on and the children die of hunger,
and the old men weep, for the young men are no more;
and the women learn how to dance without a partner,
who will keep the score?

If the war goes on and the truth is taken hostage,
and new terrors lead to the need to euphemize;
when the calls for peace are declared unpatriotic,
who'll expose the lies?

If the war goes on and the daily bread is terror,
and the voiceless poor take the road as refugees;
when a nation's pride destines millions to be homeless,
who'll heed their pleas?

If the war goes on and the rich increase their fortunes,
and the arms sales soar as new weapons are displayed;
when a fertile field turns to no-man's land tomorrow,
who'll approve such trade?

If the war goes on, will we close the doors to Heaven?
If the war goes on, will we breach the gates of hell?
If the war goes on, will we ever be forgiven?
If the war goes on. . .

COME AWAY WITH US: On Saturday, January 8, the Center will hold its annual retreat and planning session, where we review our mission and set priorities for the coming year. We welcome the participation of non-Board members who may have ideas, interest in the Center's direction, or simple curiosity. We have a potluck lunch around noon, and then convene all afternoon. It is a time for us to share our ideals and aspirations, and join together in inventing ways to realize our visions. If you would like to join us, give us a call for directions.

STIRRING IT UP: After he completed his leave for electoral work, we invited Vince Lavery to resume hosting our Stir It Up segment on KFCF the second Wednesday each month at 3:30 PM. As he often does,

Vince has kicked up some spirited controversy. On his first show back, he invited a leading Valley Republican to dialogue with him, and he announced his intention to have Jerry Duncan on in January.

Responses have varied from "Good work; we need to engage in this kind of serious conversation with those we disagree with" to "Why are you wasting our precious air-time? KFCF is supposed to be a voice for the voiceless, not for those with lots of media outlets."

The effectiveness of Vince's prescription—for getting beyond the usual polarized offerings we're all used to—is on the agenda for our retreat. We welcome readers' comments—most handily at our e-mail address (info@fresnocenterfornonv

violence.org), or by phone or mail.

WEDNESDAY MOVIES TO CONTINUE: The second Wednesday movie series will continue on January 12 with the screening of *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land: U.S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. The video should illuminate what we know and don't know about the most enduring and intractable problem in the Middle East. Join us at noon or 7:30 PM—and be prepared to debate this always-controversial subject.

CPAs ANYONE? We are looking for an accountant with knowledge of nonprofit organizations to prepare an audit for us. If you are one, or know of one, please contact us to discuss terms.

ANNUAL APPEAL: As of press time, our

yearly phone-a-thon has brought in close to \$2000 in pledges. This appeal is the basis of our financial viability for the coming year, so thanks to all who've pledged; and a reminder to those we haven't reached that our continuing presence in the community depends on you.



THE WELCH REPORT



Saving The Iraqi Children

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THE chaos in Iraq, resulting from President Bush's ill-advised and quite unnecessary war in that country? President Bush's original policy on Iraq was delusional: we would be welcomed with flowers, we should disband the Iraqi army, security is fine. But today there is risk coming from the small but growing contingent that wants to bring our troops home now.

The Lancet, the prestigious English medical journal, published a study suggesting that at least 100,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the invasion of Iraq. "Among Iraqis the risk of death by violence was 58 times greater after the war than before, and infant mortality also nearly doubled"—apparently caused by insecurity.

A physician in Basra last year reported how physicians and patients alike had had to run for cover when bandits attacked the infectious diseases unit there, firing machine guns and throwing hand grenades, so they could steal the air-conditioners. Given those conditions, women are now more likely to give birth at home, so they and their babies are both more likely to die of "natural" causes.

A second troubling report, in the Washington Post, recounted that acute malnutrition among children under 5 increased to 7.7 percent this year from 4 percent before the war. These figures suggest that 400,000 Iraqi children are badly nourished, and suffering in some cases from irreversible physical and mental stunting. These glimpses at the public health situation in Iraq are a reminder of the disastrous impact of our invasion, and also of the humanitarian impact of our pulling out our troops prematurely, in which case the country could virtually fall apart. The middle of the country might well erupt in bloody civil war and turn into something like Somalia with child mortality rates as high as 200,000 and nearly 10,000 Iraqi women dying each year in childbirth.

John Kerry asked about Vietnam: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" The best answer to that question is that our mistaken invasion has left millions of Iraqis desperately vulnerable, and it would be inhumane to abandon them now. "If we stay in Iraq, there is still some hope that Iraqis will come to enjoy security and better lives, but if we pull out we will be condemning them to anarchy, terrorism, and starvation, costing the

lives of hundreds of thousands of children over the next decade." Those Iraqi children are the reasons we should remain there until we can hand over security to a local force. Saving those lives is a worthy cause for which to risk American lives.

(Source: Nicholas D. Kristof, op-ed columnist, *New York Times*, Nov. 27, 2004)

(Most board members of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence support the removal of occupying American forces from Iraq now.)

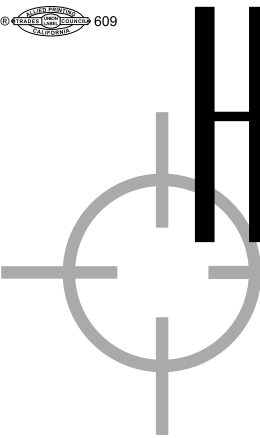
IN FALLUJA'S RUINS, BIG PLANS AND A RISK OF CHAOS

Standing in the rubble outside an empty medical clinic here, Dr. Basam Mohamed gazed out at the ruins of his native city. He had just heard a group of American civil affairs officers explain their plans to rebuild the clinic and install a huge water tank behind it until the water pipes, smashed by bombs, could be fixed. As military officials start letting residents return to Falluja, they face the challenge of winning back the confidence of the people whose city they have just destroyed; also they will need to deter returning insurgents who will try to sabotage the reconstruction with attacks.

The full extent of the damage inflicted by American bombs, tanks, and artillery is only now becoming apparent. Far more than 200 buildings, as announced, have been destroyed. The city's power lines are so badly damaged that in most of the city they will have to be ripped out and rebuilt from scratch, taking six months to a year. The city's water and sewer pipes will take months to repair: as water from broken pipes created chest-deep floods in Falluja's streets, American officers had trouble persuading Iraqi engineers, who knew where the valves were located, to venture into the city and help shut them off.

Within two or three months bigger projects will be set in motion, including four new school buildings, several new health clinics. Badly damaged homes will be bulldozed and rebuilt, or owners will be compensated. The Marines will ask all returning residents with relevant skills to take a job in the reconstruction projects. American and Iraqi forces will provide security for the reconstruction projects. This section is paid for by Fresno Center for Nonviolence, who has complete editorial control of the content

This section is paid for by Fresno Center for Non-violence, who has complete editorial control of the content.



HUME
PRINTING & LITHOGRAPH, INC.

SERVING FRESNO SINCE 1911.
A COMPLETE OFFSET & LETTERPRESS FACILITY

**FRESNO'S UNION
PRINT SHOP**

3021 W. Dakota Ave., Ste. 199 Phone: 559-226-4863
Fresno, CA 93722-4975 Fax: 559-226-4828
Email: humeprinting@sbcglobal.net



PROPER

I UNDERSTAND THAT I MUST PLAY THE ROLE OF A HUMAN AND AGE INTO DUST AND POSSES ONLY A BODY OF MEMORY AND INSPIRATION. LATELY I FEEL SO MOROSE OVER THE FACT THAT THE CHILD IN ME IS NO LONGER.



IT IS BEGINNING TO FADE . MY FACE HAS BECOME RIGID COVERED IN HAIR AND SMELLS OF SEX SWEAT AND GASOLINE. NO LONGER WILL I CRY IN MY MOTHERS BOSOM BUT WITHIN THE BOSOM OF ANOTHER FATHERS DAUGHTER, AS SHE HOLDS MY AGING RIBS HER FINGERS TURN RIGID AS WELL AND WE AGE TOGETHER IN SILENCE. IN THIS WORLD INFECTED WITH FOREST OF OPINIONS, MY LAND IS IN A GARDEN OF BULLETOSSERS AND ALL THE STATUES ARE CRACKING AND VANDALIZED WHILE FOUNTAIN CHERUBS PISS SODA POP

GAHINDA.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Calendar Of Events

Wednesday, January 5

Noon

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, from 12-1:00 PM and stand silently, advocating PEACE. For more info: 278-7140 or 225-2850.

Thursday, January 6

6 PM

The Interfaith Alliance of Central California invites the public to attend their Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook in Fresno. Dr. Ned Doffney, Fresno Community College President will speak on 'The importance of Multiculturalism and Interfaith Cooperation'. RSVP to the Jessups, 225-1438

Thursday, January 6

7 PM

Democracy for America - DFA-CFD of Fresno & Madera Counties will meet at Bobby Salazar's Restaurant, 2839 Blackstone in Fresno. RSVP &/or see who's coming: <http://dfa.meetup.com/58/events/3622543/>

For the January Democracy For America Meetup, we're planning to focus on how to frame our values to build support for the Democratic agenda. We're going to use Professor George Lakoff's new DVD called "How Democrats and Progressives Can Win" to guide the discussion.

In preparation for the DFA Meetup, DFA is mailing to every DFA Meetup organizer a package with the Lakoff 's DVD. The Meetup.com site is now more user friendly. (no more voting, etc.) Please sign up and RSVP if you want to attend the January DFA Meetup so I will know how much materials will be needed.

Friday, January 7

4:30 - 6:30

PM Peace Fresno returns to 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. Also, January 14 & 21. For more information go to: www.peacefresno.org.

Friday, January 7

6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents "The Monsters are due on Maple Street" from the Twilight Zone. This episode of the science fiction/fantasy series is Rod Serling's chilling commentary on how easily neighbor

can be turned against neighbor when brought up against inexplicable events. Here, the brute group entity is dissected and revealed for what it is: a violent chaotic force powered by fear and nurtured by irrationality. It first aired on March 4, 1960 and the message remains relevant in today's climate of suspicion and prejudice. It reminds us of the dangerous power of fear. How easily it manipulates and controls, how quickly it fans the flames of anger and hate, and how swiftly reason becomes replaced with violence.

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 dfriesen@telis.org

Saturday, January 8

3:30 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC will meet at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information call (559) 978-4502 or email info@cvppac.org. Also see: <http://www.cvppac.org/>

Wednesday, January 12

12 Noon and 7:30 PM

FREE -- Monthly Video Series - Second Wednesday of Every Month at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. "Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land" Documentary: U. S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Discussion following 7:30 PM showing.

Thursday, January 13

7:30 PM

The Fresno Folklore Society presents John McCutcheon. Virginia's Renaissance Man. Singer songwriter multi-instrumentalist. First Congregational Church is located at 2131 Van Ness (just south of Clinton at Yale). \$15 advance; \$20 at door. Info: 431-3653 www.fresnofolklore.org

Friday, January 14

10:30 - 11:30 AM

GARLANDING CEREMONY at Fresno County Courthouse Park, (1100 Van Ness Avenue) at the stature of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Contact Gail Gaston (559) 681-3140 or Cary Catalano (559) 355-0751 for more information.

This event is the start of the 20th annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration - 2005. The theme is "living the Dream: Let freedom ring for greater access for quality education and better health conditions for

all!"

Friday, January 14

3 PM

CHAANGE "Coarse of Action" meeting will be held at their office, which is at 1584 N. Van Ness Ave, inside the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, just south of Fresno City College. This will be a time where community advocates and members will discuss ways CHAANGE can improve and make the best use of it's time, knowledge, and information. This is a good time to get on board the CHAANGE train and help make a positive impact on this city regarding HIV/AIDS issues. For more information call (559) 268-1969

Friday, January 14

5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents Lightning in a Bottle at the Tower Theatre. On February 7th, 2003, renowned artists across multiple music genres and generations came together at New York City's Radio City Music Hall to pay tribute to their common heritage and passion — the blues. Produced by Martin Scorsese and directed by Antoine Fuqua, Lightning in a Bottle captures the night's magic and weaves a history of the blues through the juxtaposition of performances, backstage interviews, rehearsals and archival clips of some of the greatest names in American music. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village, and at the door. Tickets are \$9.00; \$7.00, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to <http://fresnofilmworks.org>

Friday, January 14

Reception to begin at 5:30 and program will begin at 6:30 PM
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. evening reception and awards presentation at Fresno City Hall, 2nd floor lobby and council chambers at 2600 Fresno Street.

Friday, January 14

6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Phil Erro, author of Central California: Transition from Blight to Delight. 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 dfriesen@telis.org

Friday, January 14

RaNcOR fund raising show at H street studios. The H street studios are the former army

induction building. For more information go to www.ran-cor.info

Friday, January 14

8 PM

The Vagina Monologues by Eve Ensler will be held at Theatre Three Repertory Company at 1544 Fulton Street in Fresno (In Downtown Fresno on Fulton Street between Stanislaus and Calaveras). An Obie Award-winning whirlwind tour of a forbidden zone. Starring Jessica Reedy, Melanie Dorian, Gwen Spratt and Lori Grace. Directed by Gordon Goede. For further information, please contact Gordon Goede at gordongoede@aol.com. This show will be repeated January 15, 21 and 22, 28 and 29, February 4 and 5 at 8pm

Saturday, January 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the February, 2005 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Saturday, January 15

8 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. all faith breakfast and music service at the Ted C. Wills Community Center, 770 N San Pablo Ave. Keynote speaker will be Bishop John Steinbeck. Members of the community can enjoy a delicious breakfast while listening to various community leaders and musical talent. Cost for the breakfast is \$5.00 and one can of food per person. For more information contact Dr. Sudharshan Kapoor (559) 435-2212

Sunday, January 16

1 PM

Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meet at the Horsley Hall, (behind UU Church) 4144 North Millbrook Avenue. For info call June @ 645 1719 or visit their website at <http://fresno.humanists.net>

Sunday, January 16

5:30 PM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Candlelight Vigil at the Fresno City Hall Fountain, 2600 Fresno Street. Candlelight vigil to be held in commemoration of the Rev. Dr. King. Spoken word by Marylee McGough; keynote speaker will be Walt Perry of Fresno Metro Ministries, with the evening song lead by Micah Morris. For more information contact Vickie Fouts at (559) 658-8260.

Monday, January 17

10 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. march and food drive to end childhood hunger in Fresno will start at St. John's Cathedral at 2814 Mariposa Avenue (you are encouraged to arrive at 9:30 AM). A "mountain of food" to end childhood hun-

ger will be collected at the church. The march will take place from St. John's to City Hall, then to the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium. The march will begin promptly at 10 AM. For more information contact Enrique Reade (559) 940-2159 or James Lett III (559) 284-6420.

Monday, January 17

11 AM

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Program at Memorial Auditorium, Fresno Street between N and O Streets (across from the Fresno Water Tower). An inspiring and enjoyable program will be hosted by the City of Fresno's Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Committee. Keynote speaker: Captain Janet Davis of the Clovis Police Department. For more information contact Ed C. Bailey (559) 304-5772.

Thursday, January 20

6:30-9:30 PM

Progressive Thursday is hosted by the GROW working group of the Fresno County Green Party. It is a free, wheelchair accessible event, and open to anyone interested in discussing topics of interest in the progressive community. This is the first of six events scheduled for a Thursday in the odd numbered months. Contact Larry Mullen (559) 227-0293 or Leah Haymond.

The event will be held at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N. First Street in Fresno (SW corner of Bullard and First). Doors open 6:30--Video 7:00--Discussion to follow. The video this month will be THE END OF SUBURBIA: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream (see <http://endofsuburbia.com>)

Thursday, January 20

10 PM

"Should We Be In Iraq?" The Fresno Center for Nonviolence discusses the issue of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. FCNV board members argue for and against the continued U.S. occupation. KNXT Ch. 49 (Comcast cable ch 9). Panel: Jack Welch, Dan Yaseen, Angela Price, Valta Pointer.

Sunday, January 23

4 PM

The Fresno Folklore Society presents Jamie Laval & Hannsjoerg Scheid.. Concert Series at the First Congregational Church is located at 2131 Van Ness (just south of Clinton at Yale) —Celtic fiddle & guitar. 21002 National Scottish Fiddle champion. \$15. Info: 431-3653 www.fresnofolklore.org www.jamielaval.com or www.hazzazar.com

Friday, January 28

7:30 PM

Lou & Peter Berryman at Unitarian Church. They began

their musical partnership in high school in Appleton, Wisconsin, way back in the sixties. By the eighties, they had established themselves as a prominent feature of the song writing subculture of Wisconsin's capital, playing their original material every week for almost ten years in the run-down but trendy music room of Madison's Club de Wash. Gradually expanding their circuit, they began crisscrossing the continent and gaining national attention with appearances on such programs as Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion and NPR's Weekend Edition. Regular appearances at festivals and folk music clubs all across the country now serve as venues for the songs contained in their twelve recordings and three songbooks, which have been performed by everyone from Garrison Keillor to Peter, Paul and Mary. The popularity of Lou and Peter Berryman is a testament to their intelligent and wickedly funny material which is rich with wordplay and witty images. This duo is not to be missed

Lou and Peter Berryman will perform at the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook Ave (Millbrook between Ashlan and Dakota). Tickets: Suggested donation \$20 Tickets in advance or at the door. Concert info: Larry Bassman, 244-0562. Childcare available. This event is sponsored by the UU Church and the Fresno Folklore Society.

Tuesday, February 1
5:30 PM
The National Women's Political Caucus of Fresno County will show "Iron Jawed Angels" at its monthly meeting in February. The public is welcome to attend the viewing.

The HBO film, featuring Oscar winners Hilary Swank and Angelica Houston, shows how two women broke from the mainstream women's rights movement and created a more radical wing. They dared to push the boundaries of political protest to secure women's voting rights in 1920. Activists get jailed and a hunger strike ensues. The women's resistance to being force-fed earns them the nickname "The Iron Jawed Angels." However, it is their wills that are made of iron, and their courage inspires a nation and changes it forever.

The event will be held at Toledo's Restaurant Banquet Room, located in Mission Village on Shaw Avenue just east of Highway 41. It's the southwest corner of Shaw/Fresno. It's the same center as Kim's Vietnamese.

COST: \$15 per person [includes dinner]. Note: This is the cost of each NWPC dinner meeting. RSVP is required by noon on Monday, Jan. 31, 2005. Please call 225-3116 or email phoebe@phoebehoward.com

Tuesday, February 1
6:30 PM
Olive Branch Sangha presents the documentary film Steps of Mindfulness: A Journey with Thich Nhat Hanh at the Woodward Park Branch Library (944 E. Perrin Ave.). The event is free and open to the public. Join world-renowned Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh on an inner journey to the roots of Buddhism. Thomas Lüüchinger's lyric account of Thich Nhat Hanh's 1997 pilgrimage to India captures the sights and sounds of this ancient land. The film's meditative mood interweaves spacious, vivid images of the Indian landscape and people with Thich Nhat Hanh's clear presentations of the Buddha's timeless teachings. For more information, call 486-1574 or go to <http://www.neuhouse.com/sangha>

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Every Sunday
Food Not Bombs serves free food to anyone who is hungry. Anyone who'd like to help call mark/miriam at (559) 442-0966 to arrange to help him and other volunteers prepare lunch at 12:30 p.m. at his home in the Tower District. Lunch is served 3 p.m. at Courthouse Park near the Martin Luther King, Jr. statue. Donations of plates, bowls, spoons, and forks made of recyclable material are greatly appreciated.

Every Tuesday and Thursday 7 - 9 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 liza.apper@sbcw.org or visit their web site at: www.sbcw.org

Every Tuesday
An ANTI-WAR Demonstration every Tuesday S E corner of White Lane and South H st. Bakersfield California. For info: call (661)366-9003

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. Recognizing that there are many ways to express Buddhist practice, this group welcomes all who seek clarity and compassion though following the Buddha Way. 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 other Wednesday
3 and 7 PM
Video Series at CSU Fresno sponsored by Campus Peace and Civil Liberties

Coalition and Peace Fresno, will include videos on the Iraq War, Women's Rights, Mother Earth among others. There will be two showings, one at 3pm in the Student Union Rm. 309, the other at 7pm in McLane 161. They are free and open to the public. For more information call Shawn or Khara at 224-1218

Every Friday
9 AM - 5 PM
Stone Soup cultural art store featuring authentic Hmong Cultural Arts is open at 1345 Bulldog Lane in Fresno. Call (559) 224-7613 or email stonesoupfresno@yahoo.com for more information

Every Friday
7 PM
Reedley Peace Center, holds its weekly peace meeting at the Fellowship Hall at Reedley's First Mennonite Church 1208 "L" Street, Reedley, Ca ... Programs vary but the focus is always on peace issues local, state, national, international....the contact is Carol Krahbel 559-637-9098 or email krahbiel@cvip.net. The meeting is free and open to the public and handicapped accessible...

Every Saturday
1-2 PM
Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. The location for cooking on Saturday is at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 East Barstow Ave., between First and Cedar starting at 9AM. They are always in need of servers at the park. For more information call 452-0277 (Dallas). email fresnofnb@yahoo.com. Visit the Food Not Bombs web site at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB/>

Every Saturday
1 PM until the last patient is served
Medical Clinic for the homeless, active injecting drug users and prostitutes. You can find them near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. * 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, 1:00 - 3:00ish. Donations of bicycle parts, inner tubes & blinky lights welcome. Volunteers needed to help with minor repairs. The bicycle clinic is near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park, beside Food Not Bombs. For more info and to arrange donations, fresnofreebikeclinic@yahoo.com

Every Saturday
2 - 3 PM
Peace Bakersfield meets every Saturday at 2:00 pm at the Beale Library in downtown Bakersfield. They will wait for people in the front of the library near the front doors before going inside for the meeting. Everyone is welcome. Your ideas are the basis for our action. Beale Library, 701 Truxtun Avenue in Bakersfield. For more information call (661) 633-2930

ONGOING MONTHLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

1st Sunday of every month
The South Valley Peace Center <http://www.svpc.info/> has peace demonstrations the first Sunday of each month at the Northwest corner of Mooney and Walnut in Visalia. Come out and demonstrate for peace. Bring a sign with your favorite peace message.

2nd and 4th Sunday of every month
1 PM
South Valley Peace Center meets on every second and fourth Sundays at 1:00 p.m. at the Visalia Friends Meeting House, 17208 Ave. 296, Visalia. Contact is: info@svpc.info
3rd Sunday of every month
10 AM to 12 noon
World Meditation Day is observed to promote peace within and harmony in the world and is held at 7319 N. Fourth St., Fresno. Program includes guided meditation followed by discussion and light refreshments. Call Veena Kapoor at (559) 435-2212 for more information.

2nd Monday of every month
5:30 PM
The Living Wage Committee will meet at the SEIU 250 office, 1279 N. Wishon. Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (C.A.F.E.) is taking the lead in this effort. We are in the research and planning stages of development. Further information contact Frances Sivak, 559-222-5240, fsivak@msn.com

1st Tuesday of every month
6 PM
The San Joaquin Valley Coalition for Immigrant Rights meeting. For more information call (559) 498-6033.
1st Tuesday of every month
7:00 PM
FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticide) meets at the Barn at Margaret Hudson's house - 4230 N Arthur. For more information email FresCAMP@yahoo.com, call (559) 227-6134 or visit the Californians for Pesticide Reform website at <http://www.1000friendsoffresno.org/pesticides.html>

2nd Tuesday of every month
7 PM
Fresno Stonewall Democrats meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Kingsmen Cafe, 1495 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno. The dinner hour is from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. followed by the meeting which is open to the public. The Cafe is a faith based business that employs youth dealing with substance abuse issues. They offer inexpensive sandwiches and salads and fair trade coffee. Fresno Stonewall Democrat's 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 email fresnostonewall@mangen.com or visit the website <http://www.mangen.com/stonewall/>

1st Wednesday of every month
12 Noon
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, from 12-1:00 PM and stand silently, advocating PEACE. For more info: 278-7140 or 225-2850.

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

2nd Thursday of every month
7:00 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 St. and Fresno and Tulare Ave. 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.

1st Friday of every month
4:30 PM -- 6:30 PM
A demonstration to Stop the Bush Administration's war against the world is held at Shaw and Blackstone in Fresno. For information call Peace Fresno 487-2515 or visit their web site at <http://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

2nd Friday of every month
7 PM
Vigil to protest the murder of immigrants at the border and by the police in this country. This vigil is organized by El Comite No Nos Vamos. 328 N Fresno Street. Call (559) 498-6033 or 497-0206 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. Questions, call 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 page at: <http://www.centerfornonviolence.org> or call 559-23PEACE (559-237-3223).

CREATE

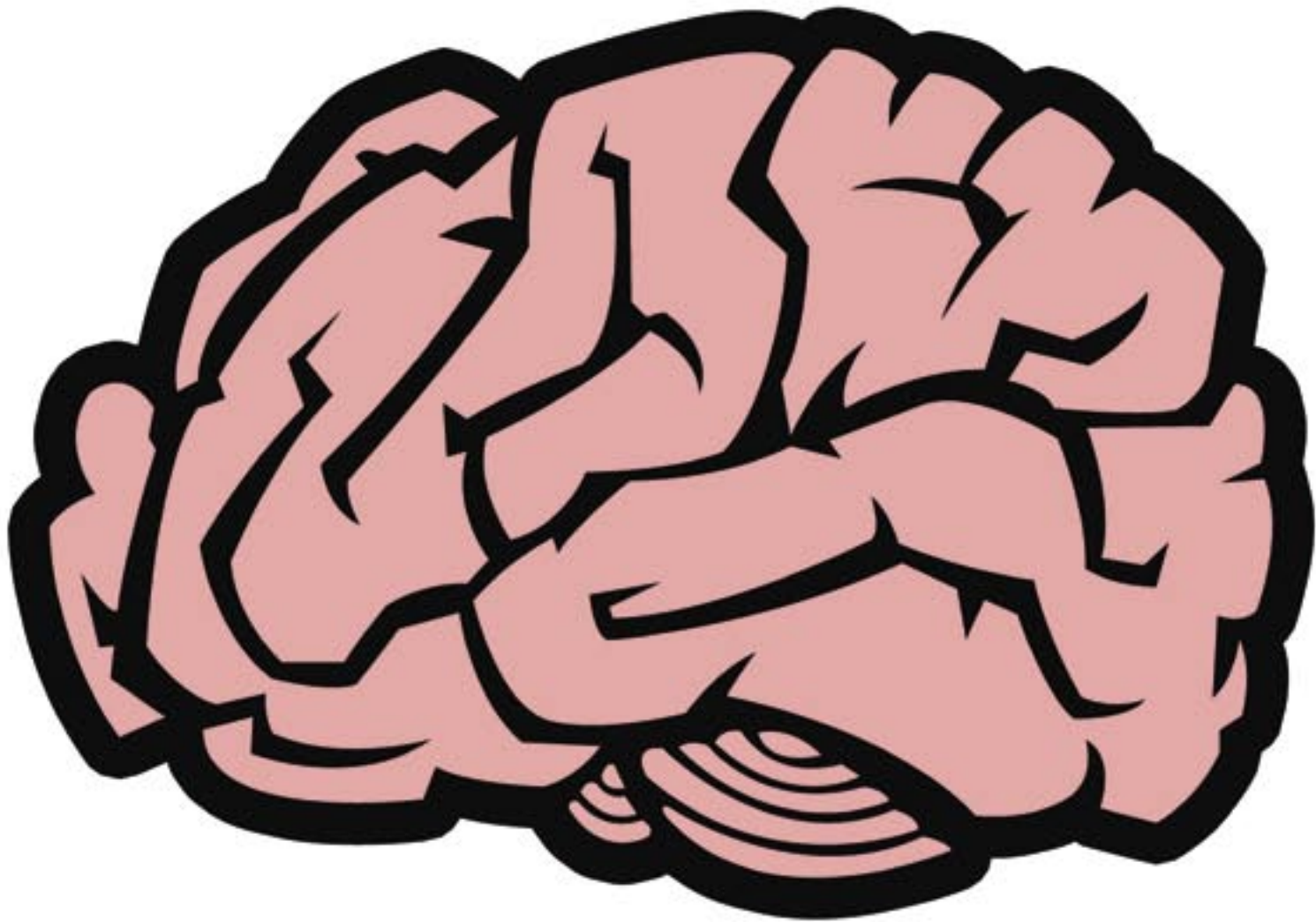


REPORT



PROMOTE

PUT OUT.



WE NEED YOUR

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ART GO HAND IN HAND. **THE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE** IS CALLING OUT TO ALL ARTIST IN AND AROUND FRESNO.

CREATIVITY: WRITERS, MUSICIANS, ART- ISTS, AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

BE A PART OF A GROWING CULTURE THAT IS UNIQUE TO FRESNO

For more info contact **STEPHEN GAMBOA** at vernac02@hotmail.com or 559.681.8886