

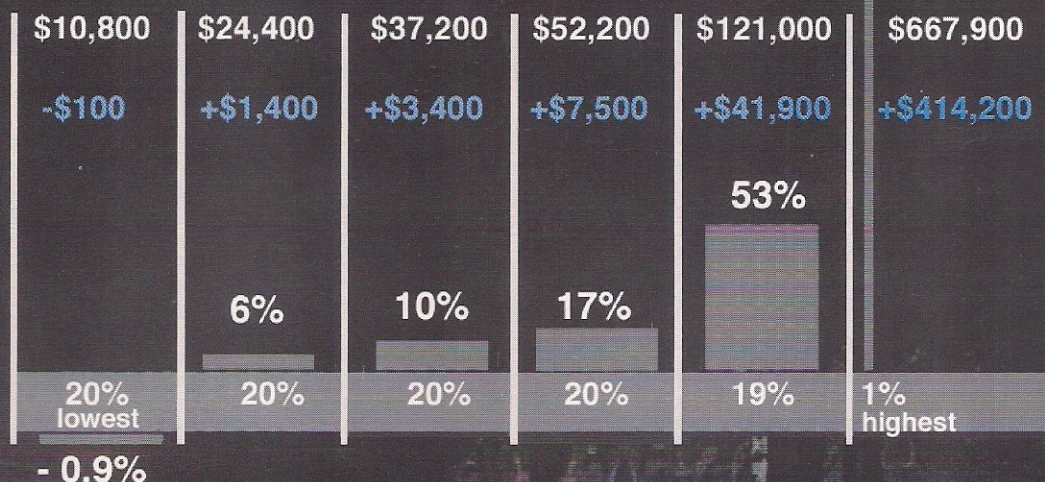
Why we are here

INCOME 1997

CHANGES IN
REAL INCOME

1979 & 1997 after tax
average household
income compared by
percent of change.

Source: Congressional Budget Office



July 2001



Labor/Community

ALLIANCE



Labor/Community ALLIANCE

This monthly magazine is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. We support the struggle for social and economic justice and believe all workers should be paid a living wage. We are affiliated nationally with Jobs with Justice. Our monthly meetings on are the last Monday, 6:30 pm, at Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness.

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July 4

by Diane Scott

Many faces, 1 flag

Come honor our many hearts and souls at the fourth annual Celebration of Our Diversity. July 4, 10 am to 1 pm at O'Neill park, Barstow Avenue between Maple and Cedar at C.S.U. Fresno. A vegetarian brunch is being provided by the Sikh community and there is entertainment by several cultural groups from the valley.

Donations are \$3.00 - adults, \$1.00 - children ages 4-12, children 3 and under free, or a total of \$10.00 for a family.

Over the last 225 years Independence Day, like many other special days, has lost its specialness and become just another day off. We go to the lake, or the coast, or maybe to Clovis for Fireworks. So, what is July 4th all about anyway? It's our country's birthday; a whole new beginning, a new form of government that called us all equal and independent; that derived its power from the consent of you and me!

And we're still working today to make those promises real.

When Thomas Jefferson wrote "all" men (and all women too-my edit), he meant people from every country, every culture, every belief system. It is this great diversity that makes us all one people.

This celebration is one of the projects of The Interfaith Alliance of Central California, an organization, with representatives of many faith communities: Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Unitarian Universalists, Buddhists and Sikhs, as well as many other faith communities and cultures. Membership is open to anyone who is in concert with The Interfaith Alliance of Central California's Mission Statement: Promotion of shared religious principles of compassion, human dignity, ethics and civility in the political process; Protection of human and civil rights of people from violence, oppression, and religious bigotry. Opposition to religious and social creeds based upon prejudiced or exclusive policies.

Founded in 1997 in response to increased proselytizing in the schools, the Interfaith Alliance worked with the Fresno Unified School District to develop a policy to ensure



The pictures on the opposite page are what a labor/community alliance in Fresno looks like. At this demonstration, called by the *California Labor Federation* (CLF) to demand Federal price controls on our energy supply, both organized labor and community groups shared the stage. Art Pulaski (CLF) and Randy Ghan (*local Labor Council*) demanded the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) impose wholesale price controls, called for a takeover of Private Power Generators Now, and supported legislation to impose excess profit taxes on pirate generating companies. Community activists Leonel Flores (*San Joaquin Valley Coalition for General Amnesty*) and Rev. Bryan Jessup (*Unitarian Church*) spoke eloquently about how the energy crisis hits the poor.

The Labor Community Alliance, who was invited to participate in this demonstration by the CFL, helped bring a large number of people to the event. The fact that we were asked to work on this event and develop the list of invited speakers is an important step forward in efforts to build a labor/community alliance.

It has always been our belief that progressive community groups and organized labor have a lot to gain by working together in the struggle for economic and social justice.

We hope that this is the start of a relationship that will benefit the entire community. In unity there is strength!

Separation of Church and State on school campuses. This policy has become a model for the nation. Subsequently, a similar policy was worked out with the Clovis School Board.

Another project of the group was the distribution of a "Civility Pledge" to all candidates running for office in the 1998 Election, requesting that they subscribe to civil discourse.

Also this group sponsored a Stop The Hate vigil at Courthouse Park last October, which culminated a week of Stop The Hate activities sponsored by CSUF and many community groups. They also joined with the State and National Interfaith Alliance in committing to the goals of:

Promoting the positive role of religion as a healing and constructive force in public life; challenging those who manipulate and distort religion to advance an extreme political agenda; and building a revitalized mainstream religious movement based upon active civic participation. If you also subscribe to this agenda and would like to join the group, pick up a brochure at the celebration or request a membership form at: The Interfaith Alliance, P. O. Box 9122, Fresno, CA 93790-9122 or for more information, call Rev. Bryan Jessup at 225-1438.

Why we are here

by Greg Fletcher

This month's cover graphically demonstrates the increasing social inequality in the United States, and the shameful gap between the prosperity of the "haves" and the economic stagnation of the "have nots".

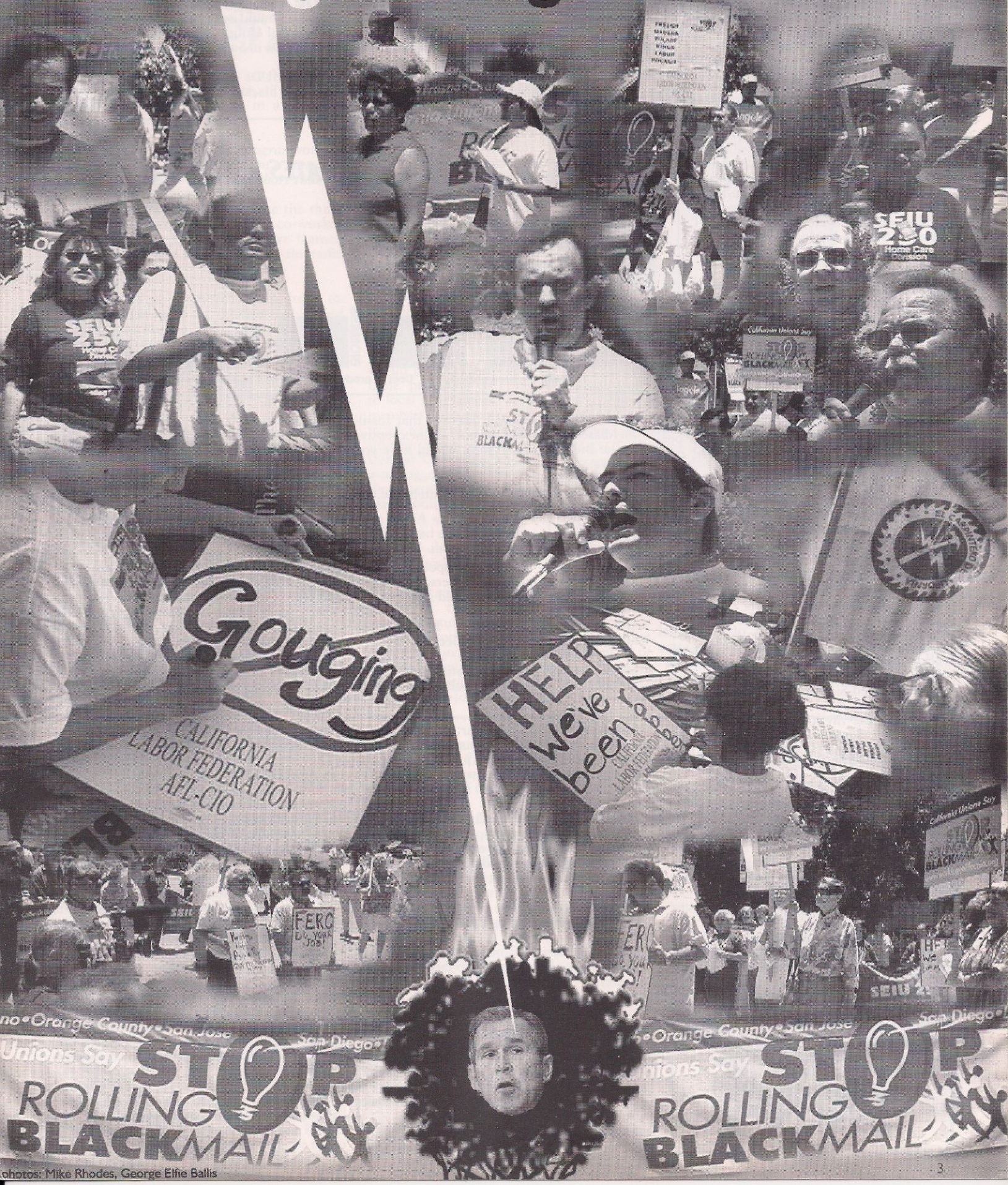
The Labor/Community Alliance exists to mobilize activism around issues of social and economic justice, so that we can all move together toward the kind of society we would prefer, one with a guarantee of a living wage, health care, affordable housing, and basic human dignity for all.

A striking example of the poverty suffered by workers in our own area is found in this month's article, "2,000 sheep and shovel toilet," by Scott Moore with stark photos by Chris Schneider. Starts on the back cover.

front cover & below photo: George Elfie Ballis



White House Squatter embraces Energy Pirates Union Lightning Strikes Bush



Empowering ourselves

by Alan Cheah

PG&E, SCE, the modern day robber barons — Enron, Duke Energy, Dynegy, Reliant and Mirant — hand in glove with Bush/Cheney Oil & Gas administration have used manipulated and colluded to gouge us, the ratepayers.

Utilities are a natural monopoly and should never be deregulated—nevertheless, they have been.

What can we do to end our reliance on America's Energy Cartel now and forever? Action should be taken on these four fronts simultaneously - the Federal level, the State level, the Local level and the Individual level.

The Federal Level

First and foremost, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) must cap rates. It must go beyond the "price mitigation" in effect now. Price mitigation limits rates to what it costs for the "least" efficient power plant to produce electricity plus a profit.

This only takes effect during a stage 1 alert, when electricity reserve levels approaches a 7% level. To put this in perspective, stage 1 alerts have occurred only twice in the past 35 days.

Price mitigation does nothing to relieve the burden of the ratepayer but makes good press for the Administration.

Gov. Davis has proposed that prices be capped based on cost plus a 30%-50% profit. By all corporate standards, this is outrageously generous.

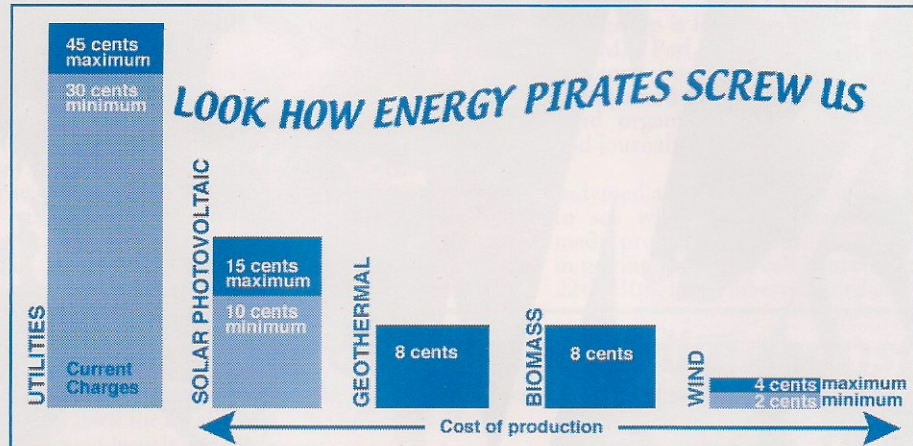
Secondly, stop proliferation of fossil fuel and nuclear power plants and put the same effort and monetary incentives into renewable energy plants. Current gouging prices have averaged \$.30 to \$.45/kwh.

To dispel the myth that renewable energy is impractical and too costly, here are some cost figures: Wind power (\$.02 - \$.04/kwh), Geothermal (\$.08/kwh), biomass (\$.08/kwh), Photovoltaic solar (\$.10 - \$.15/kwh).

These prices, even for Photovoltaic solar is competitive with the pre-gouging prices of \$.04 - \$.06/kwh. How can that be you say?

Well, you have to consider that the \$.04 - \$.06/kwh you pay does not include the subsidies and tax incentives you already paid through your taxes to huge corporations to explore for oil and natural gas.

If you factor those hidden costs into your



the utilities & power generators. They are in control of their own destiny and not subject to the greed of privateers.

Fresno, however, should

implement its MUD with the majority of its power coming from our vast solar resources (300 sunny days/year).

electricity bill, you will discover that fossil-fuel-based electricity is not as inexpensive as the Bush Administration would have you believe.

Contact Bush at president@whitehouse.gov or 202 456-1111

The State Level

There are many initiatives proposed by your State Senators and Assemblypersons. Here is a list of some, which we should support:

SBX11 (State Sen. Nell Soto) - Impose wind-fall profits tax on sellers of electricity.

SBX123 (State Sen. Nell Soto) - Streamline the process for forming public power districts.

SBX16 (State Sen. John Burton) - Create CA Consumer Power and Conservation Financing Authority which will provide electricity to CA at a cost of production and cost to finance the project.

ABX147 (Assemblywoman Patricia Wiggins) - Encourage increased public control over California's future by making it easier to create locally owned and operated utility districts (Municipal Utility Districts - MUDs).

SB 531 - Require 20% of power from clean, renewable resources by 2010.

AB 48x (Assemblywoman Carole Migden) - Restructure electric policy to facilitate public power.

Information on these and other bills can be found at:
www.publicpowernow.org
www.sen.ca.gov

Go to your telephone book to get addresses for your representatives.

We can start by looking into the huge defunct solar farm in Kerman. This facility is owned by PG&E and has not been used for many years.

We should minimize our use of any form of generation which merely exchanges one problem for another: burning bio-mass introduces air pollution problems; hydroelectricity disturbs the ecosystem and impacts the water needs of the population; fossil fuels, coal, or nuclear contribute to global warming and/or pose a toxic waste disposal problem.

Another avenue to explore is energy co-ops. Delta-Montrose Electrical Assn (DMEA) of southwestern Colorado is an ideal model. They were featured in a special energy report in BusinessWeek, March 5, 2001.

They have extensively used geothermal systems for home heating and cooling. Geothermal heat pumps use the constant 58-degree underground temperature to both cool and heat homes.

Building codes should be updated to require energy efficiency design and construction. According to the National Renewable Energy Labs, which is a division of the Energy Department, "advances in building design, heating and air-conditioning systems, lighting and insulation can slash energy usage by 40% to 80%." Just imagine that if all future development incorporated energy savings and current buildings are retrofitted, we can considerably mitigate our power needs and would not have to build any power generation facilities.

Next month; what we can do personally to free ourselves from the energy pirates.





by Julius Rasmussen

ROAR against the Energy Pirates

We did our thing at the downtown power protest, see page 3, the mainstream media gave us a tiny bit of coverage, and we went home to sit in silence! My brain's been racing ever since!

I don't know about you, but this gave me an empty and futile feeling to have such a small influence over such a huge issue! But I think I might have thought of a way to have a much greater impact on this issue. See what you think of it.

How do we have a big, meaningful impact? We can send up a loud and sustained ROAR that those in power cannot ignore no matter how hard they may try! A steady, loud roar to George Bush and to Grey Davis!

We need to take the power industry back from the corporates "for keeps" and spend our state money on developing municipal utility districts and alternative energy sources.

The backbone of my plan to help us keep up the roar - in the ears of the people in both capitals - consists of repeating over and over and over, day after day, what I call the "3 Rs of a Red Alert."

First of all, the letters "R-E-D" in the word "red" represent the words "Roar Every Day." Also, the "3-Rs of the Red Alert" stand for the three powerful ways we can roar at the powers that be:

- 1) *Rant Every Day (by-email)*
- 2) *wRite Every Day (or every week) (by U.S. mail), &*
- 3) *Reach Every Day (by phone)*

Rant, wRite, & Reach the people who have the power to stop and reverse this power scandal!

Each and every one of us, especially those with E-mail access can compose a message, and then send it, or a slightly modified version thereof, each and every day to the people who need to hear it!

You and I can flood their offices with E-mail messages like they've never been flooded before! You and I can also call and send as many letters as possible. It only costs a total of \$20.00 to send one letter every day for two full months!

It costs less than \$3.00 to send one letter every week for two months! Either way, it's a small price to pay for being able to completely swamp these rascals with a giant roar of our opinions!

Cell phone owners can also call from anywhere any time of day! Who are the people who need to hear you and me roar?

How about George "The Bushwhacker" Bush and "Tricky-Dick" Cheney, your most favorite oil men? You can write to either one, or reach either one, by phone by sending your letters to the same following address and the same phone numbers below:

The White House Mailing Address: The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500. The White House Phone Numbers: SWITCHBOARD: 202-456-1414 FAX: 202-456-2461

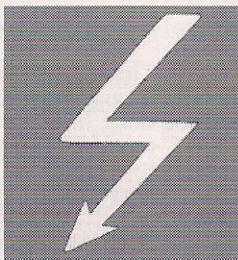
Send your E-mails to: President George W. Bush: president@whitehouse.gov or to: Veep Dick Cheney: vice.president@whitehouse.gov

Or you can contact the Governor or U.S. Congressional Representative at the addresses and phone numbers below:

Governor Gray Davis State Capitol Building Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: 916-445-2841 Fax: 916-445-4633

governor@governor.ca.gov

Congressman George Radanovich 123 Cannon House Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20515 Washington phone: 202/225-4540 - phone 202/225-3402 - fax Local phone: 627-6549 phone Local address: 2377 W. Shaw Suite 105 Fresno, CA 93711 Web site only: www.house.gov/radanovich



Celebrate • Inform • Inspire

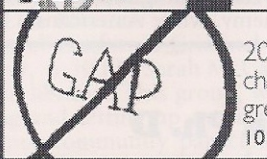
!ACT NOW! Videos - locally & globally

SunMt produces docu-poem videos to vitalize our collective loving dance toward more harmony with ourselves, each other and Big Mama. Each poem is a chapter in our family story. Our family story can be told only by us - and financed only by us.

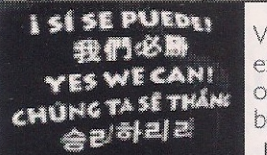
Herewith 3 samples. You can check these and others out by renting them from The Movies video store in Fresno. If you're hot to trot, buy them there or directly from SunMt. See clips at sunmt.org/video.html.



Street theater, teach-ins, protests and civil disobedience shut down the Seattle WTO. 32 minutes
\$30 for unrich persons and unfunded community groups; \$125 for all others



20 are arrested at Fresno's Fashion Fair challenging GAP sweatshops and corporate greed. 10 minutes \$20 and \$80



Valley union Carpenters rally against exploitation of workers and low quality on Fresno housing tracts. Demand action by Fresno City Council. 10 minutes \$20 and \$80

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Jim Crow ANOTHER SLAVERY

The labor/employment problems that plague African Americans are not of their own making as the controllers would have you believe. In these articles I hope to enlighten you.

The first Africans brought here were traded for provisions. They became indentured servants, but unlike the indentured servants from Europe, they could not escape and blend into the population. This fact and the need for strong and cheap labor is why Euro-Americans passed laws making Africans and their descendants slaves for life. This act gave Euro-Americans plenty of free labor. Freedom for ex-Africans only created more problems because they were not allowed to own anything, they had nothing to start a new life with, not even a history.

A group's history is its map from the past to the future. Slaveholders made sure the freed people had no positive memory of Africa. As soon as the Civil War ended, another one begun - a war (that is on-going today) against the descendants of slaves. The goal, to keep them from becoming self-sufficient.

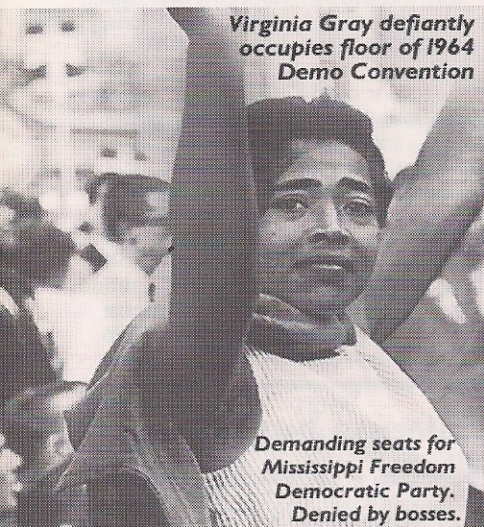


photo: George Ellis Bellis

freed people. When the former slaves built homes, churches, started businesses and schools, these groups, (mainly poor uneducated whites) conducted night raids in African American communities, burning everything in their paths, and killing those who tried to protect their property. (I have to laugh because the poor uneducated whites were like puppets on a string).

The rich white businessmen used fear to get poor whites to do their biddings. Many of these poor whites would have starved after the war had it not been for the generosity of the former slaves. Whites were led to believe that the former slaves would be competing with them for jobs and after their daughters, when in fact many of the former slaves had better skills than many of the whites.

The freed people became totally disenfranchised by these laws. Many escaped the South heading North and West, seeking a place where they could live in peace away from the enemy, white Americans.

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Feminist Therapy

Sexual Orientation Issues

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This was not to be so, because bounties were placed on their heads. Just like the slave catchers during slavery, greedy white men hunted them, and forced many to return to the plantations. Those who didn't were murdered.

Some did manage to escape and built towns, developing their economic base. Economic self-sufficiency angered the rich whites, and they again used the white supremacist groups to destroy all the black towns not dependent on white America for survival. Rosewood, and Tulsa were two of the worst.

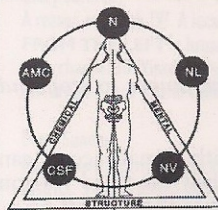
Former slaves who went North didn't fare much better because racism was alive and strong. Just like today the women had to become breadwinners, because they could easily obtain employment as domestics.

Throughout America's history, African Americans have been excluded from gaining their share of the American dream. From 'Black Codes' came Jim Crow laws, an elaborate and interwoven tapestry of social and economic restrictions that destroyed the ability of blacks to improve their conditions....Four principal varieties of laws were adopted to restrict mobility and frustrate competition:

"Contract enforcement" laws strictly limited the times during which laborers (former slaves) could seek new employment. Vagrancy laws discouraged mobility by making it unlawful to be unemployed. "Emigrant agent" laws restricted the activities of labor recruiters.

And the "convict leasing" laws created a system of "debt peonage" by which blacks who were imprisoned for debts were furnished to employers who would assume their obligations until the debts were paid.

Source: The Reincarnation of Jim Crow: by Clint Black



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JOIN FREE SPEECH VICTORS AT FASHION FAIR

By Bob Fischer

with 11-year-olds in the vanguard

Let's get to the point: We are asking all of our friends and co-conspirators, please come and demonstrate with us at 10 A.M. on Saturday, July 7th. Come stand with us at Fashion Fair and help us make it very clear to the powers that be that we cannot be intimidated; we will not become discouraged, and we will not be ignored. Come and help us tell the people of Fresno that nonviolence and persistence pay off, and **WE ARE WINNING!**

The anti-sweatshop coalition's June demonstration was smaller than usual, but as high-spirited as ever. There would have been more than the two dozen who demonstrated, but to beat the summer heat, we have changed the time for the demonstrations to 10 A.M. to noon. The time switch put us in competition with the Pride Parade in the Tower District, and the regular Saturday morning meetings of some of the groups in our own coalition.

Inside the Fashion Fair Mall, our leafleters, Simone Whalen-Rhodes and Hallie Lopes walked about unrestricted by mall security. They freely approached shoppers, and handed them our flyers about the Gap Inc.'s leadership among clothing retailers in keeping young women and children working under sweatshop conditions.

There are some surprises hidden in that. The first surprise is the ages of our stalwart leafleters: Simone and Hallie are both eleven years old! That has to be a first at Fashion Fair.

The other surprises were that Fashion Fair Security personnel were nowhere in sight. In the past, they have surrounded whoever was

leafletting in the mall, and watched them more closely than prisoners in an exercise yard, even though the leafleters were there by written permission of the mall's owner, Macerich Company. Fashion Fair did not assign extra security personnel for our demonstration, and that's another surprise.

The Private Property; No Trespassing signs posted at the entrances to the mall, close to where we demonstrate, had been removed. Furthermore, after the leafletting began, Mike Rhodes, who is Simone's dad (and the editor of this fine magazine) was allowed to add his name to the list of those leafletting inside the mall, to bring the number up to three. Adding a name, or making a substitution among leafleters was unheard of before that day.

Believe it or not, those small changes are a big thing. They represent a major relaxing of surveillance and repression on the part of Fashion Fair.

These new developments are the sort of thing that should have been standard policy all along.

From the beginning, we have been telling Fashion Fair we have a right to freedom of speech and we are claiming our right. There's a reason for these concessions. The reason is that WE ARE WINNING!

Our persistence and perseverance is paying off. We keep coming back, and we won't go away. So, little by little, **WE ARE WINNING!** There is some justice in the world after all -- if you are willing to stand up and fight for it!

Sexual orientation accepted at open youth gatherings

By Reyna Gillet

For fifteen years Community Link has offered help for the highest risk group for teenage suicide. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered teens who are looking for support can find solace at Fresno's Center for Non Violence. Every Friday at 7:30 P.M. you can expect to see Jeff Robinson and his partner/co-facilitator, Juan Bustamante, opening the door to all who come to support one another.

Not only do the youth find peers to relate to and share feelings with, they are able to be themselves and make friends in a comfortable, accepting environment. Jeff is able to give the youth guidance through first hand life experiences and knowledge of society's intolerance towards gays and lesbians.

Whoever attends the gathering, has to show respect by allowing each person to introduce themselves and then discussions usually begin with a question addressed to the group to open up conversation.

At the youth group you can expect a few regulars who might monopolize the forum with their issues, but always expect that your concerns and questions are open to be heard and debated.

The group does attract a young crowd and ages range from 15-26 the "cut-off" age. Some nights the group will attract so many, it will be standing room only.

The youth group does not discriminate against people for sexual orientation or questioning identities as long as they come with open minds. The gathering is also open to parents who wish to come and observe what the assemblage embodies.

By-no-mean is the group a pick-up scene, but it is a nice alternative to the usual bar scene gays and lesbians turn to. The bar environment contributes to excessive drinking and allows for very little personal interaction. Youth group allows for more intimate relationships to be made and a safe place for teens to go.

Jeff and Juan are very active in the community. They are always trying to get the youth involved in social events, fundraising and anything involving the GLBT community. Jeff has always been an advocate to have the GLBT youth represented in the community. Community Link's youth group is planning a reunion February this next year to celebrate their anniversary.

For any information regarding the youth group or other Community Link activities contact them at CLinkInc@aol.com or (559) 266-LINK.

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WHAT WOULD FRESNO LOOK LIKE

if we reduced youth crime 2/3?

I recently learned of an innovative restorative justice program in Wellington, New Zealand. They have been able to reduce youth offending by two-thirds in just three years and haven't had a youth sentenced in eight months.

by Vickie M. Fouts

There is an alternative to our current criminal justice system where the state is considered the victim. It is called restorative justice. In our present system the true victim, the one who was harmed, is ignored or lost in the system.

The offender is punished through retributive justice, which usually means incarceration. It is causing our prisons to overflow. The state is pleading for more prisons at the expense of the taxpayer.

Nothing is done for the victim of the offense. Nothing is done to rehabilitate the offender or determine and repair the social ills that may have caused them to transgress.

Nothing is done to help the families involved on both sides. Nobody wins except those in control of the prison industry complex.

When using restorative justice the victim, offender, and community come together with the aid of a mediator to resolve the conflict.

The goals are: a) restitution and healing for the victim b) healing of the relationship between victim and offender c) accountability and healing for the offender d) healing for the community.

An excellent example of what restorative justice is and what it can do is the case of two teenagers who had taken property from three unlocked garages in Fresno.

The two boys, their families and two of the three victims meet with a mediator from the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP).

These two young men could have been sent to juvenile hall. They could have learned how to become hard core criminals. The victims could have felt resentful, lost and ignored. The families could have been torn apart. The community would have to pay for the incarceration. No one would have won.

Instead, they talked and worked it out amongst themselves. It was decided that the boys would write 500 words describing their thought and feelings about the break-ins and the hurt they had caused their parents.

They would do 50 hours of community service. In six months they were to write another 500 words detailing their activities, goals and objectives, family life, thoughts and feeling during the last six months. Everyone came out a winner.

What a better idea is it to heal the victims, offenders and community over having the highest rate of prison incarceration in the industrial world.

You can check VORP out at <http://vorp.org/index.html> or call for more information at (559) 224-1110. They are always looking for community volunteer mediators.

Restorative justice is not just something to be used by our criminal justice system. It can also be used in our workplaces, non-profit groups, civic organizations, churches, schools, and homes. Can you imagine what a wonderful place Fresno County would be if everyone agreed to try restorative justice over retributive justice.

What would Fresno be like if we reduced our youth crime rate by 2/3?



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OUR PEOPLE SPEAK

2 murders don't make a right

Although it is hard, I am trying to understand those who think that a murderer, including one who committed a most aggravated crime, deserves punishment by death. How many of us take time to reflect on it? Very often, we misinterpret scriptures and theologians, while none of the prophets or the apostles, whatever they prophesized, can stand higher than the most Human and yet the most Divine, who himself became the victim of the capital execution, warning us at last that he takes the sins of the world so we would not do it again to anyone else. How quickly we forget it...siding with the Pilate of modern days.

If "an eye for an eye" is justice, it is dead wrong; for the feelings of rage and vengeance do not bring the lost one back, and therefore do not bring "closure." We should stop violence, not life. If we truly believe in the dignity and inalienable value of life, which is given to us by God, we must preserve that value by putting ourselves above a crime. We can choose an option to strip a murderer of all the freedoms in a life imprisonment without parole for him or her to think and repent on committed crime till the very end. We know that the system can fail, but let us believe that we are created in the image of a loving and merciful God, and work towards that good.

Enver Rahmanov

Tarnishes Peace Officer badge

By Richard Stone

(Because of involvement with my neighborhood association, I was invited to take part in the Citizen Police Academy, a semester-long class presenting the philosophy and operations of the Fresno Police Department. At class end, we were asked to write an evaluation. This is mine.)

I came to the Academy with ambivalence. My work in the Lowell neighborhood has led me into trusting relationship with several area officers who we turn to for help in creating safe living conditions. However, as Program Director with the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, I've been familiarized with many problems that community members--especially minorities--have had with police. My hope in attending the Academy was to reconcile the paradoxes of these experiences.

Overall, I was impressed by the officers who came to our classes. They were well-trained and dedicated. They showed pride in their work and the forward-thinking of the F.P.D. I was surprised to find how much knowledge (technical, legal, logistical) officers are required to have. From the classes and even from the uneventful afternoon I spent on a ride-along with a patrol officer, I gained a distinct picture of the unceasing mundane pressure, as well as the extreme crises, that officers have to cope with day after day.

On the other hand, from the very human presentation (with the officers feeling free to share their frustrations and limitations) patterns emerged as to how the police think about their work and the people they encounter. Here several troubling tendencies became apparent that explain, at least in part, the discrepancies between "the two faces of the police" as I know them.

"Police trained to think of their authority as coming from a political hierarchy rather than from the people do not feel connected to the democracy they are nominally charged to protect."

with decency; "groups" may have customary practices, but individuals superficially associated with a particular group may not conform to the group norms.

Our lecturers also related stories indicating an apparent department-wide mind-set that public safety is threatened primarily by individuals acting out of private motives like malice, greed, anger, compulsion.



from painting by Maia Ballis

First there is an on-going refrain about "the 95% good guys" and "the 5% bad guys" who are responsible for crime; and about "group profiles" (who is likely to commit which variety of crime, or use which drug.) This kind of thinking is understandable under the pressure to act according to probabilities when confronted with time and manpower constraints.

Still it concerns me when this police folklore is repeated as truth. It needs to be institutionally countered with reality check: any of us is capable of crime; habitual criminals are capable of NOT committing crime at a given time, and even of acting

I heard nothing to indicate that police training involves any systematic or sociological analysis of the conditions under which crimes are enacted: what factors pre-condition antisocial behavior, and what specific events tend to trigger it.

As a result, police officers may well induce antisocial actions precisely by treating suspects as "bad guys".

Furthermore, there is no distinction made between individual law-breakers and citizens engaged in "disturbing the peace" for political reasons that are not criminal in intent.

Police trained to think of their authority as coming from a political hierarchy rather than from the people do not feel connected to the democracy they are nominally charged to protect.

They readily become guardians of established interest rather than being true public servants. Thus in the case of the GAP protesters at Fashion Fair a year ago--police saw their duty as confronting the demonstrators as if they were "bad guys". There was no understanding of the social context.

A related problem emerges from the esprit de corps natural to any group facing continuing adversity together.

While the officers freely admit that they are capable of mistakes in judgment ("we're only human"), there seems to be no awareness that unstinting support for the brotherhood leaves little room for objectivity. Impartiality is required in evaluating individual officers' behavior or the effects of police policy and procedure on the course of events.

Finally, I comment on the delight shown in the "tools of the trade", and especially high-tech capabilities which tend to blur the distinction between soldiers and police officers.

It is completely understandable that police should appreciate technology that makes their work safer and easier. But (comparable to the case of high-tech medicine) there is a trade-off between the cost of technology for the extreme situations versus investment in the basic, unglamorous services of prevention and community building -- the tasks that really justify the title Peace Officer.

From my experience at the Academy, I can only conclude there is a serious systematic bias in the training and morale-building of the force that cannot be corrected from within.

There needs to be much more dialogue with, and significant input from, other sectors of the community. If this is done, I would expect the police to be a better-appreciated, less adversarial partner in our civic society.

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reported, *he was looking at a mammoth minimum wage violation claim.*

At the time, the workers were getting paid \$600 a month, a mere fraction of the minimum wage. Chris thought they were entitled for the hours they put in. (Sheep herders are required to be on the work site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and, in most cases, 365 days a year. They are considered "on-call" at all times. During the lambing season, September through April, workers report laboring a minimum of 13 hours a day. Dealing with what he thought was a straightforward (and seemingly winnable) lawsuit, Chris had no idea he was about to hit a brick wall.

"As I was trying to put together the wage claim, I discovered that California law specifically excluded [shepherders] from minimum wage laws. Then I discovered that they were excluded from the federal minimum wage law as well."

The Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC), the group that sets the minimum wage and standards for working conditions, had determined the "minimum" wage for shepherders by asking the ranchers how much they were currently paying their workers and then, based on that figure, a wage was set that could not be decreased. Shepherders were explicitly excluded from IWC's Wage Order 14, which controls wage levels for all other farm laborers. Chris's petition to eliminate this exemption was quickly denied.

Though he soon lost contact with the two workers who originally sparked his interest in the issue, Chris has continued to visit the Valley's sheep camps on a regular basis and has compiled evidence to support legislation improving their conditions. Aside from the level of squalor that is visible even to a casual observer, Chris has, through talking with as many workers as he can find, assembled a mountain of what he calls "anecdotal information" that describes a prolonged history of labor rights abuses in the sheep industry.

"Imagine being taken to country where you don't speak the language. You're brought in and immediately put out in the middle of nowhere, told that you're not supposed to talk to anyone, you won't have any form of communication or transportation. You don't have any contact with the outside world. Your employer won't let you receive any magazines or have books because that will distract you from your work..."

Chris implores before his voice trails off. He has found this depiction to be consistently typical with the workers he has encountered. It's clear that their state of near helplessness has impassioned him to ensure that this issue is a priority for the state.

Early on in his work for California Legal Assistance, before he began working for CCLS, Chris met a worker in a Wasco field who was eager to talk but requested he come back after dark for fear that the rancher or grower might spot the two talking.

Chris returned that night and, as shepherd was describing the discrepancy between what he thought America would be like and the reality of his situation, tears began to well up in his eyes.

Whenever they would hear a truck on the road or see a pair of headlights, the worker would dim his kerosene lantern to the point of invisibility because, had he been discovered talking to an outsider, he would have been immediately fired.

For someone like him, a man here on a guest visa who possessed no knowledge of the language of the land, termination of employment would mean deportation and having to break the solemn promise he made to his family to work in America for the required time.

As evidenced by the first two shepherders that Chris met, complaining about working conditions to the bosses carries the same punishment as talking to the outside world. Perhaps more damning, though, is the fact that the same fate meets those unfortunate enough to become hurt on the job.

"I've got a client in Bakersfield who injured himself, asked to be taken to the doctor, and the grower wouldn't take him. He'd say, 'Oh, you Peruvians are just lazy; you're always looking for an excuse to get out of work.' Finally, [the worker] couldn't work anymore so the grower took him in to town, dropped him at a hotel and the next day he migre showed up."

Since it is common for the growers to keep their workers' I-94 documents, which show that the individual is in the country legally, the Bakersfield worker was unable to prove his status and spent the next three months in jail. Often times, growers will simply send complaining or injured workers back to their homelands themselves.

**24 hours/day
7 days/week
\$1,000/month
No contact
with outside
world**

Other times, the workers just get beaten.

Pedro, now in his seventies, has labored as a non-H2A worker in California for over twenty-five years. Originally from Mexico, he has been a fixture of the industry for such a long time that he is often granted privileges that other herders lack; for instance, he gets a day every so often. Chris met him several years ago and there is clearly what can be considered a friendship between the two.

A couple of Christmases ago, Chris's daughter suggested that they make cookies to deliver to some of the local shepherders, including Pedro, since they wouldn't be getting any visitors otherwise. Pedro was so moved by the gesture that six months later, when he was given a free day, he rode the bus into Fresno to thank Chris at his office.

Chris, Maria Elena, and I spent much of our day together scouring the Valley for Pedro. We found him purely by chance at a camp we stopped at just outside of Avenal and were greeted at his door with a loud, pleasant greeting. According to my companions, Pedro has the nicest, most spacious abode they have seen at a sheep camp though, truthfully, it is no larger than a walk in closet and lacks electricity and running water. While Maria Elena and Chris talked to Pedro (part official work, part friendly catching up), he would continually look at me while he was responding.

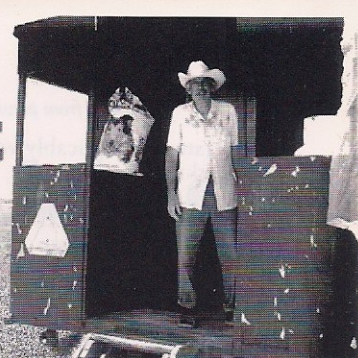
I considered it a sign that he was including me, the stranger, in the conversation though, honestly, I was too embarrassed to try to explain that I didn't speak Spanish. Even without the advantage of literal comprehension, I was able to understand the feelings that he was expressing, if not the words themselves. After they had finished talking, Pedro explained that there was another herder nearby and that, since he was getting ready to take the water truck to the local



2,000 sheep & a shovel toilet



Herders names have been changed to protect the vulnerable



pump to reload, he would lead us part of the way there. There were several people already at the pump when we arrived an apparent mixture of hired hands and supervisors. Though he gave us directions, Pedro in no way hinted that he knew us as anything more than lost tourists. The consequences for violating one of the strictest work rules, even for this seasoned veteran, could be dire.

Two years ago, Chris decided that it was time to put the anecdotal information he had been collecting for a decade into a form that could materialize the argument he already knew to be true. He figured that the best way to present his evidence was in the shape of a standardized survey that would be taken to as many sheep camps as he could find and then published as a final report. The leg work would be both daunting and time consuming, and wholly necessary.

"At the same time, I got a call from someone who worked at Radio Bilingue and she said, 'Chris, I've got this volunteer here who was an attorney in Mexico, but she doesn't speak any English. Do you think there is anything she can do at CCLS?'" Chris explained the type of work he had been doing with the sheepherders and asked Maria Elena if she would be willing to go out and conduct interviews with them onsite. She agreed and got to work.

Maria Elena could not have been more perfectly suited for the role designed to flesh out the feelings and experiences of the workers. She seems to have an uncanny ability to get the herders to talk, no matter what their inhibitions.

When we first arrived at Juan's camp, he was expectedly very cautious in his responses to the questions that Chris posed. Juan stood with his arms folded, offering at most one or two word answers to the queries. As soon as Maria Elena began talking, however, his whole posture changed. He began to laugh and tell stories about his life in Chile.

He joked about his dogs. He explained how he had purchased a television and car battery with his own money and figured out how to wire the two together. He expressed how much he missed his brothers and sisters back at home. In short, he opened himself up to her. And she was able to utilize this gift to interview forty-one workers in less than two years.

The survey was based around several questions relating to the types of treatment the workers had been receiving. Included were questions like "Since you began working here, have you ever had a day off?" and "Have you ever been to a restaurant or movie?" Overwhelmingly, the answers to these questions were "No." Chris was not surprised by the findings as they supported

what he had already discovered in ten years of informal conversations. What he had now, though, was something tangible which he could use in his fight for the sheepherders.

The report was published last March under the name "Suffering in the Pastures of Plenty: Experiences of H-2A Sheepherders in California's Central Valley." The results of the report are astounding. Here is a summary of some of the findings:

Drink irrigation water, get very ill stomach

Of the 41 workers interviewed, 37 of them said that they have never had a day of rest. None had ever been able to attend church or go to a library.

Only two workers had toilets onsite, and one of those toilets was located in the herder's trailer, completely unusable without a way to drain the tank. Only 7 workers were allowed to have visitors and 33 were explicitly forbidden from talking to anyone from the outside. The workers were also given a chance in the survey to air their concerns without fear of retribution.

They described situations in which they had been threatened, beaten, and/or fired for merely complaining about the lack of food and medical treatment.

The unsettling evidence contained in the report has resulted in a surge of public interest in the lives of the sheepherders. Chris credits this increased attention with a decrease in the opposition's power and its ensuing promising developments.

Recent activities by the California legislature have generated mixed feelings among labor activists. Last year, when the IWC began considering raising the minimum wage, hearings were held to discuss removing some of the current exemptions to the wage law. Chris and other worker advocates began bringing injured and fired sheepherders to the hearings to testify about the lifting of their specific exemption.

Victor Flores, president of the Sheepherders' Union and a former H-2A herder himself, was the first to testify. In a moving display, Victor detailed one of the many reasons why increased worker protection is so vital: "[W]e suffer psychological abuse for having asked for better food, because they'd only give us two cans of milk per week, they gave us five pounds of potatoes per week, they gave us canned beans, all expired dates. They gave us contaminated water that they took from the irrigation wells. They didn't give us clean water. And as a result, many of the sheepherders, Peruvians, Chilenos, Mexican, Spanish, suffer from stomach illnesses."

Late in the year, the IWC voted to raise the minimum wage and lifted every exemption except one: the exclusion of sheepherders from any real wage protection. The board's reasoning behind their decision was that they wanted to further investigate the issues of both pay and working conditions for domestic sheepherders. Too little too late, says Chris: "By doing that, [IWC] ensured that these workers would go another six months without any real improvements."

The IWC appointed a wage board to study the problem. The board was composed of equal parts ranchers and worker advocates. The outcome was an obvious draw.

In the aftermath of the wage board debacle, the labor representatives offered a monthly figure that they had, knowing that the commissioners would never approve anything approaching minimum wage for the workers, cautiously placed at an embarrassingly low level, about \$1000 less than another farm laborer would earn for the same hours worked. Perhaps more embarrassing for the system designed to protect workers' rights, however, is the fact that the IWC voted down even this insufficient sum.

Eventually, the commission reached a compromise and a wage lower than the labor advocates had hoped for was approved. The result is a raise, effective July 1st 2001, that will increase the monthly sheepherder wage from \$900 to \$1050. Also included in the agreement is a second increase to \$1200, which will go into effect in July 2002.

What was not included in the compromise, even though the IWC postponed lifting the exemption specifically to have time to study the issue, was any decision about improving the working conditions of California sheepherders.

In fact, IWC commissioner Doug Bosco, who in December said he supported waiting on a decision so that both issues could be further

(continued on following page)

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Lonely, abused herders

investigated, inexplicably voted down both proposals to better wages and working conditions.

Luckily, labor advocates are capable of a fair amount of craftiness themselves. Late last year the AFL-CIO, the Sheepherder Union, and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation convinced Assemblyman Paul Koretz of West Hollywood to amend one of the bills that he had pending and redraft it into a sheepherder bill to improve working conditions.

The bill, titled AB 1675, contains six provisions for the health and safety of the workers:

- 1) Toilets will be required at all work sites. Toilets available now, even at Luis's luxurious abode? A shovel and an endless expanse of dirt.
- 2) Bathing facilities will be supplied for all workers. Facilities currently provided include a small, round aluminum vat, a beer keg-sized tank that drinking water is also extracted from, and the endless delight of being naked in the great outdoors. (Chris and assistant Eduardo Stanley recently peeked inside one of these tanks and found that a layer of slime coating its sides and the top of the water.)

- 3) All trailers or fixed housing units must have heating during the winter. Sad reminder of the hostile opposition to improving workers' rights, the labor advocates had to nix the inclusion of air conditioning for fear that the bill would not pass.



- 4) Should the bill become law, employers will be required to ensure that their workers receive regular mail service. Currently, most of the workers' mail first has to go through their bosses

hands, trampling any notion of an employee's inherent right to privacy.

- 5) For emergency use, telephones and/or radios will be made available to the sheep herders. Responding to ranchers' claims that the workers will misuse their phone privileges, the bill includes a proviso that if a phone is used for personal use, the employer has a right to be reimbursed for the actual cost of the call. Chris Schneider: "It's okay for the growers to abuse the workers, but don't let the workers abuse the cell phones!"

- 6) Any time a worker is required to perform work unrelated to herding sheep (i.e. transportation, cattle ranching, welding) he will be paid the same as someone regularly working in that field.

The bill passed through the assembly labor committee and on Monday, June 4th, AB 1675 was passed by a majority in the general state assembly.

It will now be sent to the appropriate committee at the state senate level and if the bill is successful there will go before the senate floor.

(A side note: At a recent hearing held to study improving working conditions, the testimony of one worker advocate was proceeded by baa-baaing from the floor of the general assembly. This attempt by our elected officials to debase and marginalize the sheepherders was discomfiting for the herders and, no matter how one looks at it, absolutely disgraceful to the state of California.)

Organizing Sheepherders as Difficult as Herding Cats

One of the toughest problems facing advocates of sheepherders' rights is the difficulty in organizing a group of individuals in situations devoid of any communication devices, secure mail service, and stability in location.

"Generally, workers don't like to give their boss a letter addressed to Legal Services and ask him to drop it in the mail box," explains Chris, "That's just not going to happen." And, due to the quasi-nomadic

nature of sheep herding work, finding someone more than once in the same place is generally unlikely.

AFL-CIO-herder Advocates stop rancher bid to kill sheep herder minimum wage.

June 15, the Industrial Welfare Commission considered a bid by the Western Range Association (WRA) to rescind the IWC's order implementing a sheep herder minimum wage. The IWC had not informed any sheepherder advocates that the issue was set for hearing. Tom Rankin, President of the California Federation of Labor attended the hearing for other issues and discovered the ranchers' sneak attack. He contacted Mark Schacht of California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and the two of them argued that the IWC should not grant the growers request.

The WRA said the definition of "sheepherder" contained in the final IWC order was not the same definition as was published for hearing. Therefore, they contended, the entire order is illegal and should be rescinded. Rankin and Schacht argued if there was an error, it was technical and the wage increase should go forward. The IWC voted to go forward with the wage increase but to correct the definition of sheepherder. Advocates anticipate the employers will use this to file suit against the IWC in to block the new wages.

else in the community for that matter, about recent developments in their case.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You may have some interest in assisting the fight for improved working conditions and higher wages for the state's sheepherders. You can start by writing a letter to your representative in the state senate requesting their support of AB 1675. Further, you may wish to recommend that the legislators focus their "fact finding missions" on visits to sheep camps with worker advocates, not with the ranch owners.

(Every trip made by a law maker to a camp thus far has been prearranged by the growing companies. You can imagine what types of testimony will be offered by a worker who has been threatened with deportation for complaining while his boss is hovering over him.)

AB 1675 will soon be in the hands of the Labor and Industrial Relations committee for their consideration. Committee members that would love to hear the opinions of well-meaning and sincere Californians: Richard Alarcon, Rico Oller, Liz Figueroa, Sheila Kuehl, Bob Margett, Tom McClintock, Richard G. Polanco, and Gloria Romero, all of whose addresses can be found at www.sens.ca.gov.



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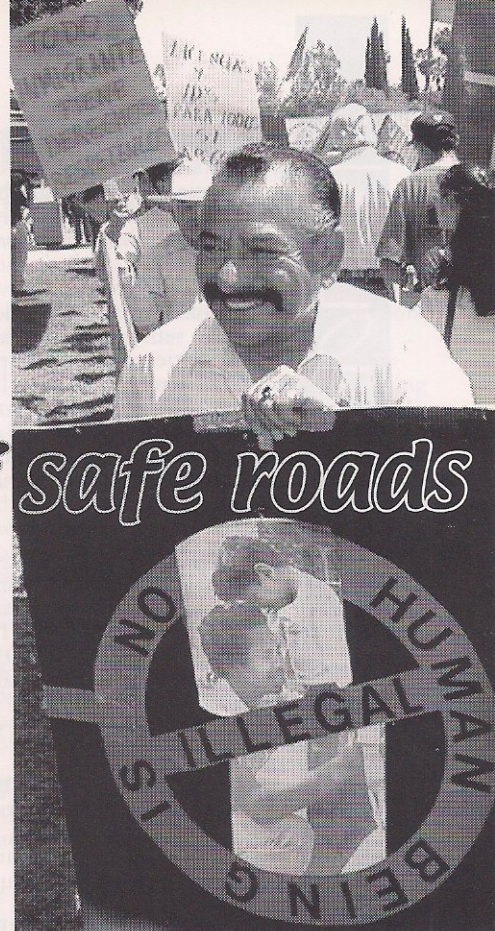
DRIVER'S LICENSES for ALL

by Mike Rhodes

Politicians, immigrant rights activists, and concerned citizens rallied for the right of all drivers, without regard to their legal status, to have a license. The demonstration, held in front of the Department of Motor Vehicles in Fresno, supported AB 60 which was introduced by Assemblyman Gil Cedillo. Speakers at the rally, including the local Amnesty Coalition, Reyes told the 200+ participants that changing the law was an issue of public safety.

Life, Liberty & pursuit of safe roads

"Unlicensed drivers endanger everyone. Without adequate testing, a driver may never learn the rules of the road," said Reyes. "Receiving a California Drivers License ensures that all drivers learn proper driving techniques." The rally was organized by a broad coalition of local groups including the Labor/Community Alliance, No Nos Vamos, Pan Valley Institute, SEIU Local 250 and many others.



photos: Mike Rhodes



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MATCHLESS MATCHERS: We go to press prior to the date of our anniversary, but we will be announcing at that time that the \$6000 matching fund challenge has been virtually met. Thanks to all our old reliables, and the many new ones who helped us make the match.

Now comes the fun part...deciding how to use the money. We have set 3 dates for "house parties" to discuss goals and priorities with our supporters. The gatherings are set for 7:30 p.m. on Thurs., July 19 (at the Center), Wed. Aug; 1 (at Angela Price's home, just north of Valley Children's Hospital), and Tues. Aug. 14 at Margaret Hudson's "estate" in Old Fig. If you can help us plan our direction, call Angela (after July 12) at 435-6383 to RSVP and get directions.

Lavery aboard: Vincent Lavery has been elected to our Board, as media coordinator. In the past year, Vince's drive and creative spirit have enabled us to undertake a monthly share of STIR IT UP!; the weekly TV show THE RIGHT STUFF FROM THE LEFT; and the Central Valley Institute. Vince also serves as our Secretary and ambassador to Ireland. We are delighted to add Vince to our working collective and to our letterhead.

Transforming them to us'all: The difficulties of creating alliance across community barriers (as in peace community, African American community, GLBT community, Latino community) became a topic of debate and frustration at our June meeting.

The result is an evening of "Building Bridges Across Cultural Barriers", to look at what's gone right and wrong in our outreach attempts, and more importantly what more to do. The hope is to build on the success of our Black/White dialogue group and create a "next generation" of bridge-building enterprises. *Please join us for what promises to be an intense and productive workshop, on Thurs. July 26, at 7 p.m.* Kehinde Solwazi and Sudarshan Kapoor will facilitate.

TIME = \$\$\$: The Center has become the first official agency member of The Time/Dollar Exchange, an extended barter club where members earn time/dollars exchangeable for goods and services from any other member. The Center will be earning time/dollars by providing meeting space and by recruiting club members. In exchange we can request volunteer services from individual members who will thereby earn their own time/dollars.

The Center may be able to spare some of our time/dollars to other groups in need of one-time volunteer help (e.g. childcare or set-up for an event, clean up, special mailing). If your groups can use this kind of volunteer assistance, call Richard at 266-2559. For direct contact with the Exchange, call Jeremy Hofer at 445-4166.

Center July Calender

WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 3:30p.m. - STIR IT UP - KFCF 88.1 F.M. Monthly call-in show hosted by Vincent Lavery and Richard Stone.

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 9:30A.M. Monthly Board meeting at the Center.

THURSDAY, July 26, 7:00p.m. Building Bridges across Cultural Barriers. Workshop for Planning ways to make the Center a better ally to other constituencies.

EVERY SATURDAY, 10:30P.M. THE RIGHT STUFF FROM THE LEFT. Cable 10 - Channel 43. The Liberal/Progressive voice in the desert of Valley television.

EVERY MONDAY - 7:30P.M. discussion on upcoming: The Right Stuff from the Left - at the Center.

\$\$\$ RAISER IN AUGUST: date to be announced. An evening of Irish genius, featuring Vincent Lavery performing excerpts from: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING OSCAR. based on the life of Oscar Wilde. For info call Lavery, 559 439-0821.

Columbia — finding hope in killing fields

THE WELCH REPORT

Jack H. Welch, M.D.

A group of Witnesses for Peace delegates went to Colombia this year, providing an unprecedented show of US solidarity with the people of Colombia and the Colombian peace movement.

They heard subsistence farmers share tragic stories of how US-funded anti-drug fumigation has destroyed food crops and poisoned their wells.

They took testimony from brave human rights activists, labor organizers and others who told them that US funding has escalated the war, threatening ongoing peace efforts.

Every day some dozen people are murdered by paramilitary groups or guerrillas engaged in the drug trade, or by the Colombian army, heavily funded by US tax dollars and tied to their paramilitary enforcers.

"The US has responded to the spiral of destruction by massively increasing military assistance to the Colombian army... almost a billion dollars of direct military aid... The Colombian army is among the most abusive in the world. Fully half its officers have learned their torture techniques at the US Army School of the Americas."

Since 1976 Colombia has bowed to US pressure, experimenting with various highly toxic chemicals, many of which now are illegal. "Toxic herbicides have been sprayed over coca and poppy fields, doing substantial damage to food crops, banana plantations, community water sources and damaging the health of the people. Despite this, net coca production has increased almost 100% since 1980, and the US street price for cocaine has dropped 400%," indicating increased supply. (Source: Stanislaus Connections May 2001)

A member of the From Violence to Wholeness program participated in the Witness for Peace delegation to Colombia and co-led a series of nonviolence trainings while she was there.

"Before going to Colombia, I was overwhelmed by the stories of violence that I heard; by the torture and execution of human rights workers, teachers and labor leaders; ... and was depressed by the rape and destruction of the fragile Amazonian environment caused by the fumigation efforts." 85% of the rural population of Colombia live in absolute poverty (earning less than \$500./year)!

But having gone to Colombia and listened to the human rights workers and others, "I can say that I have a new sense of hope. Looking through the lens of active nonviolence... I saw two things: an incredible organization and resilience of a people and their nonviolent struggle for dignity", despite "at the same time the system of economic greed and injustice seeking to destroy them." (Source: Pace E Bene's From Violence to Wholeness program spring 2001)

The above, of course, is describing the US War on Drugs. In my private practice of medicine I had experience in treating persons who were drug--addicted.

In the early 1970s in Los Angeles I saw and treated some 150 heroin addicts (with methadone, in part). This experience confirmed for me the greater importance of treatment (and, preferably, prevention) of drug addiction over efforts to curb the supply side, which latter can succeed only when demand is reduced.

ACTION: urge President Bush to change the course of US policy toward Colombia in the direction of providing more War on Drugs funding for prevention and treatment in the US. 202 456-1111



JULY WILPF EVENTS CALENDER

Wed 4 There will be no board meeting in July.

Wed 25 "Stir It Up" WILPF-style. Tune in to KFCF 88.1 FM from 3:30 to 4 p.m with hosts Lauralee Crain Carbone and Zay Guffy-Bill.

Coming up in August:

Wed 1, 7 p.m. Board meeting at Carol Bequette's, 3747 Circle Drive, West. Along with regular business, we will be planning the upcoming August retreat. Call 229-9661 for more info.

Sat 18, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. WILPF branch annual retreat at Carol Bequette's, 3747 Circle Drive, West. Call 229-9661 or 227-2133 for details.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE CATALYST

If you're receiving the Labor Community Alliance newsletter because you're on the Fresno branch WILPF mailing list, you will only be receiving the quarterly Catalyst in August. Your Catalyst page will return in the Labor Community Alliance newsletter in September.

JUST WHAT WE NEED--A COUPLE OF NEW PROJECTS!

by Carol Bequette



One danger of attending WILPF cluster meetings is that when I hear what other branches are doing, I often say to myself, "Wouldn't that be a great project for us!" So when some branches reported at our last such meeting that they were working with coalitions to obtain a "living wage" for workers on government financed projects, I said to myself "Wouldn't that--" (see above).

Anyone interested in working in this effort, contact me and we'll attempt to form a coalition, hopefully with labor activists, to pursue this goal of bringing economic justice to workers who subsidize our quality of life.

The second project that was approved at our last Board meeting comes from the WILPF National Legislative Office. It has come to their attention (surprise!) that Diane Feinstein and George Radanovich have bad records on our issues.

This makes us eligible for membership in their exclusive project EYE on Congress. The WILPF database shows there is a large enough presence of WILPF members in California and in Radanovich's district to organize and work together to make a real difference.

For the next two years our branch will help publicize the pro-military, anti-people stands of these two legislators so that their voting records are well known by the 2002 elections. Again, let us know if this political project is something you can help us with.

"The New Colossus"

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowes world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"



July 4, 1886, a year before her death at 38, Emma Lazarus recited her sonnet, "The New Colossus," at the dedication of the Statue of Liberty. Lazarus, herself a Sephardic Jew, was prominent in her role as head of an organization providing relief for Jewish immigrants.

As a far reaching, militaristic nation, the U.S. has done its share to create staggering numbers of homeless exiles with its international war and conflict policies.

Many of the people affected by our military's actions who seek refuge in the U.S. after personal and political devastation are turned away never even getting close enough to read the closing lines of the poem carved at the base of the statue.

This July 4th please think about recommitting yourself as an even stronger presence for peace and justice work locally, nationally, and/or internationally. Fresno branch WILPF or any of the other wonderful organizations around are an excellent way to act on your commitment.

Let people around the world know that the U.S. military and its government do not represent most of the U.S. citizens' sensibility when it comes to violence and strong-arm tactics.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

At our last branch board meeting, officers for the new term were elected. They are as follows:

Coordinators Carol Bequette/Zay Guffy-Bill
Program and Action Desi Cortez
Recording Secretary Jan Slagter
Treasurer Lauralee Crain Carbone
Membership Barbara Nelson
Literature Laura Fultz
Publicity not filled
Telephone Nora DeWitt
Historian Ellie Bluestein

If anyone is interested in the position of Publicity chair, please contact Zay Guffy-Bill at 227-2133.

If you're a WILPF member, we encourage you to submit any information you have and want to share with other members call or email Zay at 227-2133/zaygb@earthlink.net. And thanks to this month's contributors for the wonderful info they provided.

JOIN POLICE REVIEW ACTION, July 9

By Ellie Bluestein

Central California Criminal Justice Committee will meet Monday, July 9, 6:30 PM Sarah McCardle room on second floor of the downtown library. This group, which has been investigating racial profiling and setting up a citizens police review board, is looking for greater community participation. Call Rebecca at 225-7627 for more information. Central California Criminal Justice Committee has concluded four public presentations by representatives of police civilian review groups in 4 California cities.

The information given was extremely valuable and is available for viewing on video tape from Rebecca. We will also have written summaries of the presentations available. Our next step is reaching out to organizations and individuals in the community to join us in evaluating the various forms of police review that have been presented and preparing a system that would best fit our needs here in Fresno.

Womens International League for Peace and Freedom



July 2001 Events

SEE YOU THERE

Monday, July 2 7:30 PM
Monthly meeting of the **Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides** (FresCAMP). Call 439-0280 or 227-6134 for further information.

Wednesday, July 4 10 AM - 1 PM
The Interfaith Alliance will hold a **CELEBRATION OF OUR DIVERSITY** brunch at O'Neill Park on the CSUF campus. The public is invited to join Interfaith Groups for a Brunch in the Sikh tradition, and celebrate with music, dance and entertainment from the variety of faith and cultural groups represented here in the Fresno Area. Call 255-1438 for more information.

Saturday, July 7 9:00 AM
Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley meeting at Denny's restaurant at Willow and Shaw. Speaker at 10 AM: Werner Lipton on "an update on the progress or not on Fresno's transportation needs." The Kennedy Club seeks donations of Kennedy Memorabilia for August 16th fund raiser for auction. Call 439-8140 for more info. <http://home.att.net/~barbarapyle/kennedy/kennedy.htm>

Saturday, July 7 10 AM - 12 Noon
Protest Gap's use of sweatshops. Demonstration will gather at Fashion Fair (Shaw Avenue and Angus Street at the north end of the shopping center). For more information: United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) FSU@yahoo.com, email or visit website: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/USAS_FSU. Call Gabrielle Kirkland for more information: 875-0057

Tuesday, July 10 7 PM
Meeting on **immigrant rights** & general amnesty at Centro Bellas Artes, 1048 E Street in Downtown Fresno. Call Leonel Flores (559) 270-0418 or 498-6033 for more information.

Sunday, July 10
Deadline for submissions to the August issue of the Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter. Send calendar items and articles to LCAeditor@mediaone.net.

Wednesday, July 11 12:00 noon
Hunger and Nutrition Forum sponsored by Fresno Metro Ministry meets at the College Community congregational Church, 5550 N Fresno Street (note change of location for June and July meetings). For more information: call 485-1416 or email metromin@qnis.net.

Thursday, July 12 7:00 PM
Fresno County **Green Party** Council Meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness Ave (S. of Olive). The Fresno County Green Party invites you to its regular monthly County Council meeting. The four pillars of the international Green movement are Social Justice, Grassroots Democracy, Nonviolence, and Ecological Wisdom. Call 265-3647 or <http://www.greens.org/cal/fresno>.

Saturday, July 14 9:30 AM
Fresno **Center for Nonviolence** monthly meeting at 985 N. Van Ness. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see their web page at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence/> or call 559-23PEACE (559-237-3223).

Tuesday, July 17 9 AM
A hearing is scheduled in Judge Hamlin courtroom (Department 50, 5th floor) for **The Gap 20**, who were arrested over a year ago at Fashion Fair for protesting The Gap's use of sweatshop labor. The expectation is that legal council for the defendants will present a motion for dismissal at this hearing. Community support is requested. Find out the latest information by calling (559) 233-3978.

Tuesday, July 17 7:30 PM
Fresno **Stonewall Democrats** meets on the third Tuesday of every month. The July meeting will be at the Express Restaurant, 3075 N. Maroa, Fresno. For more information call Jay Hubbell 292-4905 or e-mail: hubbell@online.no.

Thursday, July 19 7:30 AM
Community Health Care Roundtable sponsored by Metro Ministry meets at Trinity Lutheran Church 3973 N. Cedar (between Ashlan and Dakota). For more information: call 485-1416 or email metromin@qnis.net.

July 19th 7-9 pm
Fresno County Free Library, Main Branch, Sarah E. McArdle Room, 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno. Join efforts to give **bicyclists** a voice in Fresno and Clovis! Topics: available money for bike transportation projects, bicycle education and promotion, and bicycle safety and awareness.

Thursday, July 26 7:00 PM
Building Bridges across Cultural Barriers at the nonviolence center, 985 N. Van Ness. Workshop for Planning ways to make the Center a better ally to other constituencies.

Friday, July 27 5 PM
Street Heat on KFCF 88.1 FM featuring Labor and Community **activists**.

Friday, July 27 7-11 PM
Night of Jazz fund raiser for Centro La Familia. For details call 237-2961.

Monday, July 30 6:30 PM
Labor/Community Alliance meeting, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 226-0477 or see <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/>

ONGOING ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Every Saturday 1-2 PM
Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. Volunteers are needed to help cook food Saturday mornings, 9:30 AM at Sierra Vista United Methodist Church, corner of Maple and Illinois. Donations of good or almost good produce can be dropped off also. They are always in need of servers at the park. For more information call 266-5305 Or 452-0277 (ask for Dallas). Visit their web site at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB/>

Every Third Saturday 3 PM
JOIN CRITICAL MASS ON THEIR MONTHLY RIDES THROUGHOUT FRESNO to educate motorists that bicyclists exist, that we are entitled to an equal share of the roads, that the politicians need to work to assure our safety with bike lanes. When we ride in large groups, people DO notice and the more people see us, the more aware they will be of our rights and less likely to sideswipe us next time they pass us on the streets. But this ride is not a grind - WE HAVE FUN - sharing stories, going new places, finding the best routes, just riding together with fellow cyclists. We'd love to see you out there with us.

Every Saturday 8 PM
Centro Bellas Artes dance at 1048 E Street. Merengue, **Salsa, Rock, Cumbias** and more. This is a fund raiser to save the Centro Bellas Artes cultural center. \$5 at the door Call 237-2783 for more information.

¡SALVEMOS CENTRO BELLAS ARTES!
SU CENTRO COMUNITARIO Y CULTURAL
1048 "E" ST. (entre Tulare y Fresno)
Fresno, CA, 93706

Every Saturday 10:30 PM
A reason to watch TV! A locally produced progressive show is now on the air. **THE RIGHT STUFF FROM THE LEFT** is broadcast on channel 43 (no cable needed). If you have cable in Fresno it is on channel 10. Vincent Lavery is the host, with guest panelists, guest editorials, call-ins and lively discussion. Tune in and show your support for a progressive presence on local TV.

Every Sunday
Food Not Bombs cooks every Sunday starting at 10 AM at 743 E. Weldon Avenue in the Tower District. Food is served between 1 and 2 pm at Courthouse Park in Downtown Fresno. Volunteers are needed. For more information see their web site at: <http://www.angelfire.com/ca6/fnb/>

Every Monday 7:30 PM
The Right Stuff From The Left! If you are interested in working on this TV media project - this meeting is for you. The Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness. Call 456-4343 for more information.

Monday - Friday 9 AM
Democracy Now! on radio KFCF 88.1 FM. Amy Goodman, award-winning veteran journalist, appropriately subtitles this show "The Exception to the Rulers" as the program covers news of the nation and world from a progressive viewpoint, with focus on the history and economics of workers, women and people of color around the world.

Every Tuesday and Thursday 7-9pm
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) each Tuesday and Thursday night from 6:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the meals. Please call Liza Apper at 559-229-6410 for additional information.

Every Wednesday 3:30 PM
Stir it Up radio show on KFCF 88.1 FM. This show is hosted by a different progressive community group each week of the month. Listen for the community calendar, interviews with community activists and more.

Every Wednesday 7:30 AM
David Bacon's Labor Journal on KFCF 88.1 FM. David Bacon's experience as a union organizer and his world-wide contacts in the labor community make him uniquely qualified as a journalist specializing in issues and concerns of working people. He covers a broad range of labor news and issues locally, nationally and globally. See David's web site at: <http://www.igc.org/dbacon/>

Love Letter to from Vickie Fouts KFCF/KPFA

KFCF has been the major catalyst for dramatic changes in my life. I learned of KFCF just three years ago in a Women's Studies class at CSUF.

What I have learned from programming on KFCF has helped me grow from a conservative to a progressive in a very short time.

It has also helped me influence the thinking of my children, friends, and co-workers by sharing with them what I have learned. Every minute that I have access to the radio, KFCF is on.

I listen to it whenever I can from the moment I get up to the moment I go to bed. I have been known to spend my breaks and lunch hour in my car listening to KFCF. I look forward to days off so I can spend the whole day with KFCF. I must admit that the majority of programming I hear is from KPFA. *But, there is also a lot of local programming that is of great importance to me.*

I didn't realize how much local programming I listened to until I printed the local programming schedule off www.kfcf.org/. No where else in Fresno can I find such diverse and educational information.

Wednesday and Friday afternoons are my favorite. I didn't realize how much I had become part of the progressive community until I looked at what "Stir It Up", a group of local activists, consisted of on Wednesday's at 3:30 PM.

I am involved in all four organizations, one way or the other. They are Labor/Community Alliance, Fresno Center for Non-Violence, Fresno County Green Party, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

"Stir It Up" keeps me appraised of what is going on in the local activist community. My favorites on Friday afternoons are "California Indian Radio Project" and "Down on the Farm" with Tom Willey. I am very interested in Native American Spirituality so "California Indian Radio Project" is of great interest to me. Tom always has such wonderful guests and great information to share with me regarding sustainable agriculture and organic farming.

Lloyd Carter, of "Down in the Valley", keeps me informed on local issues dealing with water policy, agribusiness, and land use. "Clearing the Air", brought to us by Kevin Hall, advises me on what is happening regarding urban growth, air quality and transportation. How can we live without all this important local information that KFCF provides us? There is no better way for me to

LISTENERS DEMAND

LOCAL KFCF/KPFA VOICE

by Mike Rhodes

The KPFA Local Advisory Board (LAB) held a "Community Needs Assessment" meeting in Fresno June 16. KFCF 88.1 FM rebroadcasts KPFA's signal in Central California. One LAB member from the Bay Area (out of 20) attended the Fresno meeting. Mark Hernandez, who is on the KPFA/LAB and lives in Fresno, led the meeting. Several KFCF board members were also in attendance. What they heard, by and large, is that listeners love the progressive political news and analysis they hear on KPFA and would like KFCF to continue providing air time to local programers. LAB members were encouraged to ask KPFA to carry more stories about events in Central California and it was suggested to have a show produced in Fresno that would be broadcast on KPFA so Bay Area listeners had a better understanding about the issues and politics of this area.

An important part of the meeting was a discussion of the ongoing problems with the Pacifica National Board. Money is urgently needed to support a number of lawsuits that are being conducted to take back control of KPFA and return the network to its original peace and social justice mission. Supporters were urged to join CAMPAIGN 3000 which is

start my weekend than listening to KFCF on Fridays, 5 to 6 PM. Dorina Lazo of "Poetry Mosaic" brings me wonderful poetry from a diverse group of local poets.

"The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", hosted by Vic Bedorian, covers a range of subjects regarding nature and culture. I am kept aware of what is happening on labor and community issues by Pam Whalen of "Street Heat".

"Stir It Up" keeps me appraised of what is going on in the local activist community.

No where else in Fresno can people be informed of what is going on in the Gay/Lesbian community than "It's a Queer Thang" brought to us by Jeff Robinson. KFCF shows its commitment to diversity with "Nuevo Foro", providing the Valley's Latino's with news and local information and the "Southeast Asian Refugees Program," hosted by Lay Prum, that provides Cambodian news and local information.

I have been known to keep on listening when the Cambodian program comes on.

looking for 3,000 listeners to contribute \$100 each to support the Free Pacifica Legal Action project.

KFCF board openings
Due to the recent death of Robert Munce and the resignations of Catherine Campbell, Dixie Salazar and Sari Dworkin, we have four openings on the Board of Directors of the Fresno Free College Foundation.

The by-laws state:

Section 4. Vacancies.

Any vacancy in the Board of Directors caused by death, resignation, or disability of a Director shall be filled by a majority of the remaining Directors.

Members of the Foundation who are interested in KFCF and the Foundation, and are interested in bringing themselves to the attention of the Board should submit a resume and a letter explaining what they feel they can contribute to the Foundation and KFCF. Deadline is July 31 with discussion at next board meeting, August 14, 7:30 pm

Letters and resumes should be sent to :
FFCF, Box 4364, Fresno, CA 93744
Attn: Vic Bedorian

For more information about how you can help, call the KFCF office at 233-2221.

Three KFCF board members announced their resignation at the June 16th meeting. Catherine Campbell, Dixie Salazar, and Sari Dworkin who are all identified with the Community Radio Coalition, left because they believe that their opinions were not valued on the board. Several speakers thanked them for working so hard to make KFCF a progressive/grassroots community radio station. they were

presented with a bouquet of flowers, and received a loud round of applause. KFCF supporters are now asking how these board members will be replaced, what role (if any) KFCF subscribers will have in the process, if any members of the CRC will become board members, and if the ethnic balance of the board will be changed to reflect the community. Stay tuned!

There is something about their language and music that I find calming and refreshing.

Weekends bring a wide variety of musical programs from jazz to classical, from popular and Greek, to pipe organ.

I was awe struck the first time I heard "Interstellar Lounge". I didn't know there was such a thing as Techno. I even called Dan Cook and asked what he was playing and went out and bought the CD the next day.

KFCF brings to me such wonderful local programming that I can't even go over it all here. It is filled with such diversity, much needed educational information, and quality entertainment, that can't be found anywhere else in Fresno. If you are not now a listener I hope you soon will be. KFCF needs all of our support.

"If I can't dance, I won't join your revolution."

— Emma Goldman

Local activists, tired of waiting for main-stream/corporate media to cover issues of concern to the progressive movement, have taken matters into their own hands. The first steps have been taken to join the national Indymedia network.

Indymedia is an alternative news information center on the Internet that is a hub for groups all over the country to tell their story. It is a news network for the rest of us - those of us on the left.

Instant news, video, photos and analysis will be available about events happening in Fresno



by Mike Rhodes

Indymedia aborning in Fresno

and the Central Valley. Eventually, the site could include radio, TV, teach-ins, etc.

One of the most impressive aspects of the local Indymedia center is that it is being led and directed by a cadre of youth with a progressive agenda. Lauren Ferber, who is the primary organizer of this project said "We are doing this to help build a progressive movement in the Fresno area." The group is also looking for a building in the Tower District that can be used as a youth drop in center, alternative media distribution point,

and office. Many of the young people involved in Indymedia are also active in the Sunday Food Not Bombs project that feeds the homeless in downtown Fresno.

The group is looking for a web programmer (HTML Perl, CGI, PHP), photographers, someone interested in shooting short film footage and other interactive media, artists, head organizers from community groups, and journalists and writers.

Indymedia at: <http://www.indymedia.org> to see what this independent progressive media project is all about. If you are interested in getting involved, call Lauren Ferber (559) 226-4304. laurenliberty@mediaone.net

by Gene Richards

Measure C sales tax could help bike transport

Measure C is the county-wide, half-cent sales tax used for local transportation projects and, unfortunately, it's been used largely for more of the same old nonsense - freeways (like the new Clovis Freeway). And god don't we need another freeway, so some developer out on the outskirts of town can make a bundle at everyone else's expense.

However, renewal of the measure is being discussed over the next few months and there is the possibility that the new measure can include funds for alternative transportation, which would include bike facilities, of course. The Steering Committee, composed mostly of government officials and politicians with a smattering of business and environmental interests meets monthly at the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce, 2331 Fresno Street, at 3:30 p.m.

The schedule for the rest of the year is: June 28, July 19, August 23, Sep. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 29.

The June and July meetings should be interesting. Representatives of the different transportation modes will present their needs to the group. It should be interesting to see who will speak for streets and highways. In July, Mark Keppler, Sierra Club Transportation Committee, and Nick Paladino, Fresno Cycling Club, will jointly talk about bicycle transportation.

I strongly recommend visiting this forum and listening and giving your two-cents worth if you feel so inclined. There is a time at the end of the agenda for public comments but be prepared to be cut off before your 3 minutes is up if madam chair doesn't want to hear it.



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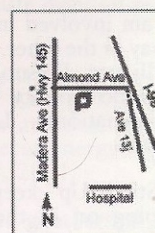
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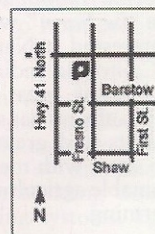
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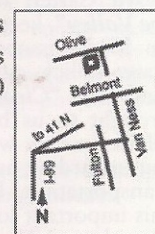
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Bolivians stop water grab

Big corps want our faucets

(Editors note: Project Censored produces a list of each year's most censored stories. These are important stories, that for a variety of reasons are not published by the mainstream media. Below is Project Censored's number one story this year)

Global consumption of water is doubling every 20 years, more than twice the rate of human population growth. According to the United Nations, more than one billion people already lack access to fresh drinking water. If current trends persist, by 2025 the demand for fresh water is expected to rise by 56 percent more than the amount of water that is currently available. Multi-national corporations recognize these trends and are trying to monopolize water all around the world. Monsanto, Bechtel, and other global multinationals are seeking control of world water systems and supplies.

The World Bank recently adopted a policy of water privatization and full-cost water pricing. This policy is causing great distress in many Third World countries, which fear that their citizens will not be able to afford for-profit water.

Grassroots resistance

to the privatization of water emerges as companies expand profit taking. San Francisco Bechtel Enterprises was contracted to manage the water system in Cochabamba, Bolivia, after the World Bank required Bolivia to privatize.

**I Remember
Cuchambamba!**

When Bechtel pushed up the price of water, the entire city went on a general strike. The military killed a seventeen-year-old boy and arrested the water rights leaders. But after four months of unrest the Bolivian government forced Bechtel out of Cochambamba.

Bechtel Group Inc., a corporation with a long history of environmental abuses, now contracts with the city of San Francisco to upgrade the city's water system.

Bechtel employees are working side by side with government workers in a privatization move that activists fear will lead to an eventual take-over of San Francisco's water system.

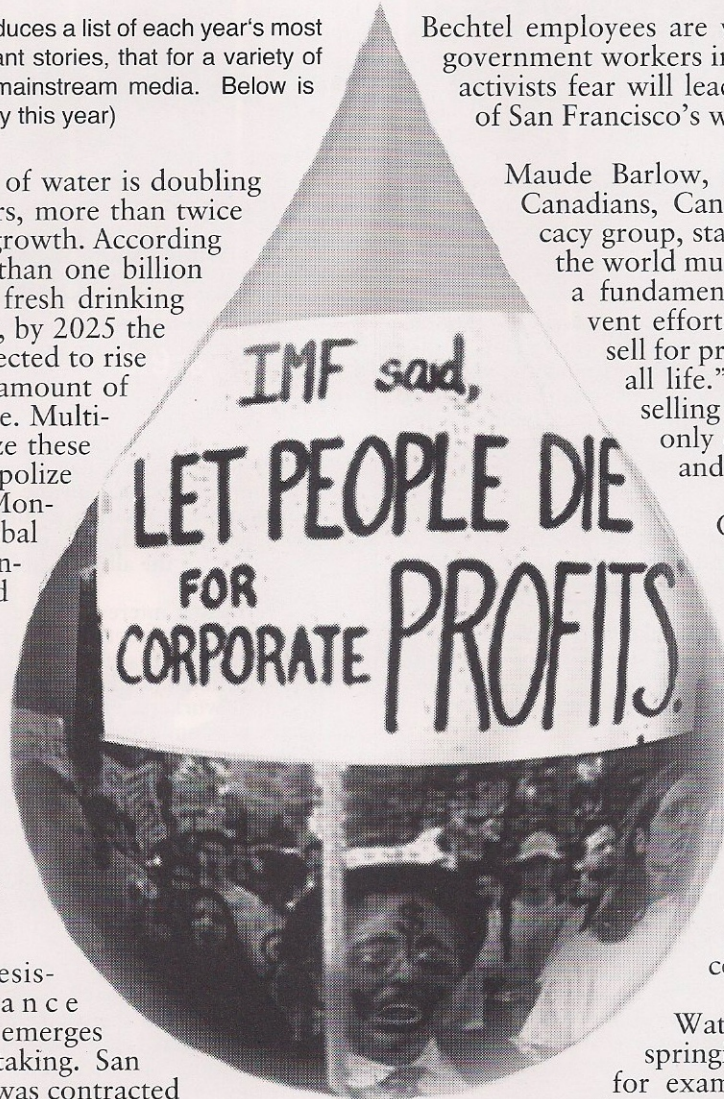
Maude Barlow, chair of the Council of Canadians, Canada's largest public advocacy group, states, "Governments around the world must act now to declare water a fundamental human right and prevent efforts to privatize, export, and sell for profit a substance essential to all life." Research has shown that selling water on the open market only delivers it to wealthy cities and individuals.

Governments are signing away their control over domestic water supplies by participating in trade treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and in institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). These agreements give trans-national corporations the unprecedented right to the water of signatory countries.

Water-related conflicts are springing up all over. Malaysia, for example, owns half of Singapore's water and, in 1997, threatened to cut off its water supply after Singapore criticized Malaysia's government policies.

Monsanto plans to earn revenues of \$420 million and a net income of \$63 million by 2008 from its water business in India and Mexico. Monsanto estimates that water will become a multibillion-dollar market in the coming decades.

For more information, call Project Censored, (707) 664-2500 or check their website at <http://www.projectcensored.org/intro.htm>



Loneliness • abuse • lousy food 2,000 sheep & a shovel toilet

by Scott Moore

photos: © Chris Schneider, all rights reserved

I let my eyes wander, first to the shabby, marginally utilitarian trailer in front of me (appearing slightly more modern than a nomad's hut, if only for the builder's choice of materials), and then to the trio of black and white sheep dogs near my feet, lying in self-made trenches to mute the effects of both the merciless heat and the unrelenting gales bursting through the grasslands.

The canines, whose barking had shattered the ancient silence just minutes before when I and my two companions arrived, had lost all interest in their human visitors and were now busying themselves in a lethargic pursuit of the innumerable flies surrounding the trailer.

My eyes found, leaning against the make shift home, a shovel that I knew (through previous explanation) served as the only toilet for the trailer's occupant and near that, the free-standing water tank that contained all of our host's bathing and drinking water.

Remembering the conversation and the purpose for my visit, I returned my gaze to the people standing just a few feet away from me: my escort and director of Central California Legal Services Chris Schneider, his colleague Maria Elena Martinez Gutierrez, and the resident of the trailer whose situation was the reason for our presence, Juan, a Chilean shepherd recruited to work in California with an H-2A visa.

Maria Elena just asked Juan about the best experience he's had in the year since he came here. He answered, "Nothing," that he didn't have one. Chris translated for me, alleviating my uncomfortable ignorance of the Spanish language. "Now she asked about his worst experience. He replied, 'The loneliness.'"

Chris continued to interpret the informal interview for my benefit, relating that *holidays were the saddest times for Juan, as he had to face them (as he does every other day of his life here) in total isolation.* When Sandro worked in Chile, he shared a large house with other shepherders who were a consistent source of companionship.

Now, in America, he counts himself lucky if there is another camp nearby on a holiday so he can stop by and say "Happy New Year" or "Merry Christmas." Not surprisingly, neither his foreman nor the rancher he works for have ever visited Sandro to wish him a happy holiday.

For Chris and Maria Elena, this tale of loneliness is nothing novel. As members of Central California Legal Services (CCLS), they have heard innumerable heart-breaking stories from the shepherders whose camps dot the Valley's hillsides and fields. Unlike myself, they know firsthand that the deplorable working and living conditions in Juan's camp are unique only in that they are not nearly as difficult to stomach as many others they have visited.

Juan, and the other workers like him, are working in America under the H-2A guest worker visa. For the sheep ranchers to be able to

claim a need to pool labor from sources outside our country, they have to be able to prove that there is a shortage of workers available locally.

"I think if the Silicon Valley ran an ad in the newspaper looking for workers in the computer industry and they had to be at the worksite twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, they would have no communication with anyone outside the worksite, and got paid a thousand bucks a month, I think you'd find that there's a shortage of computer workers here in the United States," comments Chris about the reason for the alleged shortage of local workers.

The recruiting interests of the sheep ranchers are represented by an organization called the Western Range Association (WRA), whose practices include seeking out the most impoverished communities they can find (mostly in Peru but also in Chile and Mongolia) for potential workers. The WRA is able to use the fact that they aim for the economic nadir to justify the conditions the shepherders face while working here in America.

After all, no matter how bad it gets here, reasons the WRA, it's still an improvement over the homelands of their workers. And they have found no shortage of interest among potential recruits; the prospect of making more money in America has convinced many to leave their families for the lonely three years required by the H-2A contract.

The plight of H-2A shepherders in the Central Valley has weighed heavily on Chris Schneider since his first encounter with the problem. In 1990, while he was working for California Rural Legal Assistance in Delano, Chris was approached by two former shepherders who told him that *they had been fired for requesting better conditions from their employers.*

"I sat down and had an interview with them," relates Chris, "When they started describing the conditions to me, how they lived, that they'd have to drink the same water that they gave to the sheep, that they'd have to get their water out of the trough, there was no bathing facilities or toilet, the refrigerator didn't work.

"Quite frankly, I thought these guys were exaggerating. I thought, Okay, I've got a couple of guys here that are disgruntled and are really painting a bad picture."

Sadly, the workers' account of their live/work environment was all too accurate. Continues Chris, "I went out to see some of these camps. [The workers] took me out, and I found that what they had described to me was an understatement. I was just amazed at how bad the conditions were. That was surprising to me because before that I had spent fifteen years working for the farm workers union and I had seen some pretty amazing situations."

The woeful inadequacy of the sheep camps' conditions, though, only revealed a portion of the injustice suffered by the workers. When Chris began to distinguish exactly what kind of case he was dealing with, he realized that, based on the pay that the shepherders had

(continued on page 10)