

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

J U N E
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THE COLOR OF ABU GHRAIB

By Bob Wing*

War Times newspaper, <http://www.war-times.org>

A friend of mine was discussing Abu Ghraib with his Egyptian father, who had originally supported the war. Referring to the photo of the female U.S. soldier with a leash around a prostrate Iraqi, he asked his Dad, "What is the message of that photo? It's that the Iraqi is a dog."

His father replied, "No. The message is that he's MY dog."

The tortures at Abu Ghraib have exposed to the world the utter moral bankruptcy of Bush's war. Far from being fought on behalf of Iraqi democracy, it is a war for U.S. supremacy in which racist dehumanization and brutalization of Arabs and Muslims play an absolutely central role.

Since September 11 the White House has framed its "war on terrorism" in thinly veiled racial and religious terms: as a crusade of the "civilized" against the "uncivilized." This unsavory propaganda campaign has built upon a more than decade-long effort by the government and the media to demonize Arabs and Muslims as "bloodthirsty terrorists."

This depiction harkens back to the portrayal of Native Americans as savages out to scalp the good white settlers who only wanted to bring light to their dark existence—and, incidentally, to destroy their way of life and occupy their land. The sexual humiliation of Iraqis recalls the daily rape of black slaves. And the smiling faces of the Abu Ghraib perpetrators and the trophy photos they took remind us of the images of white people who gathered to enjoy the lynching of black people in the South.

To justify its war of choice, the White House added to this racist imagery the myth that the chief Arab terrorist was Saddam Hussein and that he was bent on attacking us with Weapons of Mass Destruction. To this day the racial ignorance so common in our country has enabled many Americans to hang on to the Bush fable that Iraq was involved in the September 11 attacks. The twisted logic is that an Arab is a Palestinian is a Muslim is a Terrorist is an Iraqi. What's the difference? They all must be destroyed before they destroy us first!

SANITIZING WAR

At the same time Washington made extraordinary efforts to conceal the horrors of war. Fearing that its racialized propaganda might not be enough to convince the gentle public to send its sons and daughters off to kill or be killed for the greater glory of the military and Big Oil, it sought to conceal all deaths and present the Iraq war as a sort of Boy Scout outing for the good of civilization. The "war on terrorism" in Iraq became the 21st century version of the White Man's Burden.

Washington bought up all rights to satellite photographs and otherwise ensured that no horrific battlefield scenes would ever disturb the public's less than watchful eyes. Similarly it ended the practice of counting the dead. Instead, the president

continually assured us that his "high tech weaponry" only struck "the really bad guys."

The White House campaign to sanitize the war was so successful that the fact that more than 10,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed in this "noble mission" is virtually a state secret. It even banned the photographing of the caskets of dead U.S. soldiers. The president has avoided attending their funerals lest the public be reminded that war actually involves the horrible death of human beings.

However, it is not enough to lay responsibility for the tortures at Abu Ghraib and the murderous Iraq war at the doorstep of the White House, its rightwing ideologues or its corporate cronies. We must also address the self-interested racist gullibility that makes the U.S. public susceptible to war mongering. Much of that public has shown

that it will let its attachment to an SUV lifestyle and false patriotism lead it to support leaders who destroy the lives and steal the resources of people who can be dismissed as racial inferiors—at home as well as abroad.

MORAL AWAKENING NEEDED

Indeed, the random jailing of more than 15,000 Iraqis reminds us that more black men in the U.S. are incarcerated than have graduated from college. Torture was practiced in U.S. prisons long before Abu Ghraib.

The mass round up of Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. since September 11 resurrects the internment of Japanese Americans as "enemy aliens" during WWII. And the self-serving U.S. denunciation of "foreign terror-

ists" in Iraq mirrors the arrogance of Anglos calling for "English Only" and a crack-down on "illegal immigrants" while occupying land stolen from Mexico in an earlier U.S. "war of liberation."

Abu Ghraib has exploded the myth that Bush's war was a moral, high tech war in which only terrorists suffered. It has finally brought the brutal treatment of Arabs and Muslims out into such harsh light that even the sleepy U.S. public snapped to attention.

But condemnation of Abu Ghraib cannot be the end. It must instead be the beginning of a profound moral awakening in this land that will lead us not only to end this war, but to open our minds and hearts to correct the manifold racist lies and injustices.

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

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Photo Credits:

Page 3, 5 (upper left), 15 Mike Rhodes

Page 4 Howard Watkins

Page 6 Connie Peterson

Page 11 Kirk Chomienia



Letter to the Editor

Probably most Americans feel shame about the sadistic abuse of prisoners in Iraq. The International Red Cross says these are not isolated acts but "patterns of behavior." Some of us may be searching for something to do to extricate our country from the pothole the Bush administration has driven us into. There is one way to ensure that such treatment by the US military/government will stop or greatly diminish.

These atrocities are taught at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas) at Fort Benning, Georgia. Fort Benning is a US Army base for training both US and foreign military and intelligence persons in what the Department of Defense recently called "military police officers enabling interrogation" or "softening up," more sanely called "immoral means for finding out more information from prisoners." Protests against SOA/WHISC began ten years ago; Amnesty International began reporting on the training in torture there at about the same time. It was at SOA/WHISC that Latin America dictators' military and police learned the repressive tactics that terrorized the citizens of Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, and El Salvador in the 1980s.

The funding for the SOA/WHISC needs to be completely ended so that these inhumane procedures are no longer taught and used by the United States. Write your

Congressperson and ask that all funding for SOA/WHISC be withdrawn now. This is one step you can take to help yourself feel better about your country and yourself.

Diane Marks

I was surprised and disappointed with the one-sided approach taken by Mr. Rhodes in the recent *Community Alliance* magazine in analyzing City of Fresno elections involving me, Jerry Duncan, Brad Castillo, and Alan Autry. The article leaves the reader to think that City of Fresno officials receive campaign contributions almost exclusively from developers/builders and, therefore, are obligated to do their bidding. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In approving the new 2025 General Plan two years ago, the Council deliberately directed new growth to the Southwest and Southeast areas of the city. Also, special attention was given for the first time in years to improving the downtown and central sections of Fresno. The fruits of this remarkable document are already obvious as housing and other development is now taking place in these previously neglected areas. And contrary to Mr. Rhodes's article, millions of federal, state, and local dollars are being put into affordable, subsidized housing throughout Fresno. I have supported such projects in my northwest Fresno district.

The article conveniently neglected to mention that I received significant campaign contributions from unions and individuals unaffiliated with the building industry. Campaign contributors support me because of my uncompromising interest in good government and commitment to the greater good. Contributions have never been, nor will ever be, a *quid pro quo* for how I vote. For the *Community Alliance* to even suggest this is both irresponsible and untrue.

A large amount of my time and my infrastructure funds have been expended on those areas of my district needing the most help, namely Pinedale, Highway City, and Herndon Town. Herndon Town has had roads paved that had not seen new asphalt in more than 30 years. Pinedale residents are participating in an extensive and expensive Specific Plan to determine the needs and direction for the community.

I sincerely believe that Mayor Autry and City of Fresno councilmembers have made many improvements in this city. Crime is at a 30-year low. Housing starts (at all income levels and in all areas of the city) are at an all-time high. Air pollution is being addressed, and scarce water resources are being protected. Short and long-range transportation needs, to include bicycle and mass transportation, are being planned for.

I am proud of the Fresno City Council. We are not perfect, but we are also not narrow-minded, self-centered individuals either. We are, I believe, doing our best and often succeeding to make Fresno (FresYes!) a better place for everyone.

Brian Calhoun
District 2

Dear Mr. President:

Did you know for every soldier the expenditure is over \$22,000 per year? For every school-age child the average public-education expenditure is \$380 per year. One new nuclear submarine equals the annual education budget of 23 developing countries with 160 million school-age children.

Hopefully, the present WMD Commission findings will inform us all why with these stats, we are depriving our country of needed funds for public education in declaring an illegal war on Iraq, since under international law only the UN Security Council (Charter Article 51) can authorize a military action.

Ray Ensher

Outdoor Drunk Tank Established to Humiliate the Homeless

By Mike Rhodes

The City of Fresno is setting up an outdoor drunk tank, which is perhaps the only one of its kind in this country. City officials say that this is an "innovative" way to save money. The facility will be run by the Rescue Mission and will be located in the epicenter of Fresno's homeless population. While City officials claim that this is not another attack on the homeless, critics have their doubts.

Speaking before the City Council on Tuesday, May 11, Gloria Hernandez said, "I have a lot of concerns with this proposal. If we have a drunk tank, both rich and poor ought to go in there. I hope that when you look at this the money is not important—the people are important." Edie Jessup said that she was concerned about the "20,000 plus homeless in Fresno and Madera who are at risk because of the eroding safety net." Edie went on to say that "an open-air drunk tank is not a solution to the problem, and this has a terrible appearance for the city of Fresno. I can only imagine the legal and human rights suits that the establishment of this facility will create."

The outdoor drunk tank will be operated by the Rescue Mission, under an overpass on G Street in downtown Fresno. Temperatures get up to 110 degrees in the summer and down to 28 degrees in the winter. The director of the Rescue Mission, Larry Arce, says that he believes the people brought into the drunk tank are in need of spiritual guidance to resolve their problems. It appears that Fresno taxpayers will soon be paying for evangelical Christians to proselytize persons picked up for public intoxication.

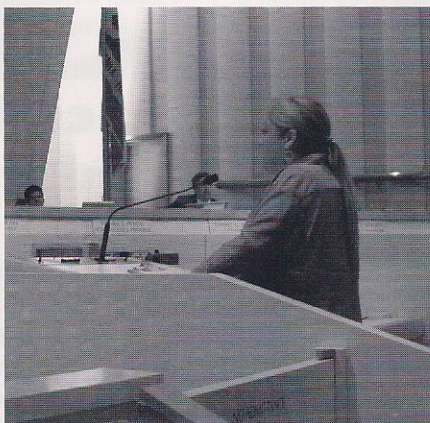
Captain Greg Garner, who is with the Fresno Police Department, says that it costs \$170 to book someone in the downtown jail for public intoxication. He claims that the City will save up to \$400,000 a year if each of the people picked up were taken to the open-air drunk tank rather than being booked into the County jail. But even Captain Garner admits that not every person picked up will be taken to the drunk tank instead of the jail. Therefore, the potential savings will be considerably less than stated. Captain Garner said that "no combative individuals, nobody on drugs, no nonambulatory individuals, and no women will be taken to the Rescue Mission facility." Some critics have suggested that the discrimination based on sex is illegal. Other critics have expressed concern that this experiment will end up costing the City money if someone dies or is seriously injured due to negligence from the inadequately trained staff at the Rescue Mission. One \$10 million lawsuit arising from the lack of care would make this a very expensive social experiment for the City of Fresno. As far as anyone can determine, the supervisors at the Rescue Mission will not be trained medical professionals prepared to deal with the variety of problems they could encounter with the individuals they have imprisoned.

But these concerns did not deter the enthusiasm for the project by City Council members. Brian Calhoun was almost giddy, saying that he was "very intrigued and impressed with this approach. This is a win-win. A thumbs up for a very good way for dealing with this population." Even our resident liberal, Tom Boyajian, voted to support the proposal. Boyajian dismissed the potential to convert the prisoners to Christianity by saying "Maybe you will give them handouts and say this is the kind of thing that maybe can help you because you have an issue that you need to take care of. You are trying to bring more humanity to these individuals."

The outdoor drunk tank is the latest in a long series of attacks on this community's homeless population. It started with a push to move the homeless South of Ventura—the homeless were harassed when they were in the downtown core where builders



and developers are planning major redevelopment projects. At about the same time, an anti-panhandling ordinance was passed and a public relations campaign implemented to convince the public not to donate cash to the poor and homeless. The public was told that the homeless would use money to buy drugs and alcohol. Earlier this year the City of Fresno bulldozed the homeless encampments on Santa Clara and throughout the downtown area, again saying that they were cleaning up the streets to prevent crime and drug use. Now, we have another project gearing up to further attack and humiliate the homeless—an outdoor drunk tank where they will be put on public display behind a chain link fence topped with razor wire. The plan for an outdoor drunk tank is not only dangerous to the health of those unlucky enough to end up there, but is probably illegal as well.



The purpose of these attacks on the homeless is to make life so miserable for them that they simply give up and move to some city that is not as hostile. There is another way: The City of Fresno could treat each resident with dignity and respect. They could provide services that would help the homeless live a better life. The city could open up some of the empty buildings downtown as homeless shelters. Community activists can be supportive by helping the groups that support the homeless—groups such as Food Not Bombs, the Catholic Worker, and the Sleeping Bag Project. It is important for the progressive community to keep the homeless on the radar screen and advocate for their fair treatment. The *Community Alliance* magazine will continue to follow the story and bring you information from the War Zone in this Tale of Two Cities.

Community Alliance Distributor Harassed

A homeless man selling the *Community Alliance* magazine on a street corner was harassed by the police last month. The man, who had been given free copies of the magazine to sell, was stopped by police and told to discontinue selling the magazine. The police, as further harassment, searched through all of his belongings and disassembled his bicycle.

The *Community Alliance* thought that this would be a way for the homeless to earn money for themselves by doing something other than begging. In addition to giving the homeless a way to earn some much-needed money, the magazine would get more broadly distributed.

If there was equal justice under the law, the *Fresno Bee* vendors would be harassed during the next Kids' Day promotion when they are on street corners selling their paper. We are sure to see the police threaten to arrest them and thoroughly search all of their possessions. Perhaps they will even disassemble their cars.

Book Review

***The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them.* Amy Goodman, with David Goodman. New York, Hyperion, 2004. 342 pages. \$21.95.**

by Barbara Price

Probably everyone has had the experience of seeing a movie preview full of exciting scenes and funny lines—and upon seeing the actual movie, making the disappointing discovery that *all* the exciting scenes and *all* the funny lines were in the preview.

Those who were lucky enough to be among the standing-room-only crowd April 14 to hear Amy Goodman speak at Fresno State might make the same disappointing discovery upon reading her new book, *The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them*. Goodman's talk gave away all the best anecdotes and funniest lines from the book. On the other hand, those who were unable to hear Goodman speak on April 14 have a chance now to find out what they missed.

Throughout *Exception to the Rulers*, Goodman, an award-winning journalist and the host of the radio and TV news show *Democracy Now!*, makes the case that mainstream journalism in the United States has become little more than a mouth-piece for the government:

"This is not a media that is serving a democratic society, where a diversity of views is vital to shaping informed opinions. This is a well-oiled propaganda machine that is repackaging government spin and passing it off as journalism" (p. 9).

Strong words—which Goodman backs up with wide-ranging examples throughout the book. She discusses the faulty mainstream media coverage (or lack thereof) of



- 9/11, terrorism, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq;
- the enormous profits being made by US corporations in Iraq as a result of the occupation;
- the corrupt relationship between Chevron and the Nigerian government, resulting in the exploitation and death of innocent Nigerians;
- the real-life consequences of the USA PATRIOT Act;
- the implications and problems of "embedded media";
- the sanitization of US news, compared with news elsewhere (for instance, the decision by the US media not to show dead and injured Iraqi civilians because it's "in poor taste," while the rest of the world does see those images);
- the Timorese struggle for independence;
- the giveaway of "the people's airwaves" and the steady consolidation of media ownership;
- the Bush II administration's decision, in violation of the 1948 Smith-Mundt Act, to use psychological operations (psyops) domestically against the American people, to manipulate support for the war in Iraq.

By the end of the book, readers have a clear answer to the question Goodman poses: "If we had state media in the United States, how would it be any different?"

Goodman paints an ugly picture of the mainstream US media and its cooperation and collaboration with those in power—but she also has hope for a revitalization of independent media in the United States: media outlets that serve the people, not the government. *Democracy Now!* is now available on more than 200 TV and radio stations internationally (including Fresno's KFCF 88.1 FM). Goodman also notes

the establishment of independent media centers (IMCs), where citizens "become the media" on Web sites such as indymedia.org.

Although the audience for this book—progressives, Amy Goodman listeners, independent journalists—is probably somewhat familiar with most of the issues presented here, *Exception to the Rulers* manages to synthesize them convincingly and make its case for the importance of an independent media in this country.

**Amy Goodman's new DVD
"Independent Media in a Time of War"
is now available (for free!) at:
The Movies • 1435 N Van Ness in Fresno**



Reaction to Amy Goodman Appearance in Fresno

By Nicole Richardson, CSU Fresno student

I was talking to my friend in the dorms about the lecture. I told her the facts I had learned from the lecture. There have been 6,131 to 7,849 civilian casualties in the war. Those are all innocent people. There have been 10,200 Iraqi soldiers killed. My friend replied, "Well, it is kind of hard just to kill the soldiers."

I would like to see her explain that to the children who lost their whole families, to the parents who lost their children, the little boy who lost his parents and his hands and who suffered from third-degree burns on his little body. I think her perception might change. Amy Goodman said if America could see these images and see what *really* happens, war would be abolished within a week. I personally agree. We need fewer glorifications of the cause, and we need more of the hard-core facts.

Gandhi was once asked, "What do you think of Western Civilization?" His reply was, "I think it would be a good idea." What will later generations think when they look back? They will probably see this: When the U.S. could not work out something by talking they started killing. How civilized does that sound? It does not. It is a complete disregard for the sacredness and the gift of *life*.

Amy Goodman's lecture was a real eye-opener. It really made me think about everything with a whole new perspective. She is brilliant. She was not just stating what she thought; she actually had facts to support her findings. I am very glad I went, and I was intrigued by her. She was very convincing in her findings. Her talk led me to one very disturbing conclusion, of many. If hate breeds hate, then what are we doing? These children will grow up only to despise the United States for all of their innocent people that we did kill. It just made me realize: Could we have another 9/11 from the next generation?

A Breath of Arctic Air in the Valley:

The Right Decisions in Alaska Could Solve All of Fresno's Problems

By Sandra Guzman



When the thermometer tops 100 degrees in Fresno, it may seem like an adventure just to walk to the corner store. Valley residents will be treated to a tale of a different kind of adventure on Wednesday, June 23, when adventurer/author/activist Chad Kister visits the Unitarian Universalist Church in Fresno as a stop on the national book tour to discuss his new book, *Arctic Quest*.

Kister, an Ohio native, trekked alone for hundreds of miles across the threatened north slope of Alaska, from the polluted oil fields of Prudhoe Bay to the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Called "the sacred place where life begins" by the Gwich'in Athabascan native people of Northern Alaska, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge nearly brought the opposite result to Kister. On a diet of roots, berries and fish, the trepid explorer survived the perils of the far north—including a life-threatening bout of hypothermia—to bring the story of this threatened Arctic landscape to the American people.

As the Bush administration has made drilling for oil in the Refuge one of its top policy goals, the arctic quest that Kister embarked on has now become a larger quest—to warn Americans about the Bush administration's energy plan, its profound shortcomings, and the damage it would bring to America's last wild places.

Saving Tundra Means Ag Profits?

The central figure in the debate about America's energy policy and national security, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is more closely tied to critical issues in Fresno than a cursory geographic analysis might indicate.

"The Bush energy plan is solely focused on drilling for oil in Alaska, and includes little in the way of investments in renewable energy," said David Edeli, the California representative of the Alaska Wilderness League. "The experts agree that if we had an energy plan that created new incentives for renewable energy, the Central Valley would be the first place to reap the rewards."

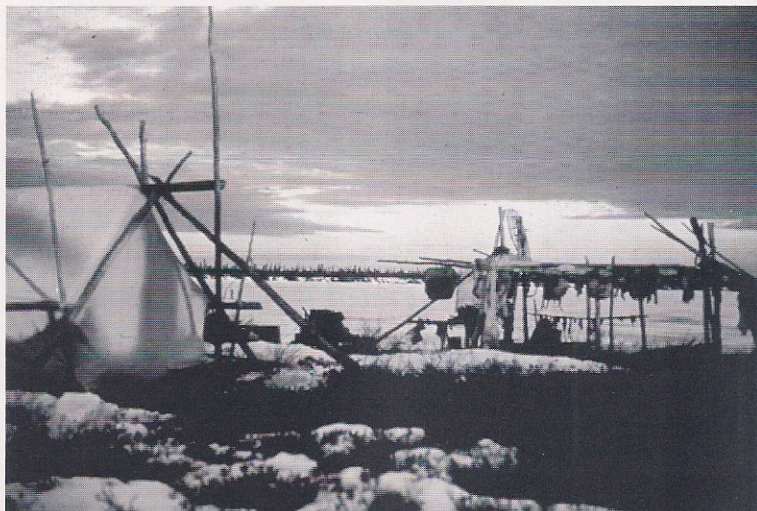
According to the Modesto-based Great Valley Center report *Renewable Energy: Strategic Opportunities for the Great Central Valley*, a shift in govern-

ment policy toward promoting renewable energy would be an economic boon to the Central Valley because of its wealth of renewable energy resources—solar, wind, and biomass energy.

"A decent energy policy would mean incentives for biomass development that would lead to an increase in farm income in the Central Valley," said Edeli. "And of course, a shift away from oil dependence would significantly reduce air pollution."

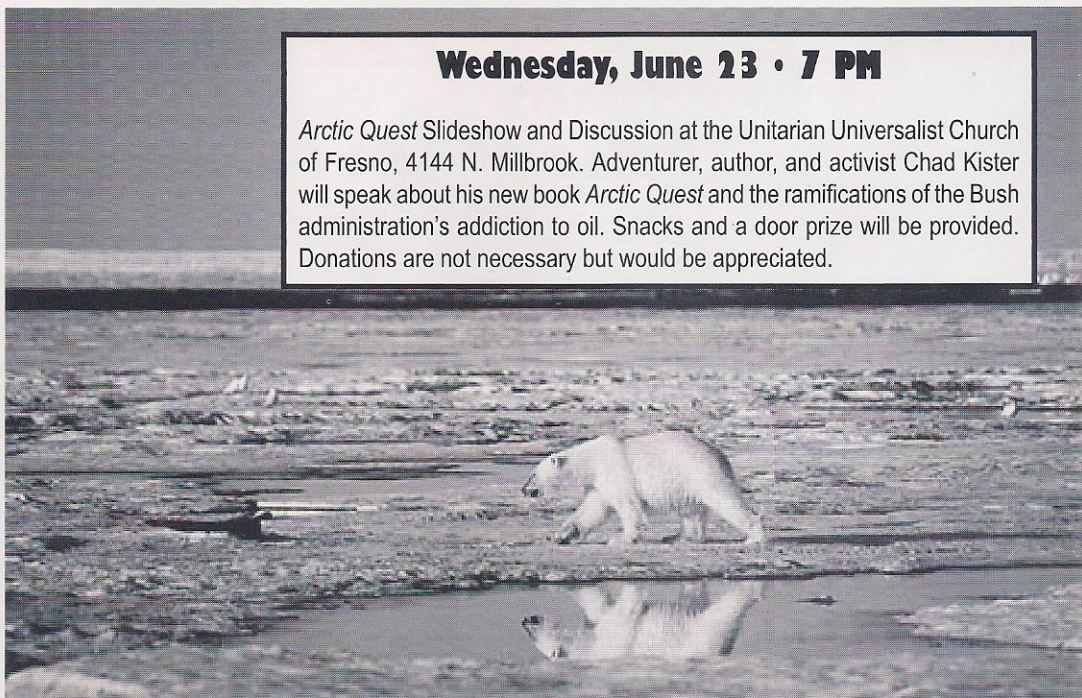
At Kister's slideshow and book signing at the UU Church, Fresno residents will be encouraged to connect all the dots and awaken their minds to a cleaner and more efficient energy plan. Instead of a twisted energy plan that will drive the caribou off their birthing grounds and leave the indigenous Gwich'in people of the Arctic with no means of survival, we need to implement an effective plan that would create more jobs in our Valley and leave Alaska's pristine lands alone for the wildlife and people of Alaska. The right decision in Alaska could solve all of Fresno's problems—from air pollution to economic malaise.

For more information about Chad Kister's slideshow or to get involved in the fight to save Alaska, clean our air, and bring renewable energy jobs to the Valley, please contact Sandra Guzman at zoie7@hotmail.com or (559) 943-0163; or David Edeli at dedeli@hotmail.com or (415) 336-5685.



Wednesday, June 23 • 7 PM

Arctic Quest Slideshow and Discussion at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook. Adventurer, author, and activist Chad Kister will speak about his new book *Arctic Quest* and the ramifications of the Bush administration's addiction to oil. Snacks and a door prize will be provided. Donations are not necessary but would be appreciated.



Queer Eye . . .

By Dan Waterhouse

How much would an Independent Police Auditor benefit the gay community?

Possibly quite a bit.

The concept of the IPA was brought forth by the Central California Criminal Justice Committee in response to a continued use of lethal force by Fresno police that many in the community find disturbing and questionable. Both Mayor Alan Autry and police chief Jerry Dyer have endorsed the idea, though Autry's support is premised on preventing the formation of a civilian review committee by creation of the IPA.

Although the focus has been on "use of force" by police officers, the IPA could address other issues—Issues such as discriminatory enforcement, hate speech by police officers, and harassment of the gay community by hateful cops.

Discriminatory enforcement can be seen when police officers target the gay nightclubs looking for possibly drinking drivers; they do not target nightclubs that serve primarily a "straight" clientele. Cops don't linger down the block from the Silver Dollar Hofbrau; they do near DejaVu and the other gay clubs.

Last September, I counted five Fresno police vehicles parked near the Echo restaurant in the Tower District as REEL Pride was holding its Directors' Club party there.

The most egregious example of discriminatory enforcement are the Roeding Park "sex stings." A Superior Court judge recently ruled them as discriminatory. Local law enforcement never charge heterosexuals engaged in public sex with lewd conduct.

Hate speech by police officers: During the first raid by Fresno police on Bam Bam's Café in November 2002, witnesses say Sergeant Kirk Pool told the mother of a 16-year-old that he (Pool) was a born-again Christian; that homosexuality was a sin and was not caused by genetics, and that she needed to put her son into counseling immediately. He then told her that homosexuality was perverted, sick, disgusting, and that he was going to do everything in his power to shut Bam Bam's down.

Witnesses say the woman was outraged by what Pool said. She was aware her son is gay and has been very supportive of him.

Witnesses say this was not the first instance of hate speech involving Sergeant Pool at the club.

Harassment of the community: Bam Bam's owner John Bentley said that as his business grew in popularity with the community, a regular campaign of harassment by Fresno police officers started. According to Bentley, the harassment included officers stopping and questioning patrons when entering or leaving the club, and patrol cars parking nearby on surrounding streets and parking lots. Patrons confirmed Bentley's comments.

According to a parent of a then-employee, the harassment extended to excessive force. The parent said his daughter (who worked as security) and a victim of a gay bashing were both Maced by a Fresno police sergeant outside the club. The employee reportedly had a severe allergic reaction to the Mace, which was described as having a potency normally reserved for use on violent felons.

The parent also said that police officers admitted they had orders from city government to close the club down any way they can. The parent claimed a police sergeant said, "Everyone who comes here is a pervert. We'll keep coming back until we've shut you down for good."



This was not the first time similar allegations were leveled against Fresno police. In 1997, the Bisla brothers said Fresno police officers "promised" to close their night club (then at Blackstone and Herndon avenues) because they were upset the former country-western bar was "now owned by a pair of ragheads." And, the owners of Soho, a nightclub in the Tower District, said their business was being blamed for every call for police service in the Tower District in order to justify the city's move to close their club. Their permit was revoked seven years ago.

The IPA proposal was to have gone to the City Council in January. Autry decided to delay that until after the March primary (which has come and gone), so it would not become a campaign issue. None of the council members support the idea, so Autry has not scheduled a hearing.

In an October 14, 2003, memorandum to Mayor Autry, city manager Dan Hobbs suggested (among other things) that the report of the IPA Study Commission be held "until a crisis occurs (that is, some cop shoots someone he shouldn't have), which will make the IPA a necessity or critical option."

To date, there has been silence from the mayor's office on whether the IPA proposal will move forward.

For the gay community, the IPA could be the independent voice that holds police accountable for their wrong-doing.



The Pride! The Parade! The Party!

Fresno's Gay Pride Parade will be held in the Tower District on Saturday, June 5th, starting at 9:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY JOURNALISTS WANTED

Are you tired of corporate media moguls ignoring stories that are important to you? Don't hate the media: Become the media! Join others in the Central Valley and help create an independent media and news organization.

Indymedia is a collective of independent media organizations, ordinary citizens, and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, noncorporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the news that corporate media neglects.

Post your article, pictures, video, or audio to:
<www.indybay.org/centralvalley/>.



On March 28, 2004 Preston Fouts (son of Fresno WILPF president Vickie Fouts) went on a humanitarian mission to Madrid, Spain to present the World Peace Flag with its immortal message, "Achieve World Peace by Becoming Fully Humane" to the people of Spain and the world for their losses suffered at the Atochia Train Station on March 11, 2004. The flag was also presented at Ground Zero New York City by others on February 12, 2003. For more information on the World Peace Flag you can contact co-founder and president of the Quantum Philosophical Institution, Frank Lynds, at (209) 957-4523.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno

Rev. Bryan D. Jessup

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

Sermon Topics:

06/06 • "Call and response" by Rev. Bryan Jessup

06/13 • "Lessons from Liberal Losses" by Rev. Bryan Jessup

06/20 • "Making Connections" by Dr. Pam Allen-Thompson

06/27 • "Music and the Spiritual Places It Can Take You" by Gail Abbott

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

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WHY HAVE PRISONS?

By Maria Telesco

Back in the 1970s, a cartoon near my workplace time-clock depicted a Gestapo type whipping a figure cowering on the floor. The caption read "Der Beatingz Vill Continue Until Morale Improves." Administration didn't grasp the humor and ripped it down; the cartoon kept reappearing until all the pro-union nurses had been fired. Many Americans still haven't learned that you can't stop a baby from crying nor a dog from biting by beating it, and you can't improve people's unacceptable behavior by brutalizing them into submission.

Penologists say we need prisons for

- 1 containment (keeping offenders out of circulation to protect society)
- 2 deterrence (making offenders not want to do it again)
- 3 rehabilitation (developing offenders' utilizable social and job skills)
- 4 retribution (extracting society's "pound of flesh"; making offenders "pay for their deeds")

Ideally, a justice system would reduce and prevent crime. America has instead created a system that increases crime and guarantees an endless supply of prisoners, by

- 5 criminalizing so-called "victimless crimes" (such as gambling, certain sex acts between consenting adults, or growing hemp for personal use), as well as social problems (such as poverty, prostitution, minor theft, and alcoholism), then locking away the perpetrators instead of providing for their socio-economic and mental-health needs
- 6 "felonizing" misdemeanor nonviolent property crimes via "Three Strikes" and mandatory minimum sentences
- 7 giving police, prosecutors, and judges carte blanche, based on their whims, rather than on the nature or seriousness of the crime, to decide who's arrested and sentenced to prison (trying a 12-year-old developmentally disabled boy as an "adult" for "arson" because he threw a lighted match into a neighbor's curbside trash bin)
- 8 brutalizing the prison environment, making it savage, painful, dehumanizing and degrading, with no privacy, no control over one's life, no decision-making power, condemning prisoners to live in a state of constant anxiety, fear, and uncertainty, thereby increasing their potential for aggressive violence both while incarcerated and upon release
- 9 providing prisoners with little or no education, job training, medical or mental-health care, counseling, rehabilitation, or even "habilitation"—that is, basic training in daily living and socialization skills
- 10 ensuring that a prison record makes it virtually impossible for an ex-convict to find a job or decent housing, thereby guaranteeing lifelong harassment by police and parole officers.

Continued on page 8

Need a bullhorn for your next event?
The Community Alliance has one available -
just call
978-4502
to make arrangements to use it.

Why Have Prisons continued from page 7

The United States has the world's largest number of prisoners—more than 2.1 million—of whom more than 160,000 are in California. The United States has the highest rates of incarceration and recidivism, and the longest sentences, in the industrialized world. Minorities are significantly over-represented. African-American men constitute about six percent of our population but, in some jurisdictions, up to 50 percent of prisoners. Some sociologists attribute this to racism. Others believe it's not racism *per se*, but "poverty-ism," because minorities constitute a disproportionate number of those living in poverty. Besides, many poor whites, and exceptionally few wealthy whites, are incarcerated.

California "boasts" the largest death row in the nation and the world, with 644 condemned men at San Quentin, and 15 women at Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla. Nationwide, there are about 3,600 men and 48 women on death rows in the 40 states and federal jurisdictions that retain capital punishment. Since executions were reinstated in 1976, after a ten-year moratorium, more than 900 men and women have been executed nationwide—11 men in California—and more than 125 wrongfully convicted, factually innocent men and women have been exonerated and released from death rows. It's axiomatic among prison reformers that "Those without the capital get the punishment." Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas said in 1972, "One searches our chronicles in vain for the execution of any member of the affluent strata of this society." Substitute *imprisonment* for *execution* and it still applies.

Sociologists ponder, "Why would any nation strive to have such an enormous prison population?" Some say there's a "conspiracy of the prison-industrial complex" to provide "slave labor" for large corporations, taking the place of debtors' prisons and indentured servitude. Others believe it's to provide well-paying jobs for those who build prisons and those who staff them.¹ Another suggests that for political purposes, "The goal of our criminal justice system is not to eliminate crime or to achieve justice, but to project to the American public a visible image of the threat of crime as a threat from the poor. . . . To do this, it must fail in the struggle to eliminate the crimes that poor people commit. . . ."²

Compare our numbers with averages from western Europe and Britain:³

	United States	Europe & Britain
Number of Prisoners		
per 100,000 Population	884	45
Recidivism Rate	80 percent	8 percent
Sentencing Range for Homicide	15 years-Life, Death	7-10 years, No Death

California has 32 operating prisons, and more on the drawing boards. All prisons are horrendous, some worse than others. Anyone who thinks they're "country clubs" has never seen one. Most prison staff are courteous and considerate of both inmates and visitors, professional in their demeanor, and are, like most of us, just people doing their jobs as best they can.

Others, the few "rotten apples," are rude, abrupt, surly, and abusive, seemingly hell-bent on making all their interactions a sojourn in hell for both prisoners and visitors. Rule books (Departmental Operational Manual [DOM] and California Title XV) encourage visiting, but in practice, visits can be nightmarish, depending on who's in charge. Specific policies for food allowances and medical care, and detailed behavioral standards for contacts between staff, prisoners, and visitors, are clearly spelled out, yet most are honored more in the breach than in the implementation.

Budget cuts have reduced prisoner food rations from 2,800 to 2,500 calories daily, eliminated lunches on some days, rationed toilet paper and feminine hygiene supplies, and eliminated educational and self-help programs. Yet the Department of Corrections (CDC) juggled numbers to give CPOA (California Correctional Peace Officers Association, the power-hungry guards' union), an 11 percent pay raise this month.

Incarcerated children and youth, as well as adults, are subject to sadistic beatings and sexual abuses by officers. Prisoners die from medical neglect, guards force prisoners to engage in "gladiator fights" to the death, and some prisoners are isolated in "control units" where they have no human contact whatsoever. Conditions of nearly total sensory deprivation, except for extremely bright lights in their cells 24 hours a day, are the norm. Some legislators, to demonstrate their "tough on crime" posture, additionally advocate depriving these prisoners of all mail, reading materials, radios and TVs (purchased by families, not the state), for the spurious purpose of "institutional security." And then they wonder why prisoners go crazy and act out.

And all this happens where, we've been told, "good" people (staff) supposedly teach "bad" people (prisoners) how to conduct themselves. What's wrong with this picture?

1. Dyer, Joel, *The Perpetual Prisoner Machine: How America Profits from Crime*, Westview, 2000.
2. Reiman, Jeffrey, *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison*, Allyn & Bacon, 1998
3. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Stop the Prison-Industrial Complex

Groups working for change:

Books Not Bars, focusing on California Youth Authority (CYA): Laura Talkington, (559) 709-5831, laura@caswellbell.com

California Prison Focus, dedicated to identifying, monitoring, and ending human-rights abuses in California SHU (Secure Housing Unit) prisons, and educating the public about violations of prisoners' human rights: (415) 252-9211, info@prisons.org, <www.prisons.org>

California Prison Moratorium Project, to stop construction of all public and private prisons: califpmp@igc.org, (510) 495-4674

Central California Criminal Justice Committee, for creation of a police-review mechanism to ensure that the constitutional and human rights of the people of Fresno are not violated by police: Ellie (559) 229-9807, Gloria (559) 268-2261, Rebecca (559) 227-3837 (see also National Action Network)

Death Penalty Focus, for abolition of capital punishment and to protest executions: Maria, (559) 255-9492, maria.telesco@att.net; Donna, (559) 255-9492, charlie-donna@worldnet.att.net

FACTS (Families to Amend California's Three Strikes), works to amend the Three Strikes law to apply only to serious or violent felonies; new Fresno chapter now forming: facts@sbcglobal.net, statewide office (213) 746-4844

Families & Friends of Prisoners Support Group (see Death Penalty Focus for contact information), for families and friends of all prisoners, not only those sentenced to death

National Action Network (see also Central California Criminal Justice Committee): 2422 N. Marks #383, Fresno, 93722, The Rev. Floyd Harris, (559) 265-3652, xyfloyd@aol.com

Valley Prison Moratorium Project, to prevent construction of new prison at Mendota: Deb Reyes, (559) 485-7884, reyesdm@pacbell.net; Leonel Flores, office (559) 444-2188, LeonFlor5@aol.com

EXPORTING AMERICAN PRISONS TO IRAQ

By Catherine Campbell

An African-American prisoner lies naked in his cell. In the shaky video, we can see him from the feet up, but his head is obscured by six or seven guards who are frantically strapping his ankles and wrists down. The cameraman is heard saying, "He's still resisting," but there's no movement from the prisoner, just the silent but hurried actions of the guards. Suddenly, from the right, a nurse enters the cell, pulls out a syringe, injects the prisoner in the arm, and then turns and walks out. The video fades into snow as the guards heft the prisoner onto a gurney.

The prisoner was dead. He was dead from the beginning of the video to the end. The video of the African-American prisoner was a cover-up created to obscure the fact that the guards had killed the prisoner during a cell extraction. The first three minutes of the video, taken in a Connecticut prison, were erased. After the prisoner died, the guards collaborated on a video remake which would show them "restraining" a prisoner they had already killed.

The abuse of prisoners during the "necessary use of force," such as when a prisoner has to be forcibly removed from his cell, is so pervasive throughout the American prison system that in many states, including Connecticut where this video was taken, and California, courts have ordered that all such procedures be videotaped. This court-ordered recording process has had the odd and often ironic consequence of filming the abuse as it occurs. What is deeply strange is the moral detachment of the officers and guards in the videos. They don't seem to know they are doing something wrong.

While the influence of American penology on the treatment of Iraqi prisoners cannot be precisely calibrated, those familiar with prison conditions in the United States suffered a shock of recognition when confronted with the photos of Iraqi prisoners being tied up, beaten, bitten by dogs, humiliated, and found dead at the hands of their keepers. As our prison population has swelled because of mandatory sentencing laws such as Three Strikes and federal sentencing guidelines, the pressures on prisoners and staff have increased. The very act of being someone who keeps other people confined is destructive of the soul, and prison guards find it difficult to control their behavior once they have agreed to do this to other human beings. The ones who succeed are those who recognize that elements of fate and luck separate them from the prisoners. Those who fail indulge in an "us and them" polarity, much like the "You're with us or you're against us" simple-mindedness of the Bush government.

Many American prison personnel, from guards to medical doctors, have been called to duty in Iraq because they are in the Army Reserves. Once there, they have been assigned to duty in American-run prisons holding Iraqi detainees because of their "expertise" in running prisons and controlling prisoners. This has

brought the ethics of American prisons to the detention of Iraqi prisoners, most of whom are guilty of nothing except being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The detention of Iraqi prisoners is governed by the Geneva Conventions related to the treatment of prisoners of war. These Conventions set a higher standard for

the treatment of prisoners than the Constitution of the United States. The humiliation and degradation of prisoners for the purpose of extracting information is not forbidden by the US Constitution, but it is forbidden under the Geneva Conventions. It is legal in the United States for prisoners to be confined to solitary confinement for 24 hours a day until they either provide information to interrogators about the criminal activities of others and themselves, they are paroled, or they die. This practice is illegal under the Geneva Conventions.

In 1996, Congress passed legislation making it impossible for prisoners to sue for any torture or torment they experience that does not result in physical injury. Thus, lawsuits for psychological harm are not available for American prisoners forced to masturbate in the open, piled nude on top of one another, threatened by dogs, and locked into solitary confinement. All of these forms of torture are forbidden by the Geneva Conventions, but in the U.S. Congress has given prison administrators and staff permission to engage in these activities unfettered by law.

There are hopes that the exposure of the treatment of Iraqi prisoners will result in a re-examination of American prison conditions. During the last 20 years, approximately one fourth of American prisons, confining approximately 40 percent of all prison inmates, have been under federal court oversight. The California prison system has been so intractable in its refusal to curb abuse, provide adequate medical care, and discipline officers who break the rules, that a federal judge in San Francisco has threatened to take over the entire system and run it from the bench.

So, no wonder. We have a President and a Secretary of Defense who believe the world is divided into good guys and bad guys, and a bunch of prison administrators who see the keepers and the kept that way, too. We send the administrators to Iraq to run the prisons and, voila, we get America all over again.

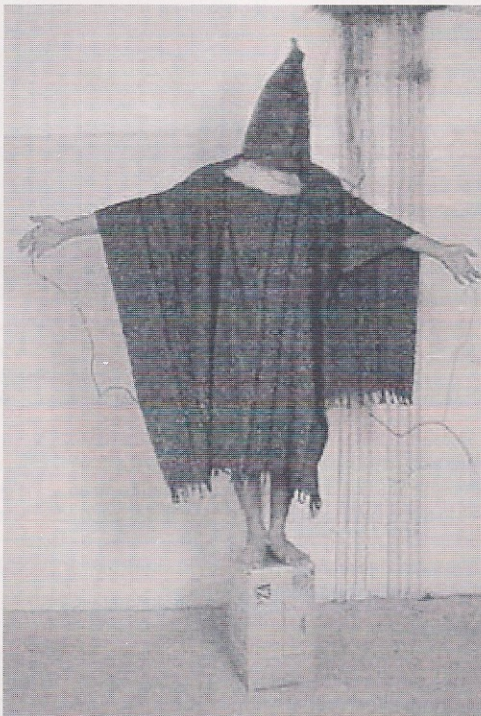
The Color of Abu Ghraib continued from page 1 tices that continue to deform the daily fabric of U.S. life—from its foreign policy to its elections to its classrooms to its prison cells.

As the great African-American poet Langston Hughes once declared, "America never was America to me. But it must be!"

**Bob Wing is managing editor of War Times/Tiempo de Guerras and a co-chair of United for Peace and Justice (<http://www.unitedforpeace.org>), a national antiwar coalition of more than 800 organizations. A special issue of War Times will further discuss the race and gender issues embedded in the Iraq war.*

War Times/Tiempo de Guerras needs your support. Visit us at www.war-times.org today to make a donation.

War Times/Tiempo de Guerras, c/o EB, 1230 Market St., PMB 409, San Francisco, CA 94102



PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE **CALENDAR** June 2004

Friday, June 4 • 6:30-8:30 pm

The Reedley Peace Center will present Open Mike Night. This is a chance for those of you who wish, to talk about an issue or to read an article that you think is special. Dave Krehbiel will be reading "Cold Turkey" by Kurt Vonnegut; Carol Krehbiel and Karen Peterson will talk about meaningful investing; Cathy Ratmeyer and Ruth Buxman will talk about the Ten Thousand Villages conference they attended. What will you bring?

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

Saturday & Sunday, June 5 & 6 • 11 AM

Refresh and soothe all of your senses at the Squaw Valley Herb Gardens during their Lavender harvest. Enjoy 'Everything Lavender' on a guided tour, through artful demonstrations on culinary, household and medicinal uses, savoring Lavender refreshments and experience Garden Theater through stories, songs and the folklore that surrounds the healing aroma and therapy of Lavender. Advance Reservations - \$15. Rosemary 1-800-579-8043 www.SquawValleyHerbGardens.com

Saturday, June 5 • 9:30 AM

The Pride! The Parade! The Party! Fresno's Gay Pride Parade will be held in the Tower. The parade will begin at Palm and Olive, and go straight down Olive Avenue past the Tower Theatre to the festival site on Van Ness just south of Olive Avenue. For more information, people can contact Community Link at 559/486-3464 or at ClinkInc@aol.com

Saturday, June 5 • 2 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC will meet at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information call (559) 978-4502 or email MikeRhodes@Comcast.net. Also see: <http://sfbay.indymedia.org/news/2004/04/1677949.php>

Saturday, June 5 • 7:30 PM

Musical group Alma, Agustin Lira, Patricia Wells Solorzano, Ravi Knypstra, Merlinda Espinosa, will perform live in Concert at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook, tickets: \$15.00. "The mission of Alma is to remind people under siege that they are not alone, to honor their strength and "to wake up the memory" to the continuum of change and creation, while stomping their feet to music."

Sunday, June 6

KFCF Benefit - 4th Annual Spring Music Festival Live at Intermountain Nursery at 30433 Auberry Road - 30 Minutes NE of Clovis — 1 mile past Prather on Hwy 168 (559)855-3113
Sliding scale \$10, \$15, \$25, or \$50 Children under 10 free

2:00 PM - Zambra - a combination of flamenco, jazz, folk, funk, salsa, gypsy and rock
3:45 PM - David Spenser - Fresno singer and songwriter
4:45 PM - Ted Nunes - Music Americanas
6:00 PM Good Medicine - rock and blues with vocals and instrumentals

Potluck dishes requested for optional dinner (\$10 adults) Barbeque and all the fixings including donated local grass fed beef, organic chicken, freshly baked bread, locally grown organic vegetables. Dinner 4:00 to 5:00 PM

Monday, June 7 • 5:30 PM

C.A.F.E. (Community Alliance for a Fair Economy) planning meeting to discuss a Living Wage for Fresno workers will be at the SEIU 250 office on Wishon at 5:30 pm. If you are tired of hearing that Fresno is the poverty capital of California come and help us work to set a wage floor that the city should adopt.

Wednesday, June 9 • 6 - 8 PM

The Central Valley Progressive PAC will hold an open house at 2058 E Pinedale in Fresno (Maple/Alluvial) across the street from MT. View School. Learn how the CVPAC will elect new leadership in this community that will work for social and economic justice. CVPAC will inspire disenfranchised voters to participate in the democratic process and empower progressives to elect new leaders and hold them accountable. This group will work for A Living Wage for all Workers, Clean Air, Affordable Housing, Adequate Public Transportation and Bike Paths, Police Accountability, and Health Care for All. Join CVPAC for its first public event - an open house at the home of Gail Gaston. Call (559) 978-4502 for more information.

Wednesday, June 9 • 10:00 PM

TV worth watching - KNXT (Channel 49, cable 9). FORUM FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING. Topic: How Tolerant is Islam? (Presentation by a Muslim, response by an Armenian Orthodox & Unitarian Universalist) Repeats: Mon 6/14 9:30pm; Wed 6/16 10:00pm; Mon 6/21 9:30pm

Thursday, June 10 • Cocktails 6:00 PM, Dinner 7:00 PM

The Democratic Party's 5th Annual Jefferson Jackson Dinner. Pardini's Restaurant, 2257 W. Shaw. Contact Billie MacDougall at 448-0160 for more information or to reserve your spot.

Friday, June 11 • 5PM and 8PM

Fresno Filmworks presents *Good Bye, Lenin!* at the Tower Theatre. This comedy from Wolfgang Becker is both a satire on corporate consumerism in a reunified Germany and a heart-warming story about familial reunification. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village, and at the door. Tickets are \$9.00; \$7.00, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to www.fresnofilmworks.org

CA 10

Monday through Friday, June 14th through 18th

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom presents: Camp Harmony 2004. They still have openings for campers for WILPF Peace Camp. For more information call: Vickie Fouts, 658-8260

Tuesday, June 15

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

Tuesday, June 15 • 7 PM

TV worth watching - KNXT (Channel 49, cable 9). YESTERDAY, TODAY & FOREVER: Topic: Vince Lavery: The IRA & IRAQ. Repeats: Sun 6/20 6:00pm Mon 6/21 8:00am

Wednesday, June 16 • 7 PM

Discussion: "Whites Looking at White Privilege", eighth in a series of discussions in which whites will be challenged to examine the benefits received from centuries of racism. Contact Richard Stone to enroll: 266-2559. This event will be held at the Center for nonviolence. Note Change in meeting day and location

Friday, June 18 (date not finalized) • 6:30-8:30 pm

The Reedley Peace Center will present Ron Claassen, Director of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific University, will speak about the Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP). In particular he will address us on the role the Peace Center can play as the VORP program expands.

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

Saturday, June 19 - 21 • 'Occupied Territory 2004'

This gathering will be in Fresno CA. June 19-21 of 2004. The Space is a Green outdoor space. Workshops are being offered by -Food Not Bombs, Book Collectives, AK Press, Earth First, Mental Health Workshops, Fire Dancing, Panel on Latin American Politics, Reiki, Silk Screening, Book binding and more DIY skills, Bio-Diesel/Veggie Oil Cars, Premaculture, Political Prisoners, Direct Action, Protest, Puppet making, Black Bloc - what's next?, Radical Cheerleading and soooo much more...if you have something to offer - write occupiedterritory@riseup.net with workshop description in subject!! For more information go to:

http://www.calendar.igc.apc.org/day.cgi?limit=25&state_values=CAMPUS*:fresno
<http://www.infoshop.org/>

Sunday, June 20 • 3 PM

Argentina and Guatemala Report at Ellie Bluestein's home. Call 229-9807 for directions. Jan Slagter has returned from 2 1/2 months in Guatemala, studying the grass roots organizing of women since the civil war, also a couple of weeks in Argentina examining the affects of the economic crisis there. She has much to tell us of her experiences.

Wednesday, June 23 • 7 PM

Arctic Quest Slideshow and Discussion at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook. Adventurer, Author, and Activist Chad Kister will speak about his new book *Arctic Quest* and the ramifications of the Bush administration's addiction to oil. Snacks and a door prize will be provided. Donations are not necessary but would be appreciated.

Wednesday, June 23 • 7 PM

An Israeli refusenik (a military reservist who refuses to serve in occupied Palestine), and an American conscientious objector will come to Fresno in June to discuss their choices. This event will be held at the Mennonite Community Church at 5015 E. Olive Ave.

Saturday, June 26

The Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN) will hold their 3rd annual conference. Learn about the growing environmental justice movement of the valley. There is no charge for this conference, which will be held at Bakersfield College. For reservations and/or more information please contact Joe Morales of The Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE) - Delano office at (661) 720-9140 or you can email Joe at jcrpe@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, June 27 • 6, 7 & 7:30 PM - at the Center for Nonviolence

Pastors for Peace 15th annual "Friendshipment" Caravan to Cuba visits Fresno, hosted by the Center. Potluck meal at 6 PM. Music by Patricia Wells at 7 PM. Presentation on the current state of U.S. - Cuba relations at 7:30 PM. Free. Public invited - come and greet the Caravanistas. For Info call Gerry Bill at 227-2133

For up-to-the-minute information about what is happening in Fresno's progressive community, join the Community Alliance email alert network. We send out an updated calendar of events once a week and alert you when there is an emergency rally or demonstration. This is a free service. You can join by sending your email address to: [<AllianceEditor@comcast.net>](mailto:AllianceEditor@comcast.net) and say you would like to subscribe to this service.

Queer Eye . . .

By Dan Waterhouse

How much would an Independent Police Auditor benefit the gay community?

Possibly quite a bit.

The concept of the IPA was brought forth by the Central California Criminal Justice Committee in response to a continued use of lethal force by Fresno police that many in the community find disturbing and questionable. Both Mayor Alan Autry and police chief Jerry Dyer have endorsed the idea, though Autry's support is premised on preventing the formation of a civilian review committee by creation of the IPA.

Although the focus has been on "use of force" by police officers, the IPA could address other issues—Issues such as discriminatory enforcement, hate speech by police officers, and harassment of the gay community by hateful cops.

Discriminatory enforcement can be seen when police officers target the gay nightclubs looking for possibly drinking drivers; they do not target nightclubs that serve primarily a "straight" clientele. Cops don't linger down the block from the Silver Dollar Hofbrau; they do near DejaVu and the other gay clubs.

Last September, I counted five Fresno police vehicles parked near the Echo restaurant in the Tower District as REEL Pride was holding its Directors' Club party there.

The most egregious example of discriminatory enforcement are the Roeding Park "sex stings." A Superior Court judge recently ruled them as discriminatory. Local law enforcement never charge heterosexuals engaged in public sex with lewd conduct.

Hate speech by police officers: During the first raid by Fresno police on Bam Bam's Café in November 2002, witnesses say Sergeant Kirk Pool told the mother of a 16-year-old that he (Pool) was a born-again Christian; that homosexuality was a sin and was not caused by genetics, and that she needed to put her son into counseling immediately. He then told her that homosexuality was perverted, sick, disgusting, and that he was going to do everything in his power to shut Bam Bam's down.

Witnesses say the woman was outraged by what Pool said. She was aware her son is gay and has been very supportive of him.

Witnesses say this was not the first instance of hate speech involving Sergeant Pool at the club.

Harassment of the community: Bam Bam's owner John Bentley said that as his business grew in popularity with the community, a regular campaign of harassment by Fresno police officers started. According to Bentley, the harassment included officers stopping and questioning patrons when entering or leaving the club, and patrol cars parking nearby on surrounding streets and parking lots. Patrons confirmed Bentley's comments.

According to a parent of a then-employee, the harassment extended to excessive force. The parent said his daughter (who worked as security) and a victim of a gay bashing were both Maced by a Fresno police sergeant outside the club. The employee reportedly had a severe allergic reaction to the Mace, which was described as having a potency normally reserved for use on violent felons.

The parent also said that police officers admitted they had orders from city government to close the club down any way they can. The parent claimed a police sergeant said, "Everyone who comes here is a pervert. We'll keep coming back until we've shut you down for good."



This was not the first time similar allegations were leveled against Fresno police. In 1997, the Bisla brothers said Fresno police officers "promised" to close their night club (then at Blackstone and Herndon avenues) because they were upset the former country-western bar was "now owned by a pair of ragheads." And, the owners of Soho, a nightclub in the Tower District, said their business was being blamed for every call for police service in the Tower District in order to justify the city's move to close their club. Their permit was revoked seven years ago.

The IPA proposal was to have gone to the City Council in January. Autry decided to delay that until after the March primary (which has come and gone), so it would not become a campaign issue. None of the council members support the idea, so Autry has not scheduled a hearing.

In an October 14, 2003, memorandum to Mayor Autry, city manager Dan Hobbs suggested (among other things) that the report of the IPA Study Commission be held "until a crisis occurs (that is, some cop shoots someone he shouldn't have), which will make the IPA a necessity or critical option."

To date, there has been silence from the mayor's office on whether the IPA proposal will move forward.

For the gay community, the IPA could be the independent voice that holds police accountable for their wrong-doing.



The Pride! The Parade! The Party!

Fresno's Gay Pride Parade will be held in the Tower District on Saturday, June 5th, starting at 9:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY JOURNALISTS WANTED

Are you tired of corporate media moguls ignoring stories that are important to you? Don't hate the media: Become the media! Join others in the Central Valley and help create an independent media and news organization.

Indymedia is a collective of independent media organizations, ordinary citizens, and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, noncorporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the news that corporate media neglects.

Post your article, pictures, video, or audio to:
<www.indybay.org/centralvalley/>.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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

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

WILPF Dates:

Wednesday, June 2, Noon: Women In Black. Fresno County Courthouse breezeway

Saturday, June 5, 10 AM–1 PM: Intern Thank-You Party. See below.

Monday, June 14, through Friday, June 18, 9 AM–2 PM: WILPF Peace Camp.

Monday, June 14, 7 PM: WILPF Membership Meeting. 1584 N Van Ness Ave. Interns' evaluation of Fresno WILPF and election of officers. All members are invited to attend.

Sunday, June 20, 3 PM: Report back from Argentina & Guatemala. See below.

Wednesday, June 23, 3:30 PM: Stir It Up WILPF Style, KFCF 88.1 FM. See below.

Let's Party: You are invited to a party to **thank** our interns, Catherine Garoupa and Ruth Obel-Jorgensen, for all the hard work they have done this past year for WILPF. They will surely be missed. We will be having a potluck at the home of Sandra Iyall on June 5, 10 AM to 1 PM. Call 222-6429 for directions. Bring your own lawn chair if possible. It will also be a time to socialize as an organization; to visit with old friends and to make new ones. Feel free to bring along prospective WILPF members and community activist friends to meet our newer members and our interns. Hope to see you there.

Argentina and Guatemala Report: Sunday, June 20, 3 PM at Ellie Bluestein's home. Call 229-9807 for directions. Jan Slagter has returned from two and a half months in Guatemala, studying the grassroots organizing of women since the civil war; she also spent a couple of weeks in Argentina examining the effects of the economic crisis there. She has much to tell us of her experiences. Come listen, swim, enjoy light refreshments. You bring the cookies or fruit, Ellie will provide the punch.

Endorsements and Letters: At our May meeting we agreed to send out three letters on behalf of Fresno WILPF. One went to all the Fresno City Council members asking them to support the request for an Independent Police Auditor. Another letter went to District Attorney Elizabeth Ann Egan, asking her to prosecute persons for felony theft of labor when they refuse to pay their employees what is owed them. This happens a lot in agriculture, but is also happening in service jobs, such as restaurant jobs and others. We also sent a letter to State Attorney General Bill Lockyer and US Senator Barbara Boxer, calling for a full investigation into the undercover surveillance of Peace Fresno.

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

I thought this would be a good time also to mention some of the endorsements we have made this year. We have endorsed the Budget Accountability Act in November, National Health Care Action Day in February, Improving Classroom Education Act, Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB), and 2004 Racism Watch in April. We also sent a letter in March to the Federal Bureau of Prisons regarding the lack of Spanish translations of material or meetings for the proposed Mendota and Orange Cove federal prisons.

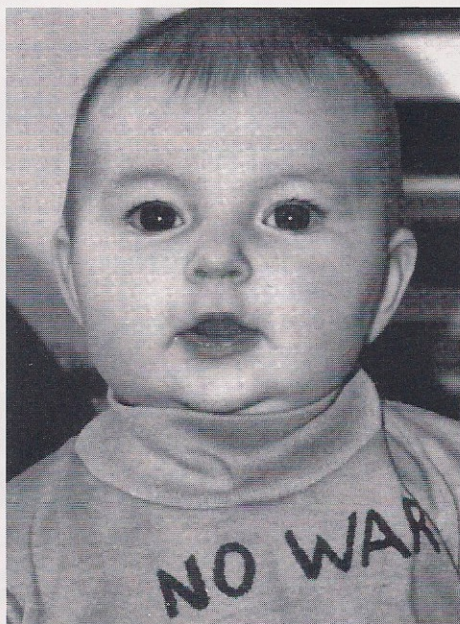
Radio Show: Gabrielle Kirkland has been the host of our KFCF 88.1 radio show, Stir It Up WILPF-style for more than two years. Due to the demands of a new job and a young family she is stepping down. She will surely be missed. **Thank you,** Gabrielle, for all the effort you have put in, to make our radio show one of the best.

Nuria Ibars will be our new host. You may remember that Nuria took over last year while Gabrielle was on maternity leave. Nuria is sure to be an asset to WILPF and to the radio show. **Thank you** so much, Nuria, for taking on the job. Nuria will be providing her own engineer, Luis Ramentas from Channel 30. **Thanks** to Mike Rhodes for stepping up and being our engineer recently when

we couldn't come up with our own. We will also be training three back-up engineers soon: WILPFers Carol Taylor and Catherine Garoupa, and community activist James Depond. **Thanks** again to Mike for providing the training.

Jane Addams Event: On April 27 our interns organized an excellent event around donating the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards books to the main library. Even though only four people not part of the program showed up, it was still a success, as seen by the excellent article by Joshua Tehee in the *Fresno Bee* on May 6. **Thanks,** Joshua. Who says progressive groups don't get good press in Fresno?

Earth Day: We thank Judi Michael, Eve Hudson, Lynn Graham, Catherine Garoupa, Ruth Obel-Jorgensen, Lydia Flores, Julie Andrews, Jon and Joanne Ching, Elaine Callahan, and Vickie Fouts for tabling at Earth Day. We didn't make any money, but we gave out a lot of WILPF "propaganda."



Quote of the Month:

"We call on women around the world to rise up and oppose the war in Iraq. We call on mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and daughters, on workers, students, teachers, healers, artists, writers, singers, poets and every ordinary outraged woman willing to be outrageous for peace. Women have been the guardians of life—not because we are better or purer or more innately nurturing than men, but because the men have busied themselves making war. Because of our responsibility to the next generation, because of our own love for our families and communities and this country that we are a part of, we understand the love of a mother in Iraq for her children and the driving desire of that child for life." —Starhawk

CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

I attended two recent conferences that helped refine and refocus for me the goals of the Center. One gathering was the annual Northern California Peace Centers Conference, held this year in Santa Cruz. The other was a local Conference on Economic Justice organized by the area's "peace Mennonites." In some ways, both conferences affirmed the approach our Center has been taking, but also they served to spur us on to some new or more directed efforts.

At the broadest level, two potent documents were provided to help enlarge our frame of reference. One is called "The Earth Charter" and incorporates specific holistic and ecological thinking into peace and just conceptualization. Its basic principles are (1) respect and care for the community of life; (2) ecological integrity; (3) social and economic justice; (4) democracy, nonviolence, and peace—each with several subprinciples enumerated. It's a wonderful challenge to deepen our understanding of what the global situation now demands of us. Information is available at Earth Council, P.O. Box 319-6100, San Jose, Costa Rica, or at <www.earthcharter.org>.

The other document is "The Interfaith Statement on International Trade & Investment," bringing moral and spiritual principles to bear on economics. Its basic principles are (1) International trade and investment (ITI) systems should respect and support the dignity of the human person, the integrity of creation, and our common humanity; (2) ITI activities should advance the common good and be evaluated in the light of their impact on those who are most vulnerable; (3) ITI policies and decisions should be transparent and involve the meaningful participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders; (4) ITI systems should respect the legitimate role of government, in collaboration with civil society, to set policies regarding the development and welfare of its people; (5) ITI systems should safeguard the global commons and respect the right of local communities to protect and sustainably develop their natural resources. Their e-mail address is iwg@coc.org.

Another renewed emphasis of the conferences was on alliance-building, based on issues related to labor, neighborhoods and youth, and racism. It was especially heartening to learn that a voice for peace is amplifying in the ranks of organized labor, due in part to connections made with unions in Iraq—which are being crushed by the corporate giants that Bush, Inc. has imported as "bringers of peace."

Another topic was the importance of *being* a peace community, creating at each Center a culture that inculcates consensus-making, individual expressiveness, inclusiveness, and commitment.

Each conference also zeroes in on specific issues that our network of Peace Centers might emphasize this year. Among these were (1) supporting the Livermore anti-nuclear action on August 8 (join the caravan—save the date and see info next month). This event is especially important this year with proposals on the table for the development of a whole new set of weapons; (2) participating in the electoral efforts to oust Bush and shift Kerry to the left. (3) alleviating Third World debt (the Jubilee program); and (4) opposing structural adjustment programs via the World Bank and IMF.

As always, the best thing at these conferences is meeting kindred spirits with unique voices and approaches to The Work. So much to learn; so much to be inspired by!

Continued on page 15

Fresno Center for Nonviolence
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<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence>

THE WELCH REPORT

Jack H. Welch, M.D.

PPRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING

The United States has the highest drug prices in the world, and they keep rising year after year. One's health plan negotiates the drug prices it pays; for example, each state Medicaid program determines its own drug acquisition costs, and a state may negotiate additional discounts from drug manufacturers to lower prices further. The Veterans Administration (VA) negotiates drug prices for those having served in the military. If one has no drug coverage, one has to pay the highest drug prices of all, there being no middleman to negotiate a lower price.

How can drug prices best be controlled, and who should be charged with controlling them? Conservatives may argue that government negotiations will not work and that this task should be left to private industry. The Medicare drug law codifies this notion, forcing the federal government to maintain a strict "hands-off" policy when it comes to drug prices for Medicare's more than 41 million beneficiaries, thereby signing away the possibility of achieving significant drug cost containment.

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND DRUG PRICES

State Medicaid programs are among the largest purchasers of prescription drugs in the United States, but there is another program which has demonstrated that expanding the federal government's negotiating powers could help rein in the high drug costs that consumers pay.

The VA's Pharmacy Benefits Management Program negotiates with drug manufacturers to get much lower prices on the drugs it provides military veterans. Drugs are reviewed for effectiveness and cost. Generic drugs, costing less, constitute about two-thirds of the program's prescriptions; otherwise, less expensive "treatment equivalent" brand-name drugs are used. In 2001 it was found that, for 24 drugs, the VA paid on average 52 percent less than did Medicare. A law passed by Congress



in 1992 requires that the VA program negotiate lower prescription drug prices.

Total U.S. prescription drug expenditures were expected to reach \$184 billion in 2003, an increase of 13.4 percent over the previous year. Spending on prescription drugs is predicted to be the fastest growing sector in health care. It will become harder for employer-sponsored health plans to cover these rising drug costs.

THE NEW MEDICARE DRUG BENEFIT

Coverage provided by public programs is being cut back, and even under the new Medicare Act of 2003, beneficiaries will still have to pay a considerable portion of their drug costs. The annual premium, currently estimated to be \$420 when this program starts in 2006, is predicted to rise to \$696 in 2013.

Moderating prescription drug prices could be facilitated greatly by removing the new Medicare law's prohibition on negotiating drug prices, enabling the federal government to buy medications for all beneficiaries in the way it does for the VA. Also there is need to know whether the more expensive and newest drug is better than the older tried-and-true drug (such as diuretic medication in the treatment of high blood pressure). Further, Americans should be allowed to import less costly drugs that are the product of foreign cost containment systems, such as Canada's. By allowing the Medicare program to follow in the footsteps of the VA, the United States could make real progress in the battle against soaring drug prices.

"Ultimately, no meaningful progress will be made in expanding health coverage to the tens of millions of uninsured Americans unless we can get a handle on rising health care costs, and one big component of those costs is prescription drugs."

(Source: "Health Action," Families USA, April 2004)

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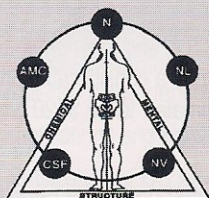
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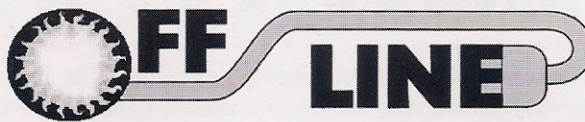


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Let's Stop the Race to the Bottom

By Frances Sivak



In Watsonville contractors who do business with the city in 14 designated categories must pay \$12.55 an hour, offer 10 days off for sick or vacation leave, and abide by worker-retention language. In Los Angeles County, companies who have contracts of \$25,000 or more must pay \$9.46 an hour, provide health insurance, and abide by provisions for employee retention and limits on part-time work. In addition, no county funds can be used to inhibit employee organization (unionization). And the list goes on to include Santa Cruz, San Fernando, Ventura County, Monterey County, Oakland, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Fairfax, Oxnard, San Jose, Sacramento. . . . These are cities and counties that have living-wage ordinances to govern their contracted work. (Source: "Living Wage Campaigns," by David Reynolds, ACORN National Living Wage Resources Center)

There is an ongoing conversation here in Fresno about job development, job initiatives, and economic growth. Somebody has to work to ensure that these living-wage provisions for workers go beyond conversation, into policies. At the same time the talk continues about privatizing city services. Again, we have to set some standards and tell the city officials what we want.

In April the Immigrant & Workers Rights Center sponsored an economic justice workshop. Out of this came a committee that wants to work for a living-wage ordinance here in Fresno: C.A.F.E. (Community Alliance for a Fair Economy) will take the lead. . . . Our next planning meeting is Monday, June 7, at the SEIU 250 office on Wishon at 5:30 PM. If you are tired of hearing that Fresno is the poverty capital of California, come and help us work to set a wage floor that the city should adopt. It's a start. . . .

LOOKING FORWARD TO CHAANGE

We have some exciting news. We have just found out that the proposed ADAP enrollment caps have been eliminated and that funding resources are budgeted at the level necessary to maintain expenditures at the Ryan White Care Act maintenance-of-effort (MOE) requirement. A hearty pat on our backs is due for our Advocacy Day effort on April 19 in preserving funding to keep California's HIV/AIDS population healthy. Advocacy works! If you want to keep the advocacy ball rolling, get involved as a CHAANGE Maker with CHAANGE on the first Friday of every month from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Looking forward to your participation in our new projects such as the Faces of AIDS art project, STOP AIDS project, *Speaking Positively* poetry book, continued drug and alcohol education, education and prevention programs for the African-American community and for youth, and our presence at the Gay Pride Parade. We invite all who are infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS to bring their energy, input, and talent to these exciting new projects. Remember, getting involved makes a difference!

Please feel free to visit us at 1584 N Van Ness across from Fresno City College. Or call us at (559) 268-1969.

Center for Nonviolence continued from page 13

ANOTHER YEAR OLDER: We will be celebrating our twelfth anniversary on the evening of July 18 with Poetry of Peace and our annual Way of Peace Awards. Please join us—exact time and place TBA next month.

GANDHI VIA MARKS: Diane Marks, a good friend of the Center, has culled some interesting quotes from her reading of Gandhi. I'll be including one each month for a while.

From *Harijan* (Sept. 29, 1940): "Pandit Nehru wants industrialization because he thinks that if it is socialized, it would be free from the evil capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them."

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CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE, TODAY

An Israeli refusenik (a military reservist who refuses to serve in occupied Palestine), and an American conscientious objector will come to Fresno on June 23rd to discuss their choices. This event will be held at the Mennonite Community Church at 5015 E Olive Ave. (see calendar for details)

Issues expected to be raised by the speakers include the personal narratives leading to their decision not to serve; the ethical basis for conscientious objection; and the legal status of those acting on conscience. Their visit to Fresno is sponsored by several local organizations including the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, WILPF, Peace Fresno, and Peace Reedley.

Sponsoring organizations would like this to be memorable occasion to acknowledge the courage of our speakers and for once deal with the complexity of the issues. We hope to have an informal reception prior to the evening presentation when people can meet and pay their respects to our visitors.

Admission to the evening presentation will be by donation, with proceeds going to the speakers' organizations. For more information contact Richard Stone at 266-2559.

Fresno Earth Day 2004

Activists Honored, Dragon Dances, Brass Blares:

<http://www.sunmt.org/may3chron04.html>

Earth Day - The Movie:

<http://www.crockford.org/earthday/>



WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT DO WE NEED?

By Diane Scott

It's five months till the next election for President and that's enough time for all of us to do some hard thinking, to make some hard decisions and a very important promise: To go vote! And to encourage our families, our friends, our coworkers, and everyone we know to go vote also!

But all of us need to cast smart votes, votes for people whose principles and intents we have found that we share. What kind of a government do you want? What kind of leadership do you want? What kind of laws do you want to see passed? Making a list is a good way to start. Do you want a good job with an adequate paycheck? Do you want security that your job won't be outsourced? Do you want a good education for your own and everyone's children?

Do you think trickle down economics helps your family? (Trickle down gives large tax breaks to the rich and the big corporations who then trickle it down to you.) Are you concerned with the environment, the air we breathe, the hazardous chemicals found in our water and food supplies, the storage of nuclear waste, our disappearing forests?

Make your own list of wants and don't wants. Then check out the candidates and compare their visions to yours. In our winner-take-all brand of Democracy we usually consider primarily Democrats and Republicans but there are many other political parties. In Fresno County the Greens, The Independent American, the Libertarian, Natural Law, Peace and Freedom, and possibly Reform will be on the November ballot along with Democrats and Republicans.

Here are some of the positions each party has taken:

DEMOCRATS: There is yet no party platform for the 2004 election.

Kerry, the leading contender for the nomination, wants to repeal Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy. He promotes his military record, believes we need to remain long term in Iraq and supports an increasing military budget. He will create a government fund to help corporations pay extraordinary health care costs for employees but they will be required to reduce their workers' health care premiums.

Dennis Kucinich, while not being the expected nominee, continues his campaign to promote his positions to be included in the party platform. He has written petitions for people to sign to be sent to the Democratic National Committee for inclusion in the Democratic Party Platform. These petitions are: 1. Repeal the Patriot Act, 2. Get out of NAFTA and the WTO, 3. Create a Cabinet level Department of Peace, 4. Bring the troops home, and 5. Create a Single Payer National Health System for All. If you are in favor of any or all of these petitions, you may call Diane Scott 559-222-6135 to receive copies or information as to how to access them on the Internet.

REPUBLICANS: Bush is the only one running. His achievements are: A jobs and growth plan for America, a Department of Homeland Security; a Compassionate Agenda which gives tax dollars to religious organizations; seniors can now apply for a Drug card from Medicare which might give a discount on drugs they purchase; the No Child Left Behind Act which has not yet been fully funded. He talks about improving the environment but takes no active steps in that direction, and wants to strengthen retirement security by privatizing Social Security.

GREEN PARTY: Nominee Peter Camejo. Ten key values: 1. Grassroots Democracy, 2. Social Justice and Equal Opportunity, 3. Ecological Wisdom, 4. Non-violence, 5. Decentralization, 6. Community-Based Economics and Economic Justice, 7. Feminism and Gender Equity, 8. Equality of Diversity, 9. Personal and Global Responsibility, 10. Future Focus and Sustainability.

PEACE AND FREEDOM PARTY: Leonard Peltier candidate for President.

1. Socialism defined as workers democracy, 2. Labor and full employment, 3. Peace and

international justice, 4. Equal rights and liberties, 5. Equality for Women, 6. Ending racism and national oppression, include Spanish as America's second language, 7. Undocumented Workers to have full rights, 8. Self determination for indigenous people and sovereignty for Native nations, 9. Equal treatment and benefits for all Sexual Orientations, 10. Special consideration and planning for the disabled, 11. Improvements in economic benefits and social services for Retired Workers, 12. Defense of Environment, 12. Development of public transportation systems, 13. Sustainable Agriculture, 14. Equal education democratically-run, 15. Right of quality, secure housing for all, 16. Guaranteed freedom, justice, equal rights in justice system, 17. Equal protection of voting and election rights, 18. Equal quality health care, 19. Equalize tax burden, 20. Public control of air waves, 21. Strict separation of religion and government institutions and activities.

NATURAL LAW PARTY: Dennis Kucinich has been asked to be the candidate. 1. Government reform, 2. Pro-growth economic policy, 3. Health strategies that focus on prevention and strengthen general health, 4. Support proven educational initiatives and curriculum innovations, 5. Support systematic, scientifically proven programs to reduce stress, to rehabilitate offenders and community policing, 6. Support legislation for sustainable agriculture, 7. Support development and use of new, environmentally clean energy sources, 8. Support reforms to strengthen Democracy, 9. Abortion: shift to private funding for legal abortion while working to decrease need for it, 10. Support family values by resolving root cause of breakdown of family life, 11. Foreign Policy shift from military aid to more life-supporting policy of technical assistance and/or, economic support, 12. Create a prevention of war program to preserve world peace, 13. Revitalize our Inner Cities, 14. Implement educational programs to teach about drug abuse and work toward coordination among law enforcement agencies, 15. Uphold existing gun-control legislation while acknowledging the constitutional right to bear arms. 16. Uphold the rights of women and minorities, 17. Support "balanced" immigration.

LIBERTARIAN PARTY: Nominee - Michael Badnarik. We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose to live."

INDEPENDENT AMERICAN PARTY: Sterling Allen appears to be the nominee. They believe this is a Christian nation, families are the building blocks of a moral society, that God has endowed men with the rights of life, liberty and property and it is the function of government to protect these rights. Christianity should be the center of American education, free enterprise is the best system, state and local governments have the right and moral obligation to discourage drug and alcohol and gambling in their jurisdictions, protection of the environment should be state responsibility. Constitution was written under the direct inspiration from Almighty God, strong defense establishment essential to preservation of nation, withdraw from all international agreements.

REFORM PARTY: Ralph Nader has been endorsed by them. They want to shift power to people, crack down on corporate crime, fraud, and abuse, environmental issues are important, withdraw troops from overseas, take action on civil rights violations against Muslim, Arab Americans.

Many people consider this presidential election to be the most important one in the history of our country. It has been said that "Republicans think it's okay for government to run your personal life; Democrats think you should run your own personal life." And "Democrats don't believe it is the government's job to tell you what to believe and do..." Do you think these are valid comparisons? All of us need to study and choose the kind of government we think would be best for our country and the world.



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RSVP: 325-0540 or 681-3140

CVPPAC's Draft Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Central Valley Progressive PAC is to promote - through education and action - human, civil, and workers' rights, environmental protection and government reform by electing progressive candidates to local office. This will be accomplished by raising money to run viable electoral campaigns, supporting and encouraging progressive candidates to run for office, and mobilizing Get Out The Vote campaigns (GOTV).

CVPAC candidates will support progressive core values: A Living Wage for all Workers, Clean Air, Affordable Housing, Adequate Public Transportation and Bike Paths, Police Accountability, Improved Public Education, and Health Care for All.

Come to the open house reception, meet friends, and find out how you and the Central Valley Progressive PAC can bring progressive change to local government.

