

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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## Understanding Iran Can Stop the Next War

by Linda Milazzo and Jodie Evans

In its dangerously familiar inflammatory rhetoric, like that which preceded the invasion of Iraq, the United States continues its non-stop grumbling over Iran's nuclear threat potential. In a news conference in May 2005, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice defiantly proclaimed, "There needs to be a very clear commitment from the Iranians to live up to their international obligations not to seek a nuclear weapon..." To most nations, imperatives like this from high ranking US officials evoke immediate fear and an obsequious response to placate the American master. But for the post-Shah independent nation of Iran, nothing could be further from the truth. Iran has no American master and adheres to no American demands toward its government, policies, religion, or citizens.

In spite of Iran's persistent refusal to cave in to America's demands, the U.S. government holds steadfast to its 'right' to dictate Iranian destiny; a common thread amongst American supremacists who profess their god-given right to global domination. To these American supremacists, it is incomprehensible that Iranians could foolheartedly believe they have a right to global independence. But Americans are unaware of the extent to which Iranians are proud, forthright, educated and keenly aware of world issues.

Although strong dissension still exists between Iran's leaders and its own populace over fundamentalist Islamic rule versus the costs to personal freedom, on one point both sides wholeheartedly agree: Iran will in no way accept American domination. Hence, the response of the Iranian government and that of its populace to America's attempts at dominion are one in the same: a vociferous denouncement of American fear tactics as a means to deny developing nations the right to explore peaceful nuclear technology for the purpose of self preservation.

Having recently returned from leading a women's peace delegation to Iran, my most compelling impressions of the Iranians I met were that they were highly educated, deeply patriotic, globally astute and extremely self confident. They are no pushovers and show no fear of America's threats or aggression. Even though nearly 80% of Iranians are not fond of their government, they firmly support its resolve and independent stance toward America. As one woman put it: "Foreign policy is one thing our current administration is doing right. Because we don't owe anything to the US and our trading partners are Europe, China and Japan, we can stand up to the bullying tactics of the US, and it makes us proud that our government is not letting the US walk all over us, unlike other weak and fearful countries that the US can and does manipulate."

This perception that other nations submit too easily to American pressure is common amongst Iranians, and



**Medea Benjamin (photo above) will be the featured speaker at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, June 23. See page 5 for details. Photo credit: Bradley, [www.Indybay.org](http://www.Indybay.org)**

underscores just how self-assured Iranians are. Theirs has always been a wealthy and sophisticated country which values education and takes pride in its intelligence; in direct contrast with Afghanistan and Iraq who persistently quashed all socio-economic advancement of their people. The citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq had been suppressed into near servitude, thus devoid of self-empowerment. Wars had pushed Afghanistan into a stone-age like state. Afghan men had little schooling, and under the Taliban, their indentured women had none. Iraqis, enduring decades of tyranny from Saddam Hussein, were rendered helpless. Though more educated than the Afghans, they were certainly no bastions of self-esteem.

Like the Afghans and Iraqis, Iranians, too, have suffered a series of life changing upheavals. Presently 80% of the mostly secular population still oppose the religious rule instituted after the Islamic Revolution of 1989. Fortunately for the less religious majority, there has been a decrease in the stringent Islamic rules imposed by Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-KHAMENEI in the early years after the Revolution. Iranians may be unhappy, but they are by no means a broken people and would be significantly stronger adversaries to America than the more broken, less resourceful citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq. Iranians want very much to change their government but they want to change it themselves. As one Iranian informed me in no uncertain terms, "We may want changes in the laws of our country and we may want freedoms and democracy but we can only achieve those by work-

ing within our own country. No one from the outside can impose these on us, and especially not the US through unwelcome military aggression. If the U.S. was to bomb us it would unite us against them immediately, just as we were united against Iraq."

There is strong evidence that if attacked the people of Iran can and will unite into a military force much more powerful than any army the United States opposed in Afghanistan and Iraq. Iran is a much larger nation. It has a population of 70 million, 60% under the age of 25. Each year, 2 million Iranians turn 18. All Iranians serve 2 years in the military, thus there are probably 5 million reservists who could be called into service within a month. Iranians are well aware of their military capability and believe an assault by the US to be foolhardy and implausible. As one young man asked rhetorically, "Does Bush know about who we are, our history and what he would be coming into?"

Iran's new conservative hard-line President, Mahmoud

**Continued on page 5**

### LAST ISSUE!

**This could be the last issue of the Community Alliance newspaper**

*See page 2 and 3 for details*

**JUNE 2007**

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

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

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

## From the Editor



The survival of alternative/independent media in Fresno is in your hands. The *Community Alliance* newspaper, which is one of just a couple of progressive publications in the Central Valley, is in a financial crisis. If you want access to news that has not been filtered through the lens of corporate America, the government, and the military industrial complex, you must act soon to save this publication. Readers of the *Community Alliance* will vote on the future of alternative/independent media with their checkbooks (see the subscription and donation form on page 3).

The reason the *Community Alliance* is in a crisis is that I'm no longer able to continue as the editor without receiving a modest salary. The writing, editing, photography, circulation and other work on this paper require more time than an all-volunteer staff can do. Unfortunately, we are just barely able to pay the printing, layout/design, and a small salary for our advertising sales person.

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The incident that precipitated this crisis was a car accident. The prospect of buying another car and new computer (my current computer is about five years old) to continue working 40+ hours a week at a volunteer job grabbed my attention. I realized it was no longer realistic to continue working this hard on a project without any prospect of getting paid.

Allow me to make my best argument for why you should vote (with your subscription and/or donation) to keep the *Community Alliance* alive. By supporting this publication you are helping to build a powerful local movement for peace, immigrant rights, and environmental/social/economic justice. Our goal is to feature articles about individuals and organizations that are working for social change. By telling these stories and encouraging our readers to participate in progressive events and campaigns, we give you the information needed to stand up for social change, while simultaneously strengthening progressive community groups. In short, the *Community Alliance* newspaper succeeds by empowering individuals and organizations that are engaged in the struggle for social justice.

We give a voice to the voiceless and validate the lives of those who are working for social change. The corporate press (like the *Fresno Bee*) discount these stories and all too often ignore these voices for change. People complain to me about how difficult it is to get their story in the corporate media. When they do manage to get the attention of the media, they are frustrated to find that they get only enough time for a sound bite. All too often, the information in the corporate media about events and groups working for social change is distorted or incorrect. The *Community Alliance* gives groups and individuals working for social change the opportunity to say, in their own words, what they are doing, why it is important, and how readers can help.

In addition to giving community groups a voice, the Alliance is able to feature stories about important issues that do not get adequate (or any) coverage in the corporate media. Recent investigative stories have included the attempt by big business to build a nuclear power plant in Fresno (we broke that story) and the attacks on the homeless by the City of Fresno. The series of articles about the homeless is a particularly good example of how investigative reporting can

put a spotlight on an issue that leads to a change in public policy. Because of our coverage of this important issue, the city has stopped bulldozing homeless encampments and started developing a policy that helps, rather than hurts, the homeless. If it were not for the coverage of the homeless in the *Community Alliance*, these changes would not be happening.

The power of independent media was also made clear when we reported on the infiltration by the sheriff's department of Peace Fresno. Not only were we able to tell the story about what happened locally, but, largely because of our coverage, the story was picked up nationally and internationally. The incident was featured in Michael Moore's movie "Fahrenheit 911," on Bill Moyer's NOW show on PBS, on Amy Goodman's Democracy Now radio show, and written about by Jim Hightower. I received an award from Project Censored for our coverage. Scott Moore, who wrote about the plight of sheepherders in the valley, received an award from New California Media for his excellent reporting. That story was instrumental in helping to pass legislation in Sacramento that benefited these vulnerable workers.

The *Community Alliance* builds unity in the progressive movement, gives a voice to the voiceless, and earns national recognition for its investigative journalism. What we need to survive is your financial support. Your subscription and/or donation is your vote to keep this publication alive.

Should the *Community Alliance* Continue Publishing?

\_\_\_Yes, I support alternative/independent media. I will subscribe and/or make a donation

\_\_\_No, I like getting all my information from the corporate media.

\_\_\_Not sure, I like to complain about how bad things are, but I'm not ready to do anything about it yet.

## Party, anyone?!

After 9/11 we had a fundraiser gathering in the Wolk garden for the Community Alliance newspaper. Because we needed to come together as a community, the turnout was large. Waddama performed, Food not Bombs served, and everyone felt better for coming together. Have we forgotten how much we need each other? Let's do it again and help support our alternative progressive newspaper.

Pat and Dick Wolk are offering their garden and concert space. Others need to do the planning and promoting. Contact Pat at 431-3653

## Quote of the Month

*"The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."*

Steve Biko (1946-1977), a political activist and writer, is regarded as the father of the Black Consciousness movement in the Union of South Africa.





# Guest Editorial

## We Can End Homelessness, Once and for All

The growing violence against and repression of the homeless, and their heroic and determined resistance in various places across the country in response, are bringing the issue of homelessness to the fore. Why has homelessness grown in our country over the last 30 years, and how do we end it? Because it can be ended, once and for all.

People point to the rise of poverty as a chief cause of homelessness. This is certainly true, but what is causing the rise in poverty? Many people point to falling wages, the decline in manufacturing jobs and the growth of low-paying service jobs, the reductions in public assistance, the growth of part-time and temporary work, the exportation of jobs to low-wage countries through globalization, etc. This is all true, but what is underneath all this?

The corporations we work for are forever trying to out-produce their competition, to get things produced faster

and more efficiently. The computer and the robot have given business the ultimate weapon in the war of production. These tools don't simply supplement or complement human labor, they replace it. Ask the hundreds of thousands of telephone operators who were replaced by computerized telephone switching systems, or the hundreds of thousands of bank tellers replaced by ATMs, or the hundreds of thousands of auto workers replaced by robots on the assembly line. The list goes on and on, and it won't stop. Every business is compelled to automate to match its competition, or go under.

The result is permanent unemployment for millions and wages too low to live on for millions more as workers are forced to compete with robots and a globalized work force for jobs. The ironic result? We can produce mountains of everything with automated production, from autos to houses, but fewer and fewer people can afford to buy anything. Homelessness is simply the worst manifestation of this process.

We have everything we need to solve the problems of poverty and homelessness. There is plenty of housing, plenty of food, plenty of clothing, and we can all see it. This is not a question of shortages, it's a question of who owns and controls the economy and who has the political power to decide what will happen.

As long as a handful of big privately-owned corporations control the economy and govern our country, they will continue to automate production, eliminate jobs, and lower wages, and poverty and homelessness will continue to grow. This is the way of the market economy. But the vast productive power of this economy could end poverty and homelessness tomorrow, if only the people controlled it. It's simply a question of the people gaining the political power to direct society's resources to end the problem. A new society is not only possible but necessary.

To build that society, we first have to recognize that the corporate rulers of our country are our enemies, not our friends, and that this tiny wealthy minority has no right to control society's resources at the expense of the majority. We have a right to be free of poverty and homelessness, and we must organize and educate ourselves for the struggle that lies ahead. The first step is to demand that the government act now to provide housing for all who need it.

###

*This article originated in the People's Tribune  
PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654, 773-486-3551,  
info@peoplestribune.org.*

## Emergency Communique

By Richard Stone

This is a critical moment for us Valley progressives, a wake-up call that we need to 'tithe' ourselves, with committed regularity, to maintain the institutions that do OUR work.

Right now we have one month to prove to those at the Community Alliance that we care enough to keep them afloat. If we can accomplish this small miracle, we will see what else this Fund can do. We are urgently requesting pledges (and if at all possible, two-year pledges, of an amount to be given annually); these pledges can be paid in installments, but they need to be made known now. Please fill out a pledge card, enclosing your first payment. OUR IMMEDIATE GOAL IS TO HAVE \$20,000 IN ANNUAL PLEDGES, AND \$3000 IN HAND, BY JUNE 30. WE CAN DO IT!

The Activist Scholarship Fund will be administered by a directorate (currently consisting of Ellie Bluestein, Catherine Campbell, Margaret Hudson, Stan Poss, Matilda Rangel, and myself) which will utilize The Fresno Center for Nonviolence as fiscal agent, making contributions tax deductible. The financial records will be transparent and available to all contributors. After the first year, contributors may participate in the process of selecting the recipients of the second year's scholarships.

Checks can be made out to FCNV, memo ASF, and sent to the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno CA 93728.

[N.B. As of May 20th, we have received between \$3-4000 in cash donations, and another \$1500 in pledges—almost halfway to what is needed to sustain the Alliance for a year, and a quarter way to what we'd like to have as an on-going Scholarship Fund. The health of our Progressive community can be greatly bolstered by this "immunization" project, for which we especially appeal to those able to pledge \$500 or more annually. Richard Stone]

### The Activist Scholarship Fund Pledge Card

I Pledge the Indicated Amount:

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# City Council Members Need to Hear from You

By Ellie Bluestein

Why do we not have an Independent Police Auditor in place for the city of Fresno?

Recently the Fresno County Grand Jury issued a nine-page report strongly endorsing an Independent Auditor for the city of Fresno. You may download it from our website ([www.cccjc.org](http://www.cccjc.org))

The mayor and chief of police both favor an IPA. The mayor has introduced it in his annual budget three times and it is included in his current budget. The Fresno Bee has endorsed it many times in editorials and columns.

Who is holding things up?

The Fresno City Council has voted against it three times and is prepared to do so again.

Why?

They immediately approved a PR position for the police department as soon as it was requested. They also approved the purchase of an airplane for the department although they already have two helicopters, and few city police departments in California, or in the U.S. for that matter, own an airplane. So it is not out of concern for the budget that the IPA is consistently rejected. The police department receives more than 54% of the entire city budget. The \$188,000 budgeted for an IPA would hardly make a dent.

The creation of an Independent Police Auditor will establish a police review mechanism that will increase mutual respect and trust by ensuring fairness and accountability in dealings between the public and the police. According to the Grand Jury Report an IPA can accomplish a balance of three key objectives.

Citizen Satisfaction: citizens can be assured that complaints are thoroughly investigated and that internal affairs investigations are conducted impartially and fairly.

Prudent Financial Management: the cost of an auditor is minimal compared with the potential cost associ-



Community members March for Justice on March 3, 2007. A central demand of this march was to stop police brutality. Photo by Mike Rhodes

ated with settlements in cases of excessive force and the potential cost of lawsuits filed by citizens whose complaints are either unanswered or improperly investigated.

Police Officers' Support: the auditor would be able to provide independent confirmation of the professionalism of the police officers where this has been challenged.

Nationally, establishment of an independent auditor is recommended as a "best practices" procedure for all law enforcement. Most major cities in California and in the U.S. have some kind of police oversight system.

National surveys indicate that a substantial number of minority citizens are suspicious and distrustful of the police. Fresno's minority community shows the same concerns that the national surveys indicate. And who is the minority community in Fresno? The so-called minority community comprises 62.7% of our population: 11.2% Asian, 8.4% Black, 39.9% Hispanic, 3.2% other, 37.3% white. Delegations consisting of constituents from each district have visited the council mem-

bers more than once. They consistently tell us that people in their district don't know about an IPA and aren't interested in having one.

That's where you come in! A vote on the budget will be taken by the end of May, but the final vote will probably come in June. Write letters to The Bee. Call your council members. Several of them are running for higher office (Dages, Calhoun, Duncan). Let them know that an IPA is important for Fresno, and if they can't support it we don't need them in office. It's down to the wire, so do it today.

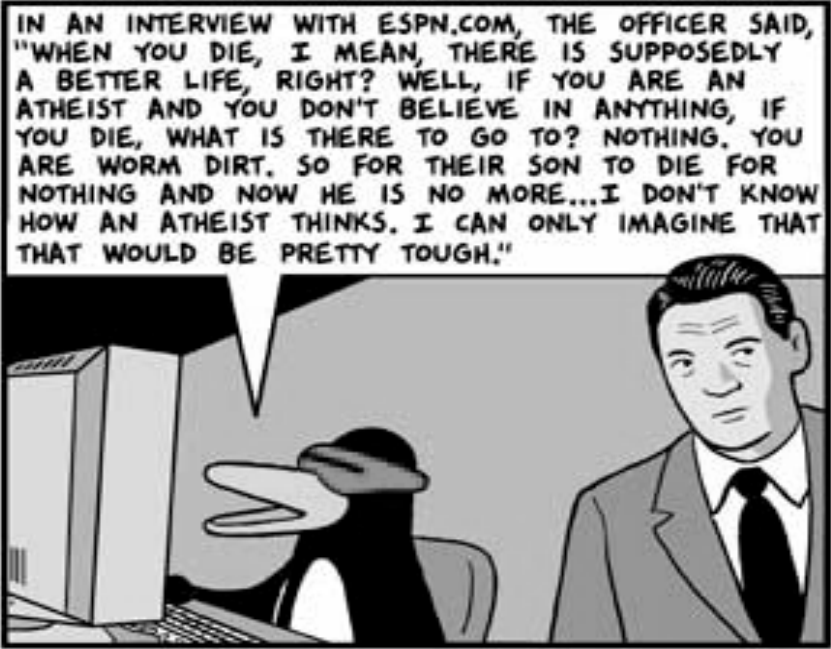
It's really up to us. We need to deluge them with phone calls, letters, and show up when the final vote is taken. It's our last best chance until we vote in new council members. Then we'll have to start all over again.

###

Ellie Bluestein is a member of the Central California Criminal Justice Committee [www.cccjc.org](http://www.cccjc.org). She can be contacted at 559 229-9807 or [ellieb28@sbglobal.net](mailto:ellieb28@sbglobal.net)

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



TOM TOMORROW©2007... www.thismodernworld.com



# Want Peace? You have a Home at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

By Richard Stone, Administrative Director

To our amazement, the Fresno Center for Nonviolence is 15 years old this June. We started as a project of an organization called Visions of Community, in response to the perceived inadequacy of Fresno's protest against the first Gulf War (1991). I can still remember the voice of Mona Reed at meetings, saying, "We need a Center, a place that's ours, where we work for peace and justice continuously, not just in reaction to another war."

Then a group of peaceniks – Drs. Jack Welch, Art Siegel, and Sudarshan Kapoor; and Gerry Bill, Valta Pointer, and Howard Hendrix — actually made it happen. They researched how best to organize, raised enough pledges to pay rent for six months, found a space to rent, and called a grand opening party. The Center was born.

At our tenth anniversary in 2001, we recapitulated those first years. We recalled events we organized and hosted, such as Fresno's first Cesar Chavez Day commemoration. Speakers we brought to Fresno, such as Native American elder Corbett Harney and social change theorist Bill Moyer. Our premiere showing of "Manufacturing Consent," a film about Noam Chomsky that commercial movie distributors wouldn't touch back then, which had two sold-out showings.

We began our tradition of reaching out to minority segments of the population, co-sponsoring events and lending support to groups trying to get started. We discovered we could act as a fiscal agent for unincorporated groups such as Patrick Young's Wheelchair Project. We provided meeting space for activities ranging from the Gay-Straight Alliance to The Living Room, for HIV-related services, to classes for mothers in drug rehab, to "movement music" classes led by Patricia Wells.

Those were also years of questioning. Why was our space so often unused? One Board member resigned, saying the expense of maintaining the Center couldn't be justified. How could we be more pro-active, more aggressively visible? Why was our base of support so narrow? What could we do to raise rent money for the next six months?

The last five years have been more stable. Under the leadership of long-time Development Director Angela Price we have established a base of support rooted in annual donations from a core of believers; annual art auction and book sale; donations for space use from five



Richard Stone and Angela Price in front of the current Fresno Center for Nonviolence home at 1584 N Van Ness.

market rent graciously offered by our former landlords. Our new digs, though, are more businesslike and accessible to foot traffic, especially from City College; they encouraged us to set up daily office hours, M-F, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. The number of like-minded groups using the Center has increased, and our range of coalition allies has broadened.

We take special satisfaction during these latter years in some new developments. One is the emergence of Peace Fresno, originally convened by Center board members, and the Counter-Recruitment Coalition. These groups carry on work central to the Center's mission, under the leadership of individuals who emerged out of our initial call to oppose the strident militancy after 9/11. We cherish our partnership with the *Community Alliance* — we were the first organization to buy a page in the paper; we provide both meeting space and fiscal agency; and we serve as a distribution center for the paper. We also were at the forefront of efforts to offer support and fellowship to Valley Muslims after 9/11.

We are proud, too, of the monthly video series we initiated about two years ago. The inaugural showings of "Outfoxed" had audiences all but hanging from the rafters; and we now have begun quarterly showings at other venues, such as public libraries, that might attract different audiences. We also initiated and co-sponsored the very successful showing of "The U.S. vs. John Lennon,"

to ten organizations, and money from acting as fiscal agent for small grants to friendly unincorporated groups (e.g. FresCAMP, Central California Criminal Justice Committee, Central California Environment Justice Coalition). We have also, for several years, received an annual private grant enabling us to pay small monthly stipends to staff doing crucial behind-the-scenes work, including a secretary, a treasurer, and a P.R. liaison.

The move, in 2004, to our current location has been as advantageous as we had hoped. We miss the beautiful building and below-

screened by Fresno Filmworks. Additionally, we take a monthly turn hosting "Stir It Up" from 3:00-3:30 p.m. the second Wednesday on KFCF. We take on topics from Indigenous People's Day (formerly Columbus Day) to prison issues, to global warming (or as some put it, global weirding), to the Mideast.

We continue struggle with the problems of an aging board of directors. We have lost some of our founders and ardent voices to death and retirement, and most of us old-timers keep getting older. So it has been a delight to welcome new, younger board members in the past few years: Dan Yaseen, our Peace Fresno liaison; Michael Black Bull and Beth Wengert, affiliated with City College and bringing fresh ideas and connections; and FCC student Brandon Hill, who does a lot of our document and publicity design work as well as serving as our in-house environmental informant. We also treasure our Treasurer Ron Vineyard and Recording Secretary Fran Saunders, as much for their spirit as for their work.

We continue to experiment with ways to reach students with countervailing ideas to the militancy our society so readily espouses; and we search for ways to foster understanding across the innumerable political and religious differences that so easily lead to antagonisms.

We continue to explore new avenues of publicizing the existence and values of our progressive community, such as the underwriting announcement before the Lehrer News Hour on KVPT.

We have been able to gain recognition and support for key figures in our community through our annual Way of Peace Awards and through the ad hoc programs we organized to honor Margaret Hudson and Vince Lavery at critical moments in their lives.

Yet when I'm asked to speak about what we "do" I often grasp for answers... until I realize that Mona Reed had it right: it's not so much what we do as that we exist, a place for people to find support for ideas, a hearing for frustration, logistical help in organizing a new project. Above all, the Center is physical proof that people care about peace and justice and decency for all.



First president of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence Art Siegel with UFW leader Cesar Chavez looking over his shoulder.



This was the first home for the Fresno Center for Nonviolence - at 981 N Van Ness (just south of Olive).

## Stop the War continued from page 1

Ahmadinejad assume office in August 2005, vowing to restart his nation's nuclear program. In no uncertain terms he has placed his European mediators on notice that the achievement of trust can only be engendered through mutual commitment. The peace ante has now been raised and the need for diplomacy is more important than ever. The American people must be aware that an assault on Iran would deplete American resources to an even graver extent than they already are. Attacking Iran would be no cakewalk.

Rather than continuing its saber-rattling, the United States should engage in diplomacy with Iran alongside the Europeans. Such an overture toward peace would be beneficial for Americans, Europeans, Iranians and the rest of the world. For the sake of justice, humanity and peace, it is incumbent upon America, Europe and Iran to do everything in their powers to "STOP THE NEXT WAR NOW!"

###

Linda Milazzo is a Los Angeles based writer, educator, activist and member of CodePink. She has directed several educational and community based programs throughout greater Los Angeles. Jodie Evans recently returned from Iran. She resides in Los Angeles and is an author, long time organizer/activist and co-founder of CodePink: Women for Peace. Jodie's most recent book, "Stop the Next War Now" is currently in it's second printing. This article is from: <http://www.commondreams.org/>, a good source of independent/alternative information.

## Saturday, June 23 6 PM (doors open at 5:30 PM)

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence will be celebrating its 15th anniversary at the First Congregational Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Boulevard

Buffet dinner by Food Not Bombs, with desserts by La Boulangerie and Charlotte's Bakery, Annual Way of Peace Awards. and keynote speaker Medea Benjamin on "Stop the Next War Now."

Music by Lonesome Jem in the courtyard following the talk. Tickets: \$25:00 for dinner; \$10.00 for speaker only (7 p.m.) Tickets are available at The Movies in the Tower District, Patrick's Music or from the Center, 1584 N. Van Ness (open from 11-3 Monday-Friday). Tables for eight can be reserved. Call 237-3223 for more information.

Medea Benjamin has supported human rights and social justice struggles around the world for over 20 years. She is Founding Director of Global Exchange, helped bring together the groups forming the coalition United for Peace and Justice. She is also the co-founder of CODEPINK, Women for Peace, and was the Green Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California in 2000. In 2005, Medea was nominated as one of 1,000 exceptional women from around the world to receive the Nobel Peace Prize as part of the project "1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005."

# The City of Fresno In- stalls Portable Toilets for the Homeless

By Mike Rhodes

The Fresno city council voted last month to install a couple of portable toilets and a trash bin at a homeless encampment in downtown Fresno. The 6-1 vote, directing the city manager’s office to provide these facilities, was necessary because the mayor and city manager had not moved forward with an earlier request from the city council on April 10. The city manager, at that time, refused to follow the direction of the city council, leading some to ask who was running the City of Fresno - the elected members of the city council or city manager Andrew Souza. For background information on that vote, see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/04/10/18394028.php>

The issue of providing portable toilets and trash bins for the homeless was brought up again at a City Council meeting on April 17. The agenda item, brought up by council member Jerry Duncan, was not voted on because a last minute press conference by the mayor was announced. Mayor Alan Autry announced at the press conference that not only was his administration going to provide portable toilets and trash bins for the homeless, but they were going to establish a “free zone” where homeless people could live, without being harassed. These services were promised within 60 days. For more information, see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/04/17/18400746.php>

Homeless people and their advocates, while encouraged by the announcement of a “free zone” and some services for the homeless, asked why it was taking so long to drop off a trash bin and a couple of portable toilets at one of the downtown encampments. The logistics of dropping off these items simply does not take 60 days. Suzi Hernandez (not her real name) asked me why they were able to put up 200 yards of razor wire fence next to the H street homeless encampment but not drop off a single portable toilet in the month since

the mayor’s press conference.

Duncan, the city council member who brought this issue up as a request on April 10, made a motion to direct the city manager to put up the portable toilets and trash bin at the downtown encampment. Duncan’s argument is that these services will provide the homeless with a little dignity and respect and clean up the neighborhood. Without portable toilets, the homeless use the area around the encampments as their bathroom.

But one city council member was not so easily convinced. Council member Larry Westerlund was concerned about what the homeless might do in the portable toilets. He may have been influenced by a memo sent out by the Fresno Police Department last month citing some of the “bad things” that can happen when homeless people use portable toilets. The police memo said the portable toilets might be used for illicit activities like - taking drugs, having sex, or perhaps someone would sleep in one. The police memo did not suggest that any of these things could also be done in a bathroom at a four star hotel or an airplane, but it did get Westerlund wound up tighter than deputy Barney Fife (from the Andy Griffith TV show).

Here is a transcript of what Westerlund had to say at the May 15 meeting: “Assistant city manager Rudd: will these be monitored bathrooms? Um, I know the proposal was that there would be monitors and there would be County services for the bigger picture, I think this is for the immediate period.” Rudd replies: “this is a short term temporary solution where there will be security provided to monitor the facilities.” Not yet satisfied that there is adequate provisions for security, Westerlund continues: “and how will that security be provided?” Rudd answers: “it will be

contracted through CIS, the City of Fresno has a contract for security, the same people that do the security here at City Hall and other city facilities. They will be contracted to provide security at the location as well.” Pursuing the daunting question of who will watch the homeless as they use the toilets, Westerlund adds: “How will that be delivered, I mean is there going to be someone standing at the bathrooms?” Rudd said “they will be standing in the area of the facilities, yes.”

Even with the question of who will watch the homeless as they go to the bathroom answered, Westerlund just could not bring himself to support the motion. He was the lone vote opposed to improving life for the homeless in downtown Fresno.

The portable toilets and trash bin were delivered to the H street homeless encampment on May 17. About 60 homeless people, living at the H street encampment (south of Ventura), can now use a portable toilet when nature calls. Assistant City Manager Bruce Rudd told the Community Alliance that it will cost the city \$13,000 a month to provide these services. The biggest expense will be the 24 hour a day security subcontracted to CIS Security.

For a list of articles and documents about the struggle for civil liberties for homeless people in Fresno, see: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/homelessness.htm>

## Poetry Corner

By Richard Stone

Joyce Glaspie has given us some poems by her husband, Ronald Ray Young, who is on Death Row at San Quentin State Prison. She writes of him, “Another innocent man sentenced to Death Row! ...Witnesses threatened and coerced. Convicted felons given “deals” to lie on the witness stand. Police department records were falsified....The man has already spent 10 years in jail for a crime he did not commit. He was sentenced to death row on April 19, 2006. He has a wife and children who need him. Please help him obtain justice and a fair trial.”

### REMEMBER: a tribute to Stanley “Tookie” Williams

Stanley Tookie Williams was murdered  
December 2005 on San Quentin’s Death Row  
And I have been assured it was an exceptional show  
Sodium Thiopental and Pancuronium Bromide  
Life still in his body but Death in his eyes  
At the time they were killing him at San Quentin, you see  
My trial was being held at Kangaroo Kourt, Tulare County  
12 months later, though I’ve never met the man  
On San Quentin’s Death Row, in his shoes do I stand  
“Founder of the Crips” has no meaning to me  
My death was arranged by the the terrorists that be.  
Beware of Deja vu, next it could be you.  
Tookie was a gifted brother, a voice resonating world wide  
Gravitating towards that Alfred Nobel Peace Prize.  
Honor Tookie’s life and the positive he did  
He reached out to save others—our community, the kids  
Denounced gangs and violence, Redemption was his message  
He kept his mind sharp for 24 years of Death Row oppression!  
I have been on Death Row for just seven months  
If there were a bridge, I would have jumped  
The struggle continues, Tookie’s death set the stage  
For hundreds of Death Row’s brothers to write their own page  
Death Row has talented brothers with a multitude to say  
Will their appeals be heard? The death machine held at bay?  
Love Stanley “Tookie” Williams for his courage, and success  
Honor him by remaining in the struggle, never rest  
Continue his legacy and pass the baton  
His spirit still lives, the movement will go on.

11-17-06, San Quentin Death Row

Donald Ray Young E78474  
P.O.Box E78474  
San Quentin State Prison  
San Quentin, CA 94974



The first homeless person to use the new portable toilets is carefully watched by a security guard from CIS Security.

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# Inside/Out Reflections from Inside the Golden Gulag

by Sara Olson



No prisoner was surprised at the “historic compromise” in the California legislature that addressed overcrowding in the human rights sewer AKA the California Department of Corrections [sic] and rehabilitation (non-existent). The CDCR is grossly overcrowded, cramming into every nook and cranny of its massive system of human warehouses, nearly twice the amount of bodies for which it was designed. It has the largest of all the states’ prison populations, 172,000 people in 33 prisons, camps and community facilities designed for half that amount. Several Democrats claimed they had to “hold their noses” when they voted for this massive prison-led expansion

*The California State prisoner population grew nearly 500 per-cent between 1982 and 2000, even though the crime rate peaked in 1980 and declined, unevenly but decisively, thereafter.*

sion (53,000) in the country supporting the largest number of imprisoned people ever in the world. They should have cut off their noses to spite their moral lassitude.

Where it concerns prisons, despite the steadily declining crime rate since 1980, state assembly persons and senators have built careers on the backs of inmates, whoring for campaign “donations” from corporate and special interests. They don’t do the peoples’ business. They do the business of the business class, the wealthy and ruling elites. In California, they cater to the powerful prison guards’ union and to its sidekick, the victims rights gangs, both funded by state taxpayers who, apparently, never run out of money.

SB40 easily, quickly, passed the California legislature. Schwarzenegger signed it into law on Friday, April 13, 2007, a fitting date befitting the bad luck it visited on California’s luckless prisoners. Prisoners are in the gun sights of Republicans and Democrats and there’s little difference between the two parties on prison issues. SB40 slammed shut the small window opened for sentence reduction that the U.S. Supreme Court’s Cunningham decision afforded when it was handed down on January 22, 2007. California’s Attorney General, Jerry Brown, said that “potentially thousands of California’s inmates could go home early.” Cunningham ruled that routine sentence enhancements by judges without a jury finding were unconstitutional. Eighty-one days of grace were all prisoners got to file writs in a near-hopeless grasp at future freedom. Under SB40, judges once again can routinely add enhancements to sentences post-plea agreements and bench trials. Thanks to prison reform queen, Senator Gloria (“I have to think of my future”) Romero (Democrat, Los Angeles) who presented her SB40 bill to her political cohorts, April 13 brought a quick close to an aperture of optimistic aspiration.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, author of Golden Gulag, was interviewed on Pacifica Radio KPFA’s “Hard Knock Radio” in April, 2007 by anti-prison activist Dorsey Nunn. She said, “Prisons kill. They are killing machines. Ask who shouldn’t be in prison, not who should be.” She declared that prison building undermines community organizing even in rural areas. In urban areas, particularly those that are poor and populated by people of color, saturation policing criminalizes entire neighborhoods, making them fertile hunting grounds to search for prey for prison cells. In Golden Gulag, Gilmore wrote: “The California State prisoner population grew nearly 500 per-cent between 1982 and 2000, even though the crime rate peaked in 1980 and declined, unevenly but decisively, thereafter. African Americans and Latinos comprise two-thirds of the states’ . . . prisoners; almost 7 percent are women of all races; 25 percent are non-citizens. Most prisoners come from the

state’s urban cores — — — particularly Los Angeles and the surrounding counties. More than half the prisoners had steady employment before arrest, while upwards of 80 percent were . . . represented by state-appointed lawyers for the indigent. In short, as a class, convicts are from de-industrialized cities’ working or workless poor.”<sup>1</sup>

One element missing from the 2007 prison-bed expansion was any mention of reform. The expansion will cost \$7.7 billion, ballooning to around \$15 billion given the interest owed eventually on the non-voter approved revenue bonds that will fund it. From this huge chunk out of the state budget, only \$50 million will go to desperately-needed rehabilitation programs. Despite all the state studies, commissions and reports that have prescribed them, there are no sentencing or parole policy reforms nor any early releases of nonviolent offenders. Republicans claim “there’s no such thing as a nonviolent offender”. Democrats must think that, too. While newspapers in the state have diligently covered the problems of the prison system, television—the form of media from which 94% of Americans get their news, leads the cheers for more prisons and for more prisoners to fill them. Crime leads newscasts, presented in breathless tones that highlight the opinions of prosecutors and law enforcement. Crime leads because it draws viewers who buy products which draw advertising monies for news departments which now must earn their own way in these tight-budget days. Whether or not crime really has escalated, one would think it has, because crime is always front center and

lurid. Even false leads are presented as major stories in a “what if . . . ?” scenario. A more measured response would be, “so what?”

Police chiefs and district attorneys have become

big celebrities. For money, television stations will present ads for anything having to do with keeping jails and prisons at an overcrowded capacity. In 2004, Proposition 66, which would have offered some modest “three-strikes” reform in that prisoners within very particular parameters could have gone to court to seek sentencing redress, was leading in the polls a couple of weeks before the November elections. A wealthy southern Californian, whose sister was reportedly a crime victim, financed a television ad to defeat the mild reform initiative. He was joined by Schwarzenegger and former Governors Davis, Wilson, Deukmejian, and Brown in a series of spurious claims devoted to the effort. Outright lies, the usual “thousands of criminals, hoards of outcasts and untouchables, on the streets” sort, frightened just enough of the normally uninformed California public to keep the proposition from passing. Later, Schwarzenegger said that Californians weren’t ready to reform “three-strikes” and, of course, the media sycophants allowed that broad untruth to go unchallenged. The truth was, if one tells big, well-financed lies on t.v. ads, people will believe you.

The United States incarcerates over 2.1 million people. The prison population has grown faster over the last 20 years than the overall population. The impact of mass incarceration has hit the poor the hardest, as one would expect. It especially impacts people of color. Of all ethnic groups in proportion to their incidence in the general population, Native Americans are imprisoned most, followed by Blacks. In African American communities, one in 12 men are behind bars. This is due, in large part, to sentencing guidelines, both state and federal, and the War on Drugs.

How did this country come to institute a system of mass incarceration as an important tool for social control of poor people? In August, 2004 Robert X. Cringely wrote an article, “Fred Nold’s Legacy”.<sup>2</sup> It revealed that in 1982, the Department of Justice (DoJ), headed by Reagan’s Attorney General, Edwin Meese, hired Fred Nold and Michael Block, two economists at California’s Hoover Institution, to “come up with some economic twist for the new [U.S. Sentencing] guidelines that would make them more effective at reducing crime. Every 20 to 30 years, the U.S. Sentencing Commission updates sentencing guidelines to keep them current with social trends and circumstances. Block and Nold had completed a research paper that indicated that monetary fines for antitrust crimes might “encourage potential white collar criminals to think again”. The fines, for those who succumbed to temptation, would be “a significant source for revenue for the enforcers”.

The opportunity to do a DoJ study opened the door to the research-oriented “big time” for the two economists and for their statistician, Sandy Lerner. They started their own company to do the work.

The DoJ, ultimately, refused to accept the research or the final paper on which it was based. The new company folded. The study by Block and Nold, “which was intended to economically validate the proposed sentencing guidelines, instead showed that the new guidelines would actually create more crime than they would deter. More crime, more drug use, more robbery, more murder would be the result, not less. Not only that, but these guidelines could lead to entire segments of the population entering a downward economic spiral, taking away their American dream.”

The study and its conclusions were buried by Meese and his DoJ. The proposed sentencing guidelines were implemented unaltered. Cringely wrote, “We spend tens of billions per year on prisons to house people who don’t contribute in any way to our economy. We tear apart Black and Latino communities. The cost to society is immense, and as Block and Nold showed, unnecessary. AND THE FEDS KNEW IT AT THE TIME.”

Cringely’s conclusion about why the Republican DoJ did something they knew would be destructive for an entire demographic of society is stark. “My view is,” he wrote, “they went ahead because they were more interested in punishment than deterrence. They went ahead because they didn’t perceive those in prison as being constituents. They went ahead because it enabled the building of larger organizations with more power. They went ahead because the idea of a society with less crime is itself a threat to the prestige of those in law enforcement.”

Burying the study led to Fred Nold’s 1983 suicide. Michael Block eventually went on to serve a six-year term on the U.S. Sentencing Commission and to work at an Arizona Conservative think-tank, the Goldwater institute. Cringely knew Fred Nold and thought his work was so important that he couldn’t allow it to die with him. Sandy Lerner, Nold’s and Block’s statistician, founded a start-up company with her husband named Cisco Systems. Cringely added, “Maybe you’ve heard of it.”

Mass incarceration increased because crime appeared to increase after the War on Drugs, fed by Colombian cocaine revenues and deeply entwined with Reagan’s Central American wars in the 1980’s, was declared. In California in 1980, the percentages of commitments by controlling offense to the CDC was 63.5% for the violent crimes and 7.4% for drug crimes. By 2000, the violent crimes percentage had dropped to 25.3% and drug commitments had climbed to 39%.

A book review by Jason De Parle, “The American Prison Nightmare,”<sup>3</sup> stated, “Counting jails, there are now seven Americans in every thousand behind bars. That is nearly five times the historic norm and seven times

*Only by counting the penal population do we see that fully two out of three young black male dropouts were not working at the height of the 1990’s economic expansion.*

higher than most of Western Europe . . . The increase in severity . . . of imposed tougher penalties . . . occurred on the front end with longer sentences . . . and on the back end by making fewer prisoners eligible for early release.”

The Drug War is fought with arrests of small-time users and dealers. Most are for marijuana-based crimes. Jeff Adachi, head of San Francisco’s Office of Public Defender, said in a March, 2007 interview on Berkeley’s KPFA that while 15% of the black population uses illegal drugs, 70% of all drug users in prison are black. He said the solution to this disparity isn’t to hire more black cops or to include more people of color in justice system jobs. Society doesn’t need a color-blind criminal justice system. It needs more justice.

De Parle noted in his review of Bruce Western’s book, Punishment and Inequality in America,<sup>4</sup> “While blacks are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed, they now go to prison eight times as often. We are used to thinking of prison as at least partially a byproduct of the larger tragedy of poverty; Western depicts it as a cause. . . He wrote ‘the poor are made poorer and have fewer prospects.’” In a human life, prison leaves the

twin residues of stigmatization and lost opportunity. Earning potential never recovers, bonds with family—especially with children—are strained and/or broken and many are permanently disenfranchised.

Western wrote, “A prison record reduces a black man’s chances of getting married by 11 percentage points . . . the whole family does time. From 1980 to 2000, the number of children with fathers behind bars rose six-fold . . . Among white kids, just over 1 percent have incarcerated fathers, while among black children the figure approaches 10 percent . . . nearly half [of these men] are living with their children at the time of their arrest.”

During the Clinton presidency in the 1990’s, the prison boom grew in leaps and bounds. The 1994 federal crime Bill and 1996’s AEDPA (Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act), both signed by Clinton, are notable for their legislative curtailment of prisoners’ rights. One major claim that Western quotes Clinton making is, “This is the first recovery in decades where everybody got better at the same time.” Western claims that this was just not true for black men. He wrote, “The prison expansion reflected inequality. The prison expansion created inequality. The prison expansion hid inequality from view. De Parle added, “ . . . the government omits prisoners when calculating unemployment and poverty rates. Add them in, as Western did, and joblessness swells. ‘Only by counting the penal population do we see that fully two out of three young black male dropouts were not working at the height of the 1990’s economic expansion,’ Western warns. Count inmates and you also erase three quarters of the apparent progress in closing the wage gap between blacks and whites.”

De Parle’s review also covered the book, *Locked Out*<sup>5</sup> by Jeff Manza and Christopher Uggen. He discusses several issues that the book raised; for instance, well over four million Americans have lost the right to vote and whether ex-felons would want to vote after losing that right while incarcerated or on parole and probation. What’s most crucial about their findings is the link between race and the vote. “The more African Americans a state contains, the more likely it has been to ban felons from voting.” They find [racially-based]” . . . statutes’ history in states such as Virginia and Florida . . . were enacted along with grandfather clauses, poll taxes and literacy tests as ‘another means through which the African American vote was restricted.’”

De Parle argued that the reason to give ex-felons back their right to vote is, “—to exclude 5.3 million people from the rolls—is to offend the principle of universal suffrage and undermine democratic legitimacy.” He

added, “if felons were allowed to vote, the United States would have a different president. Disproportionately poor and black, felons choose Democrats in overwhelming numbers—giving them between 70 percent and 85 percent of their votes in presidential elections.” He noted that other elections are affected too. De Parle wrote that, “Manza and Uggen find that seven modern Republican senators owe their elections to laws that keep felons from voting: John Warner of Virginia (1978), John Tower of Texas (1978), Mitch McConnell of Kentucky (1984), Connie Mack of Florida (1988), Paul Coverdell of Georgia (1992), Jim Bunning of Kentucky (1998), and Mel Martinez of Florida (1998).” According to the authors’ estimates “ . . . four would have lost even if only the ex-felons in their states had voting rights, . . . since the senate has been so closely divided [since 1978], a fuller enfranchisement might have shifted some years of partisan control to Democrats.”

*If prisoners could vote or if even only ex-felons could, a different kind of Democratic candidate might emerge.*

If prisoners could vote or if even only ex-felons could, a different kind of Democratic candidate might emerge. However, perhaps only a different party, not Democrat or Republican, could produce the kind of politician who would have the courage to support legal changes across the country for ex-felon, what’s more, felon enfranchisement. As former Senator Bill Bradley said in a radio interview as he discussed his “no vote” in 2002 when the U.S. Congress gave Bush the go ahead to invade Iraq, “Democrats don’t have the courage of their convictions.”

Class and race deeply inform the cowardice of politicians when confronting prison reform in California and in the United States as a whole. Politicians depend on the “kindness” of corporate-controlled media which need crime stories to lead their news and, by extension, the imprisonment of as many criminals as possible as a meal ticket. Government and the powerful interests that control it find hiding the poor from view much more useful than-what?-redistributing wealth? Ah! No.

The 1960’s and the early 1970’s were eras of rebellion. Social upheaval reigned and mass organizing coupled with resistance led to a ruling class reassessment. How to deal with the rising up of those at the bottom? What to do with lower-middle and working classes who had the luxury of going beyond high school to college which led to questioning government policy? During the Nixon years, his theme of “law and order” surfaced and the Controlled Substances Act was enacted. It transferred control over drug policy from

the Surgeon General to the Attorney General by giving the DoJ the power to create drug schedules. Thus began the War on Drugs. Later, Reagan’s DoJ under Meese devised sentences that, despite real crime rates, would ensure that urban riots and political organizing couldn’t lead to a challenge to state power.

In California, the 1992 Los Angeles uprising resulting from Rodney King’s beating and the acquittal of the four LAPD officers charged with that crime, reminded state politicians that they were on the right path with mass incarceration. Ruth Wilson Gilmore wrote: “the legislature embarked on a criminal-law production frenzy, passing more than 100, and sometimes as many as 200, pieces of new legislation each year since 1988—up from the former output of 20-25 pieces, which included routine amendments of existing statutes. As a result, by 1994, the backlog had become so great that it was impossible to clear the legislative calendar by the end of each term. . . .”<sup>6</sup>

For the 21st Century, the War on Terrorism plus Drugs runs on increasing legal legislation and the threat of incarceration. Anyone can be sent to prison for anything. Politicians have been reminding the public that they’ve been “protecting us” from criminals, terror-

ists, or simply other people for so long that they can’t stop now. But don’t be alarmed. Your elected officials—with their courageous votes (and, for a price)—are watching out for your interests. Yeah, right. Or . . . you could just say, “NO!”

###

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<sup>1</sup> Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, University of California Press, p.7.  
<sup>2</sup> “Fred Nold’s Legacy Why We Send So Many Americans to Prison and Probably Shouldn’t” by Robert X. Cringely  
<http://www.pbs.org/cringely/pulpit/pulpit20040812.html>  
<sup>3</sup> “The American Prison Nightmare” by Jason De Parle, April 12, 2007 pp. 33-36, The New York Review of Books (NYRB).  
<sup>4</sup> Punishment and Inequality in America by Bruce Western, Russell Sage Foundation; reviewed by Jason De Parle NYRB  
<sup>5</sup> Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy by Jeff Manza and Christopher Uggen, Oxford University Press, reviewed by Jason De Parle NYRB  
<sup>6</sup> Golden Gulag, Gilmore, p. 110.

Bennett and Mitchell say they are actively seeking community input and participation in the filming. If you want to make a suggestion for the film, you can email Entandem at [query@entandemprod.com](mailto:query@entandemprod.com). As filming progresses, video clips of the work in progress will be posted for viewing and comment on the Entandem website, [www.entandemprod.com](http://www.entandemprod.com) and on Entandem’s MySpace page, [www.myspace.com/entandemproductions](http://www.myspace.com/entandemproductions).

# Now Filming: New Film Company Entandem Plans Documentary to Capture Fresno’s Urban Transformation

Fresno is fast becoming a large city, but what kind of city will it be? That is the question posed by Fresno filmmakers Jaguar Bennett and Christine Autrand Mitchell, who are currently filming a documentary about the transformation of Fresno from small town to metropolis.

“Fresno is condemned to become a great city, whether it likes it or not,” says Bennett. “Right now there is a flood of civic groups whose vision is to make Fresno a more cosmopolitan city, with better infrastructure, more art, and greater self-confidence. But the real driving force for urbanization is that millions of people will be moving here in the next few decades. This is a special moment in the city’s history, a time of opportunity and danger, and we want to capture that in the film.

“Bennett and Mitchell plan to cover Fresno from a variety of perspectives: the art and music scene, local government, city planning, ethnic communities, economics and labor issues, the role of religion in civic life, and environmental issues.

“We want to avoid taking sides on any issue,” says

Mitchell. “We want to explore the diversity and complexity of Fresno and the variety of viewpoints here without us editorializing.

“The documentary is the first production from Bennett and Mitchell’s new film company, Entandem Productions. The filmmakers say their future plans for their company include producing a variety of narrative films and creating production facilities to support continuous, long-term film production in Fresno.



Jaguar Bennett interviews San Francisco artist Mia Paschal for an outsider’s view of Fresno for Entandem’s new documentary, “Fresno.” - Photo by Christine Autrand Mitchell





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Fresno Center for Nonviolence | 1584 N. Van Ness Avenue | (559) 487-2515 | www.peacefresno.org

# Word on the Street

by Wendy Russell

From the top of this lush, jungled hill I can see for miles and miles across green pastures, over the almond tree-fringed beaches, the bright turquoise blue gulf and disorderly rows of diminishing mountains in different hues of purple and emerald green, way on the other side - truly ‘as far as the eye could see’ because there is no pollution here in Costa Rica. In the early morning light as small bats fly around me, returning from their night of eating mosquitoes and other human pests, I reached up to pick an avocado from one of our trees. Lifting my arm I -

I woke with a start, still holding up the newspapers I had been reading while snuggled on the sofa, in the warm sunny spot under the window.

It was time to quit my daydreaming and head out to ask this month’s Question:

*June might be the Community Alliance newspaper’s last issue. What impact would the loss of this alternative independent newspaper have on you - if any? How much do you value independent media such as KFCF, KPFA and the Community Alliance?*

I chose the campus of California State University, Fresno because, frankly, after reading that morning’s newspapers I needed a lift. Asking this month’s Question amongst the people of the future - the students - would show me that change indeed would come. It might *seem* as though it’s getting worse but I would see that the future will be bright!

But the first students I stopped had not read the Community Alliance nor heard of KFCF. One said she had “only been in town since August” and the other said all she did was “study, eat and sleep.” I walked around the entire campus, looking for someone wearing a peace sign, a protesting t-shirt or even a strong, ‘aware’ gaze - as my sign of higher brain function. I never saw one and after a few more blank looks and negative answers to our Question I gave up.

In high school I led my fellow students out into the streets, joining marchers nationwide protesting the Viet Nam war. I went to meetings and alongside other ‘soldiers for peace’ helped paint signs in an old farmhouse hidden in the orchards on First street. After the war ended I felt that - together - we all had truly made a difference. That was exhilarating!

The years have since led me to right here, writing these very words in this politically conscious newspaper, the Community Alliance - one little tiny part I have in that long long fight for a better nation. Every page here is filled with the words of other fighters, some new to the fight, others battled veterans. Our varied and divergent battle plans have ranged from Love-Ins, Marches and Rallies to walkouts and Die-Ins, from Boycotts, Phone Trees and Action Committees to precinct-walking and leaflet distribution, from Paid Advertisements to Letters-to-the-Editor to indie newspapers and pirate radio, from tree-hugging to boat-ramming to holding up signs on street corners. My own plan; of spreading reggae musics’ message of unity, spirituality and ital (pure) living - drove me onwards for twenty years. We have many plans, but never enough soldiers. We win a few skirmishes but ohh the nation seems wholly given over to the ignorant, the greedy and the self-interested manipulators that rule us.

I will get our answers on the streets of the Tower District - one small oasis of individuality and free will that I know of, here in Fresno. First stop are the KFCF studios where I hope to find words that will inspire and prop up my will to fight once more.

Remember our Question?

*June might be the Community Alliance newspaper’s last issue. What impact would the loss of this alternative independent newspaper have on you - if any? How much do you value independent media such as KFCF, KPFA and the Community Alliance?*

In the studio to record the calendar, CATHY LINDEBOOM gives her answer:

“I’d be very unhappy to see Community Alliance disappear. I’ve been reading Community Alliance since it began. I’d be devastated if KFCF and KPFA were taken off the air for any reason. The station was almost lost in 1999 when there was a lockout at KPFA. They wanted to sell the frequency. There was canned music 24 hours a day from KPFA and no one knew what was going on. It was during those two weeks of canned music that I realized how important it was to me and I started volunteer-



CATHY LINDEBOOM

ing here. We take for granted sources of news like KFCF, KPFA and Community Alliance. There is no better source! Over the years I have learned so much. It’s like a college education! I really appreciate member-supported, non-commercial, grassroots media because there is no interference from corporations or the power elite influencing what you do and don’t read or talk about, so therefore you get a more complete picture. In mainstream news you often get a very incomplete and slanted viewpoint. I’m upset to hear Community Alliance might go under. Mike has done such a service to the community, expanding on topics given the sketchiest coverage elsewhere - such as the homeless - giving them dignity. And spotlighting the police and the lack of an independent auditor with the courage to address it in depth - it’s been some scary stuff sometimes. Community Alliance is not afraid to offend the wealthy and powerful. Personally, I am sending Community Alliance a check and I hope a lot of other people do the same. As with the radio station I value so much, we must understand that *we* are responsible for supporting and keeping this independent media alive!”

Our next words come from VICKY GONZALES, who used to work at Inside Out years ago:

“I’d be really upset. For me Community Alliance is an important source of information locally and internationally. I read it cover to cover. I like the advertisers; I am much more likely to go to anybody that would advertise in CA first. I like the articles; a friend of mine, Aaron Tesfaye, wrote the article on Darfur and the way Aaron wrote it - I got it - more than from mainstream media. I like the articles, the advertisers and the Calendar. Mike Rhodes has been working and helping for years. It would be a huge loss to me personally and the community.”

After that, our Question was answered by a retired professor of Psychology and Criminal Justice, who had gone



VICKY GONZALES

back to school to get her Ph.D. when in her 40’s and with two children, DIANE MICHEL:

“We *need* independent media in the U.S.. The American people - especially the young people - don’t understand that our news is filtered and censored. It’s appalling that we are not allowed to know what is going on. How can you make life decisions? How can you be a citizen and elect people to represent you without knowing all sides of an issue and the implications of any decisions? It’s your duty to be involved in the political process. It’s a right. They don’t understand a lot of people don’t have those rights. I am a member of MoveOn.org and I read the BBC, London Sunday Times, Manchester Guardian and the

New York Times online just to get a balance.” Diane laughed then and said, “And when my french was better I read Le Figaro. Everything is political - even the personal. How else could you explain marriage? You need that political process!” But then she become serious once more; “I am worried about the route the U.S. seems to be taking despite the polls and the voice of the people. Bush said he didn’t care about polls. That he didn’t care about the protesters, he was going to do what he wants to do. Sounds like what Hitler said. I’m glad I was born when I was. It’s hideous to see the young today and their lack of choices for a decent life. They can’t even get good health care.”

We had worked ourselves up talking about the youth and their future. It looks like things are getting worse not better in our government. It seems there is not even any



DIANE MICHEL

apparent need to hide the wrong doings or traitorous trickeries manifested by our leaders because the people don’t seem to care - or are the people so desperately running on that hamster wheel just to make a bare-bones living that they can’t look that hard? I see young people with two and three jobs barely making it here in the USA. I realized suddenly my knees were weak. It was time to move on.

While gulping down a protein drink standing on the sidewalk in front of Piedmonte’s Deli, I got this answer to our Question from CHUCK McNALLY:

“Before I left Fresno, Community Alliance showed me there is an alternative and progressive community in Fresno. I always stayed in touch with what’s happening in Fresno by checking out the Community Alliance. People don’t realize what’s going on in a community without independent newspapers - mind you, I work with Undercurrent! I had hoped we could link up with other independent media to cover all the stories. We each cover different parts of the community (Undercurrent is more



CHUCK McNALLY

arts-related), and I thought it’d be nice to have one place on the web where we could post. Even just more collaboration in general. Hopefully Community Alliance will continue the struggle, giving a stronger voice for the voiceless.”

We read next the words of DAVE WAKLEY. He is in the Tower today, drawing, while taking some ‘mental health time.’





DAVE WAKLEY

“It’s tragic at any loss of any media that so blatantly attempts to expose the truth about the system we live in. We are exposed to a streamlined reality which has a tendency to repress the diversity of opinions, that make up the true fabric of our society. Community Alliance gives us a realistic interpretation of our community.”

See? I knew I would find young people that think and ‘got soul’ in the Tower!

I can count my other times when I felt we really were changing things. Years ago George Ballis won a victory

in the Supreme Court about salt, our water and farm-lands against the huge corporate mega-farmers. The details are fuzzy now but the feeling of exhalation at reading of that victory has not faded to me. We won! Same feeling when Clinton won the election; ‘my side’ had won! And again, walking amongst May 2006’s largest immigration rally here in Fresno, I felt it; this was so big, so well organized and with such true and articulate oration resonating nationwide - now ‘we’ would surely win changes! Things would be different!

Things are different, but it doesn’t change.

Inside the Revue, I found our next answer with 47 year old, ex-Navy man, JOSEPH ADAMS:

“I value independent media - even more than my friends! Community Alliance is more intelligent and informative than any one of these local stations! I get my news from many different sources; PBS, Community Alliance, KFCF - and I used to from Air America. I miss Air America. TV sucks here. I’m at a loss without Community Alliance and KFCF. I listen to Amy Goodman in the morning but it’s only an hour and barely fills the need for the real truth. These local guys don’t tell the truth. These four stations compete with each other - over the *weather* - while the police throw away the homeless people’s stuff. One makes a big deal of being High Definition - I don’t want to see Jason Martinez’s eyebrows defined any more than they already are! I want to see the Truth! I want to see everybody sick of this war - especially my right-wing friends!”

Joseph made me laugh, even as I walked towards home. A house had open curtains and on the table was a potted philodendron type plant. That would be 15 feet tall in Costa Rica, I mused to myself. Which reminded me of how BIG lapis (scarlet macaws) are in the wild jungle,

flying free, compared to caged birds here. Oh and Christmas poinsettia bushes are as big as small houses. I picture my husband holding up an avocado, saying that the worst avocado in Costa Rica tastes better than the best one he ever bought at home! Next, he’d hold up the tomato and say the same thing! And then the pineapple, papaya... ‘course there is that trash burning I saw at the town’s dump... after our move there I will want to start looking at alternatives for that... and did you know Costa Rica has a higher literacy rate than here in the USA? And no army since 1948, it’s called the Switzerlan — oh, am I daydreaming again?



JOSEPH ADAMS

## Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Frank Hernandez is an immaculate man, typically dressed in spanking white shirt and pressed jeans, with a calm humility that conceals an unshakeable determination. You may not notice Frank, but you can feel him.

Now he is pursuing what he imagines will be his final dream: to build a chapel dedicated to “farmworker martyrs” on the grounds of the United Farmworkers Union at La Paz, California—close to the grave site of Cesar Chavez.

Frank’s life has often been guided by simple thoughts or pictures arising from his profound religious faith. In this case, it was a response to seeing the spiritual backbone of the Farmworkers struggle begin to disappear after Chavez’s death. “When Cesar was alive, every march and demonstration began with prayers. Afterwards, we would hold a mass before the parades honoring him, but people didn’t come. I felt a need to do something so people would remember. But I want something that will be used, not just a monument.”

Frank also wants to do something to show gratitude to those who courageously suffered to bring justice and dignity to his people—especially those who died for La Causa, like Nancy Freeman, Nagi Daifullah, Juan De La Cruz, Rufino Contreras and Rene Lopez. “I was never a farmworker—I worked 35 years for Hormel—so people ask why do I care about the farmworkers. But I see what they accomplished for us.”

Actually his involvement with the UFW began in 1962, when the priest at his church spoke about the movement and asked parishioners to help. “I began going to the marches and demonstrations. I joined the pickets at the strawberries, and the lobbying in Sacramento.”

Frank also began making banners, first to make visible the presence of The Lady of Guadalupe, later to list the many nationalities of the workers (“we’re not all from Mexico.”). People added to his collection of pictures and banners, and it became his role to bring them to marches, and then to set up back-drops for presentations at schools. In his quiet way, Frank became an inevitability.

Frank made his presence known, too, in the proposal to change the name of Kings Canyon Blvd. to Cesar Chavez Blvd...and when Robert Smith flip-flopped on the vote, Frank worked to have Smith removed from office.

And now he has another cause, another “picture” to work on (see description below.) Using his persistence, his contacts from years of movement and diocese work (including 25 years volunteering at San Alfonso Church), Frank has won pledges of support from the Chavez family (granting him a plot on the La Paz property), several unions and contractors, and even some politicians “The estimated cost of our chapel is \$300,000, but most of that will be covered by donated labor and material. We need to raise \$50,000 in cash, and we now have about \$26,000 of that.”

It is Frank’s dearest hope to see the ground broken for the Chapel within the year, and to see it complete before he dies. “I’m 80 now, with all these health problems. My wife keeps saying, ‘Who do you think you are—you’re no architect, no contractor. Let it go.’ But...I don’t know..I can’t sleep, I can’t pass the buck. These people made life better for me and my family, they need to be honored and remembered.”

As we talked, I learned a little of Frank’s history. When he was very young, his family was caught up in that era’s “deportation movement” and sent to Mexico. Only when he was a young man and thought about becoming a bracero did his father tell him he was born in the States and was a U.S. citizen. He came up to California

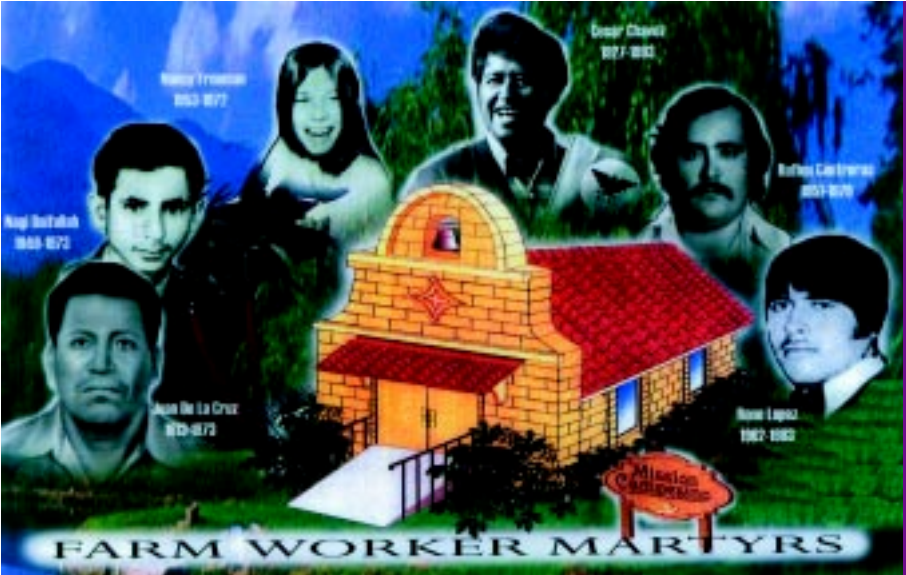
alone, but soon found work and a wife. (He jokes, “I got a job and married the next day. I got rid of the job after 35 years, but I still have the wife.”) With no knowledge of construction, he built a house for his family...the first of three he would build.

In this same way—from scratch, with care, loyalty, perseverance, humor, modesty and a will of steel—Frank has built a life that is worthy of admiration. I don’t doubt his chapel will get built, too.



### IDENTITY BOX

Name: Frank Hernandez  
Place of birth: Detroit, Michigan  
Primary identity—Latino  
Religious identity—Roman Catholic  
Political Identity—Democrat  
Admired figures: Cesar Chavez; Farther Abelardo Lopez of San Alfonso Church  
Motto: “If we don’t help others, we have no business coming to church.”  
Other activities: caring for home and farm and 21 grandchildren  
Unexpected pastime: dancing (even at age 80)



**MISSION CAMPESINO**—One of the few people in our lifetime who fully understood the meaning of the Church’s call to a “preferential option for the poor”—both in word and deed—was Cesar Chavez...Today there is an effort underway to build a Chapel in La Paz that would commemorate Cesar’s life and the lives of the martyrs who worked with him in the struggle for justice. The idea is to build the Chapel not with a few large contributions from those who have it to give, but with lots of small donations. As with the Union, Cesar would want to know that ordinary people built the Chapel. We remember that Jesus praised not those who gave from their surplus wealth; his praise went instead to the widow who, from her poverty, gave two small coins....Let this be OUR Chapel and OUR tribute to a true disciple of the poor.

If interested in participating in this project, please make your deductible donation to: Vocaciones Juan Diego, 828 W. Woodward, Fresno, CA 93706. [www.ufwww.org/links](http://www.ufwww.org/links)

# Journey for Justice Spotlights Homelessness and Lack of Health Care

By Sandy Perry

The Journey for Justice traveled from the mean street corners of the California Central Valley to the lofty halls of power from April 14-21. A grassroots caravan of poor and working people, its message was to house the homeless, heal the sick, free the prisoners, and clean up the air pollution that is strangling the Valley. As Rev. Floyd Harris of the National Network in Action stated, its purpose was "to educate, to motivate, to organize, to mobilize, to energize, to take communities to a higher level." Everywhere, it sought to empower, unite, and encourage communities to demand government accountability for the basic welfare of the people.

California's Central Valley is the second poorest area in America after Mississippi. At the same time, it is the most conservative area and it blocks the movement for justice in the entire state.

In Merced the Journey brought together environmental and health care leaders, Labor Party members, and community ministries. It met with the homeless in Sacramento, Stockton, Turlock, and Fresno. It spoke to city council members in Merced and Fresno and legislators in Sacramento. It met with people fighting clinic closures in Tulare County.

Everywhere in the Valley people are battling just to survive. In Turlock we met a grandmother who had been living in her car for three years and struggling

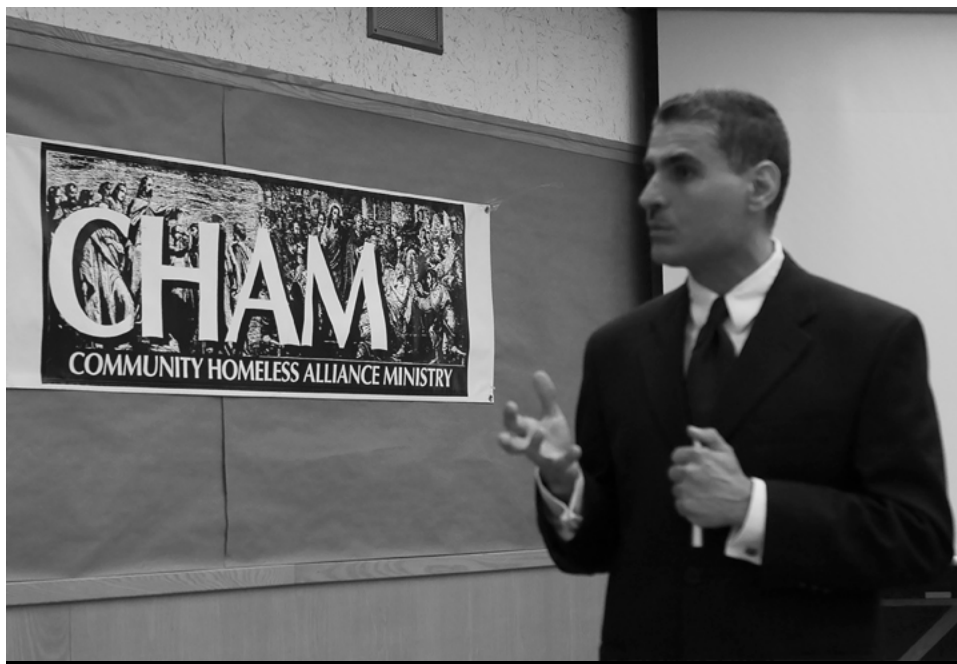
with diabetes, because her insulin medication kept spoiling from lack of refrigeration. In Fresno we found the homeless living in a large tent city on G Street, not as a protest, but because there was nowhere else to go.

Dr. Ali Rezapour spoke to the Journey on the movement for a national health care plan. He described how our society is like the human body. If one organ is sick, the whole body suffers. In society, if one person is suffering, then emotionally and spiritually we all feel it, or else we are not truly human.

Dr. Rezapour invited us to a candlelight vigil that night for the students slain at Virginia Tech. He spoke out against the government mental health cuts that contributed to the tragedy.

Pastor Scott Wagers pointed out in Fresno that although our numbers are few today, and Pharaoh's power is great, he saw new Moseses sprouting up everywhere. Moses won the victory in the end, he reminded us, because God hears the cries of our people.

The Fresno homeless and their allies showed us the way. Together for over a year they fought outrageous persecution, marched, testified, organized, wrote articles, filed lawsuits, spoke out on the Homeless Mara-



**Dr. Ali Rezapour spoke to the Journey on the movement for a national health care plan. He described how our society is like the human body. If one organ is sick, the whole body suffers. Photo by Gary Sanchez.**

thon, and used the internet. As result, on the very day we were there, they forced the stiff-necked Mayor of Fresno to relent and agree against his will to meet their most basic of human needs - portable toilets.

Their tactic of demanding that government meet their needs is the key to the whole movement for creating housing, providing health care, and ending poverty. The Journey for Justice vowed to spread that lesson throughout the Valley in the years to come. "I see a vision of justice fighters stretched in a human chain all the way from Bakersfield to Sacramento," said Gloria Hernandez, one of the Journey organizers.



## QUEER EYE

### Fresno High Schoolers Make Transgender History

by Dan Waterhouse

Three weeks after Cinthia Covarrubias was nominated for Prom King at Fresno High School, transgender Roosevelt High senior Johnny Vera was selected by his classmates as this year's Prom Queen.

When Covarrubias was nominated for Prom King, she made history—and national and international headlines—as likely the first United States transgender high school student to run for a prom title.

Vera also made history as probably the first American transgender title holder.

He was one of three candidates for the Queen title. He said that while he didn't know Covarrubias, he had been inspired by her to run.

Vera, who stands 6 foot, 4 inches in heels, is well-known on the Roosevelt campus, where he's also known as Crystal. He is on the cheerleading squad, immensely popular, and a good student.

According to school administrators, there was surprisingly little controversy about Vera's running for Queen. Assistant Principal John Leal told reporters, "everyone loves Johnny. He stands his ground. I remember the winter formal—he was dressed in a beautiful dress by the way—no one batted an eye."

Vera was selected as "Mr. Roughrider" at Homecoming last fall.

He plans to go to fashion design school in San Francisco in the fall.

The Fresno Rainbow Pride parade committee asked Vera to be a youth Grand Marshal in this year's parade on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, along with Covarrubias and the Madera High School Gay Straight Alliance club.

According to the Gay Straight Alliance Network, Covarrubias was involved with the Fresno High's GSA club activities. Her attendance at meetings led to her going to the Expression Not Suppression conference as well as to Sacramento for Queer Youth Advocacy Day.

So, when the call came that she was nominated for Prom Queen - there was no question that Cinthia had to be honest with the school about what made her feel most comfortable - she wanted to run for Prom King, instead. "I hope this opens up something new. I've been really excited about it and feeling a lot of hope."

Covarrubias (and Vera) also felt a lot of hate. The haters hurled their homophobic and racist venom at them: "If this person's (Covarrubias) disillusion (sic) had to do with anything other than sex, it would be considered a mental disorders (sic) and doctors would be more than happy to prescribe (sic) all sorts of drugs and therapy to treat it. Additionally, because of abortion, homosexuality and feminism (sic), liberals do not reproduce very many little liberals. That's why it's so important for them to get to our kids at school and indoctrinate them. Otherwise, their kind would die out in a few generations."

And: "In the original (sic) story, this GIRL (Covarrubias) was depicted as a native of Mexico. Since it was not then stated that she was a naturalized citizen, I assume she isn't. It was also never mentioned that she and her family weren't Resident Aliens. Which probably means they aren't. The solution to this controversy is quite simple. DEPORT THEM.

"It says a lot about how ridiculous (sic) political correctness has become if it is in fact the case that they are illegal aliens, and are at the same time brazen enough to bring such a spotlight on themselves."

And, about Vera: "Well, only the Tijuana Reporter would cover something like this at a school like Tijuana High. So this is the culture that the good citizens of Mexico (sic) are bringing to our community. What a JOKE!"

Fresno High's GSA club advisor, Tiffani Sanchez, worked hard to advocate for Cinthia to be able to run for the Prom Royalty title that felt most comfortable to her. "Cinthia finished her recent transition to dress and look how she felt most comfortable. She was so happy and comfortable with herself. She came out of her shell and just blossomed.

I had never seen her so happy and outgoing before. I can think of no other word to describe it besides true liberation."

But, when Cinthia was nominated as Prom Royalty the school wanted to place her in the Queen category. Cinthia explained to school staff that she did not want to run for anything if she had to wear a dress. Then, efforts to change the district's policy began.

"We got the call on the morning of Day of Silence," Sanchez said "that Cinthia was going to be allowed to run for Prom King, when I got off the phone I told Cinthia what was said and we both let out screams as we jumped up and down. I am very proud of Cinthia who decided to take a stand, not only for her, but also for the generations of students who will come after her."

Sanchez explained that Covarrubias "made a very brave decision after only coming out to her parents less than a month earlier. It has not been an easy decision for her to follow through with. There have been positive and negative results for Cinthia as a result; however I know that she does not regret her decision."

"I know that within the Fresno Unified School District the change has been made," Sanchez continued. "Which is no small feat. Fresno Unified is one of the largest districts in the state. For all of the students in the Fresno Unified District, Cinthia has made an immediate change. The district will not stop any student from running for the position they feel comfortable. For other students in other districts she has set the precedent. Hopefully other districts will see that it is the right thing to do."

When the voting was over on Prom Night, Covarrubias had lost. Because of the hate tossed at her and her family, she evaded news media when the prom ended. She has maintained a low profile since—sources say—at the behest of her parents.

#### Fresno Rainbow Pride 2007: 17th Annual GLBT Pride Parade & Festival

Parade along Olive Ave in the Tower starts at 10am



More info @ 559 486 3464 or [www.FresnoRainbowPride.com](http://www.FresnoRainbowPride.com)



# Fresno Center for Nonviolence



1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93728 - [www.centerfornonviolence.org](http://www.centerfornonviolence.org) - [info@centerfornonviolence.org](mailto:info@centerfornonviolence.org)

dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through  
SIMPLICITY - JUSTICE - INCLUSIVENESS - NON-INJURY

## 15 Years and Counting...



Howard Watkins with Cindy Sheehan when she spoke in Fresno in October 2006



Maria Telesco, the Center's esteemed President.



The first taping of *The Right Stuff from the Left*, with Vincent Lavery as host.



Ray Ensher as Town Crier at one of the Center's Fresno/Oxford Debates



Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor chatting with Dolores Huerta at a Peace Centers Conference in Northern California



Brandon Hill, our youngest board member, presents a Way of Peace Award to Lloyd Carter

### Stir it Up

with host Gerry Bill as he interviews Medea Benjamin about her book, *Stop the Next War Now!* Wednesday, June 13th- 3 p.m. - KFCF 88.1 FM.

### FCNV 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Saturday, June 23, 2007  
First Congregational Church  
2131 N Van Ness

Doors Open 5:30, Dinner 6:00, Speaker-7:00  
Tickets \$25, Speaker Only -\$10

Our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will also include our Fine Art Raffle,

Way of Peace Awards being presented to; Sue Kern, Frances Sivak (posthumously), Dr. Marc Lasher, Fran Saunders & Berry Nishkian. Youth Awards to Rosanna Spicer and Nick Clark. Organizational Award for Teatro de la Tierra, music by Jemmy Bluestein, as well as a delicious buffet prepared by Food Not Bombs.

Tickets available at the FCNV, The Movies (233-8346), and Patrick's Music (222-4244).

### Fine Art Raffle

Four local artists – Polly Victor, Saul Eskin, Avigdar Adams, and Dick Haas have generously donated art pieces for this year's raffle. Only 100 tickets sold.

Suggested donation for tickets are \$20 each (3 for \$50). Tickets are available at the FCNV and the raffle will be drawn at the Center's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary on

Saturday, June 23 at the First Congregational Church (2131 N. Van Ness)

Need not be present to win!

### Second Wednesday Film Series

## THE IRON WALL

This documentary warns that a contiguous and viable Palestinian state is becoming no longer possible, and that the chances for a peaceful resolution of the conflict are slipping away. *The Iron Wall* features interviews with prominent Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and political analysts, including Jeff Halper, Akiva Eldar, Hind Khoury, and others. Also included are eye-opening interviews with Israeli settlers and soldiers, and Palestinian farmers.

**"The best description of the barrier, its routing and impact is shown in the film *The Iron Wall*."**

- President Jimmy Carter

Wednesday, June 13th

7 pm @ the FCNV (No noon showings during the Summer months)

Potluck @ 6:30 / Discussion to follow evening showing

For more information call: 237-3223



# WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

## Calendar dates:

May 24 - WILPF co-sponsors Kathy Kelly at 6:30 p.m. at the St. Paul Newman Center

June 14 - Next WILPF meeting at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence

July 21-27 - WILPF International Congress in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

The last several weeks have been busy ones for WILPF. Activities have ranged from Tax Day Awareness, the WILPF Northern California Cluster Meeting, and the successful Big WILPF Yard Sale.

## TAX DAY AWARENESS:

It has been WILPF's yearly tradition to distribute flyers at local post offices on the day taxes are due. The graphs pictured on the flyers make it very easy to see just how much of everyone's money goes for military expenditures, and how little for education, health care, and social services. This year members were present at the Griffith Way Post Office from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on April 17. In all but two or three instances people graciously took the flyers, and, over and over, were heard to say, "Yes, I know where the money is going, and I don't agree with this war, but what can you do about it?" It seemed that the public is poised for the next step, but is looking to someone else to initiate it. Could it be that we have forgotten that the government is supposed to serve at the pleasure of the people of the United States?

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CLUSTER MEETING

Each year WILPF branches gather by region at least once to discuss focus issues and trade information. This year's regional gathering was hosted by Fresno WILPF on April 28 at Margaret Hudson's Barn. The group represented branches from Santa Cruz, Monterey, Davis, Sierra Foothills (Auburn), Berkeley, Sacramento, National WILPF, San Jose, San Francisco, and Fresno. Our main topics were Water, Uprooting Racism, and the Middle East. Below is a short summary of information on those topics, each written by the presenters.

**Uprooting Racism** - Vickie Fouts, Fresno WILPF (socialjustice@sti.net.)

Racial justice was the topic of Vickie Fout's presentation. The first part covered the National WILPF issues committee, Building the Beloved Community (BBC). Vickie explained BBC's mission and how BBC is tied to the two national campaigns. She also explained what BBC members have been doing the past two years. The second part of Vickie's presentation was on the Fresno Branch's Uprooting Racism book discussion group. She gave background on how it came about, what the book group did and the future plans for the group to continue racial justice work.

The next step for the group will be putting on a Prejudice Reduction Workshop at CSUF for Uprooting Racism, WILPF and community members on June 23. For more



This photo of the WILPF Spring Cluster Meeting in Fresno was taken on April 28, 2007 by Howard Watkins.

information on the workshop contact Vickie Fouts at socialjustice@sti.net or call 658-8260.

**Middle East** - A Film Presentation by Margot Smith, Berkeley WILPF ([margotsmith94709@aol.com](mailto:margotsmith94709@aol.com))

"Listen to Iran's People: A Call for Peace" was filmed in Iran in March, 2007 during a particularly volatile political time. President Bush was rattling his saber, and Iran's President Ahmadinajad was posturing in response.

At that time, 23 Peace Delegates from the United States representing the Fellowship of Reconciliation visited Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Qom. This video tells about their trip, and of their welcome by Iran's Vice President, as well as the thoughts of people on the street, students, professors and imams, who all sent a message to the United States desiring peace.

We also visited the Society for the Support of Victims of Chemical Warfare. The United States supplied chemical weapons to Saddam Hussein in Iraq at the time of the Iraq-Iran war. The long lasting effects of chemical weapons are shown.

This video is particularly timely now that Iran has been declared part of the Axis of Evil by our president. It shows the Iranians as humans, and that bombing Iran, the cradle of civilization, would be an inhumane act.

All women in Iran are required by law to cover their heads, so this film was videoed in a scarf, a chador and a hajib, on various occasions. It was not easy, the hajib got in the way of the camera, hearing, seeing, and it was too hot.

We were permitted visits with only the most conservative people who were not fearful of talking to us. We had to travel in the whole group of 23; they were concerned about our safety as they did not want to have an international incident occur. Our email was cut off after the first day. We had to be careful about what we said, emailed, wrote, phoned.

Despite the difficulties, we felt that Iran's people were very open with us. They had no problems with criticizing their government, they made us feel welcome, and said that they "love" Americans but do

not like our government.

**Water Issues** - Nancy Price, Davis WILPF (nancytprice@juno.com.)

The new Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) was signed by Pres. Bush, Mexico's President Fox, and Canada's Prime Minister Martin on March 23, 2005 in Waco, Texas. Members of governments, corporate business, the military, financial institutions and other think tanks from these countries have met secretly several times, but our Congress has not debated the plan nor provides oversight.

This plan has two goals: secure North America from external threats and respond to threats from within; and integrate these three countries economically by creating cross-border regions. For example, Atlantica will cover northeastern Canada and New England/northern New York. All cross-border regions will be connected by a vast network of super-corridors from southern Mexico to northern Canada. Each super-corridor will be one-half mile wide with 6 lanes for cars, 4 lanes for trucks, and parallel railroad lines and utility corridors to carry oil, natural gas, electricity and water. The Trans Texas Corridor is furthest along in planning, would take more than 500,000 acres of land and would be a toll-road built and owned by a Spanish corporation using generous state and federal subsidies.

There will be a workshop on the SPP at the US Social Forum in Atlanta, GA, June 27-July 1. Go to [www.ussf2007.org](http://www.ussf2007.org) for information. View the powerpoint at [www.thealliancefordemocracy.org](http://www.thealliancefordemocracy.org) under Featured Today on the home page. Help Stop the SPP. Eastern Canada has organized Atlantica No Way and there is a Texas Corridor Watch. Call your representative and Senators and say you want debate in Congress! Call your local state representatives and find out where the corridor will be routed in California.

At the close of the Cluster meeting WILPFers caravanned to CSUF to view the new statue of Jane Addams. Jan Slagter provided a short history of the statue's being chosen for the Peace Garden, and Dr. Sudarshan and Veena Kapoor hosted a wonderful reception for all Cluster participants.

Fresno WILPF says good-bye to our wonderful intern, Witney Grandi. Since last September she has worked very, very hard for us, under the expert supervision of Joan Poss. Throughout her internship Witney has been our right arm, getting us through our many tablings, the Craft Faire, organizing volunteers for Tax Day, the Cluster, the Yard Sale, the Peace Runway Project, the Community Alliance WILPF page, and other things too numerous to mention. Witney, we love you and will miss you very, very much. Good luck next year as you continue your studies at CSUF.



Mosque in Tehran, Iran. Photo by Margot Smith.



# PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Friday, June 1 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film *Who Killed the Electric Car?* (USA w/discussant, car engineer, John Dunning). This film will be shown at CSU-Fresno music room 160. Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum [dblum@csufresno.edu](mailto:dblum@csufresno.edu) 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha [abid.undercurrent@gmail.com](mailto:abid.undercurrent@gmail.com)

## Friday, June 1 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Steve Ratzlaff will speak about his recent book *The End of War: How Pragmatic Pacifism Can Save the World from the Coming Environmental Cataclysm*.

Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at [dfriesen0@gmail.com](mailto:dfriesen0@gmail.com)

## Saturday, June 2 • 8 AM - 3 PM

Yard sale to benefit Friends of Radio Grito/Proyecto Campesino, as they move forward in the creation of a Low Power FM community radio station. KFSC-LP 94.1 will be community radio at its best, giving voice to locals on issues important to our local community. This has been a long process and we're very proud that it is coming to the day when we will once again be on the air with programs to inform, educate and motivate especially local youth, who are already planning on what type of programming they will do to raise issues of concern. This event will be held at the Quaker Oaks Farm. For directions, see: <http://www.quaker.org/visalia/flowers/index.html#Map#Map> . If you have items you wish to donate for this worthy effort, contact Graciela at 733-4844.

## Saturday, June 2

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Fresno & the Central Valley GLBT Pride Parade and Festival. The theme is: Pride: Power, respect, integrity, dignity, equality. For more information see [www.fresnorainbowpride.com](http://www.fresnorainbowpride.com) or call (559) 486-3464.

## Sunday, June 3 • 5:30 PM

The Rev. Dr. Ronald L. Claassen, a life-long community advocate for peace making and peaceful conflict resolution, has been named as the third honoree as California Central Valley's "Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good." Claassen, director of Fresno Pacific University's Center for Peacemaking, will receive the award during a dinner program to be held at Hope Lutheran Church. which is located at the NW corner of Fresno and Barstow.

Fresno Metro Ministry, the Interfaith Alliance of Central California, and the Fresno Ministerial Association sponsor this event. The award is named for Carl and Esther Robinson, central valley champions for social justice programs for more than 40 years.

## Tuesday, June 5 • 10 AM

Fresno City Council will discuss the 2007-08 proposed budget for the Police Department. FPD wants another \$800,000 for video surveillance equipment so they can spy on you. The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held at City Hall in downtown Fresno. Another issue that will be discussed is whether to fund an Independent Police Auditor. Should the FPD be accountable to the public or do you think the Internal Affairs department does a good job of investigating their friends and co-workers? You can voice your opinion on either of these two issues by attending this meeting.

## Tuesday, June 5 • 5:30 PM

National Women Political Caucus will hold its monthly dinner meeting at Toledo's Mexican Restaurant on Fresno and Shaw. Dinner is \$15 for members and guests. Our guest speaker will be Barbara Thomas of the Fresno County Board Of Education. Our July 3rd speaker will be Seanna Herring-Jensen, President of the Central Valley Veterans, and our August 7th speaker will be Ashley Swearingin who will update us on the progress of the Regional Jobs Initiative. Membership is open to any woman or man who is interested in the identification, training and support of pro-choice women into elected and appointed positions within our geographic area. We will present a candidate's workshop this fall to help interested women become winning candidates.

## Thursday, June 7

ART HOP. Held the first Thursday of every month, Art Hop provides local artists an opportunity to showcase their work in locations throughout Fresno. Art Hop is organized by the Fresno Arts Council, whose mission is to foster an arts community, advocate on issues of concern to Valley artists while supporting and encouraging their efforts, and to collaborate with community leaders, businesses, corporations, foundations, and other arts or-

ganizations to bring artists and audiences together. <http://fresnoarthop.org/> For more information contact Maria Franco at [mfranco@fresnoarts.org](mailto:mfranco@fresnoarts.org) or call (559) 237- 9734.

## Thursday June 7 • 8 - 11 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents - Art Hop Reception for Rattananan Moerdyke "Spiritual Fantasy" Plus the Music of Pieter Moredyke. No cover, 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 [www.fullcirclebrewing.com](http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com)

## Friday, June 8 • 5PM and 8PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "The TV Set" at the Tower Theatre. Jake Kasdan's wickedly funny comedy about network television stars David Duchovny and Sigourney Weaver. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E. Olive Ave., The Movies, 1435 N. Van Ness Ave., WineStyles in Fig Garden Village, and at the door, for \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to [www.fresnofilmworks.org](http://www.fresnofilmworks.org) .

## Friday, June 8 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Susan Kroeker Coordinator, Fresno Healthy Dairy Commission. Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at [dfriesen0@gmail.com](mailto:dfriesen0@gmail.com)

## Friday, June 8 • 7 PM

The Turquoise Amalgam performs an eclectic blend of classic and original instrumental music, with Brazilian and Flamenco influences. The collective musicianship of Dusty Brough (guitar), Eva Scow (mandolin & violin) along with Steve Haney (percussion) and Kevin Freeby (bass), is sure to be an exciting adventure filled with memorable moments. A veritable "supergroup" of young acoustic players, the band's members have toured extensively throughout the United States, Canada and South America, performing with musicians such as Mike Marshall, Joe Craven, David Grisman, Anthony Wilson (Diana Krall), Jesse Cook, Virgil Donati, Ozomatli, Michael Franti's Spearhead.

Bonner Auditorium - Fresno Art Museum

\$15 advance, \$20 door - tickets available @ Fresno Art Museum gift shop, Patrick's Music, "The Movies" video rental for more info call 221-8347

## Saturday, June 9 • 2:30 - 6:30 PM

The National Network In Action will hold a Victory Community Block Party at 1209 E. George St., Fresno, Calif, 93706 (between Bardell & Tupman). The purpose of our block party is to bring unity to the black and brown communities. We see the need and have a solution; we have invited Pastors, Educational Organizations, Doctors and various Leaders to speak on relevant issues facing our communities.

The National Network In Action has been instrumental in organizing and teaching that there is hope and victory within our own communities. There will be entertainment, free medical screenings, free blood pressure checks and blood-sugar tests, health brochures, music, know-your-rights information, AIDS information, prison information, employment information, a water balloon contest, a 100 yard dash, basketball dunk contest, double dutch, free food, a bounce house for the youngsters, free clothing, gift baskets for our senior citizens, and more. For more information contact Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr. At (559) 803-0286 or [xyfloyd@aol.com](mailto:xyfloyd@aol.com)

## Wednesday, June 13 • 7 PM

Monthly Video Series. At the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 1584 N. Van Ness. "The Iron Wall" shows in detail how, following Israel's 1967 occupation, settlements were strategically placed as part of a plan to maintain control and eventually incorporate the majority of historic Palestine into present day Israel. Filmmaker Alatar said Israel takes 62 percent of the water from the West Bank, and only uses two percent for agriculture. "They don't use all of it," he said, "just make sure the rest doesn't go to the Palestinians." The film makes it clear that the Wall has "nothing to do with security . . . it is a tool to permanently secure more land from the Palestinians." When the Wall is completed, it will be 420 miles long. (59 minutes). All are welcome - FREE. There will be a potluck at 6:30, prior to the evening showing, and a discussion afterward. For info call 237-3223. Note: This Movie Is Re-scheduled from Last Month, at Which Time the DVD Was Delayed in the Mail and Did Not Arrive in Time for the Showing.

## Friday, June 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the July, 2007 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to [AllianceEditor@Comcast.net](mailto:AllianceEditor@Comcast.net)

## Friday, June 15 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film *Seeds of Peace* (USA re: Palestinian and Jewish youth). This film

will be shown at the Peters Auditorium, which is the Leon P. Peters Auditorium on the west side of Save Mart at Woodrow and Shaw Aves. Enter through the entrance marked "Student Recreation Center." Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum [dblum@csufresno.edu](mailto:dblum@csufresno.edu) 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha [abid.undercurrent@gmail.com](mailto:abid.undercurrent@gmail.com)

## Friday, June 15 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center will discuss Jesse Morrow Mountain. Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 pm. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on 'L' street between 12th and 13th streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen by email at [dfriesen0@gmail.com](mailto:dfriesen0@gmail.com)

## Friday June 15 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents "Jon Mahaffey Blues" - \$5.-cover. 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 [www.fullcirclebrewing.com](http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com)

## Saturday, June 16 • 5 - 7:30 PM

KFCF 88.1 FM Juneteenth Gathering. Looking Back to Move Forward. This event will be held at the Fresno Arts Museum Bonner Auditorium, 2233 N First Street in Fresno. Music, Poetry, and informational panel. For more information call 559 233-2221 or see: [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org)

## Wednesday, June 20 • 5 - 8 PM

Join the National Women's Political Caucus of Fresno County in celebrating the lives of our local educational leaders at the 3rd annual Ida B. Wells-Fredrick Douglass Reception at the African American Museum and Cultural Center 1857 Fulton Street One Block South of Divisadero. Reservations in Advance \$35 At the Door \$45 Students \$10 Mail to : Mary Stanley 1361 North Del Mar Fresno, CA 93728 Phone: 559-268-5756

## Thursday June 21 • 8 PM

Full Circle Brewing Co. Presents Inner Ear Poetry Jam \$5.-cover. 620 F St. Downtown Fresno 559-264-6323 [www.fullcirclebrewing.com](http://www.fullcirclebrewing.com)

## Friday, June 22 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film *The Last Communist* (Malaysia, re: Chin Peng). This film will be shown at the Peters Auditorium, which is the Leon P. Peters Auditorium on the west side of Save Mart at Woodrow and Shaw Aves. Enter through the entrance marked "Student Recreation Center." Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum [dblum@csufresno.edu](mailto:dblum@csufresno.edu) 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha [abid.undercurrent@gmail.com](mailto:abid.undercurrent@gmail.com)

## Saturday, June 23 • 6 PM (doors open at 5:30 PM)

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence will be celebrating its 15th anniversary at the First Congregational Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Boulevard. See page 3 for details.

## Friday, June 29 • 5:15 PM

Cineculture & The Undercurrent present the film *Haiti, We Must Kill the Bandits* (Haiti, re: Aristide). This film will be shown at the Peters Auditorium, which is the Leon P. Peters Auditorium on the west side of Save Mart at Woodrow and Shaw Aves. Enter through the entrance marked "Student Recreation Center." Cineculture Club promotes cultural awareness and addresses diversity issues through film and post-screening discussion. For more information contact the Cineculture Club advisor: Dr. Denni Blum [dblum@csufresno.edu](mailto:dblum@csufresno.edu) 278-0248 or The Undercurrent: Abid Yayha [abid.undercurrent@gmail.com](mailto:abid.undercurrent@gmail.com)

## Saturday, June 30 • 7 PM

Jon Adams & Faith Petric, Queen of the SF folk music scene. Jon Adams, that interstate minstrel who sings "anything you can get away with at a campfire" performs with Faith Petric, Queen of the SF folk music scene. Jon describes Faith as performing "social open heart surgery"; she opens your heart to social injustices and dives right in. Jon describes his music as "connect the dots between O Brother! and Oh my God!" Friends and fellow performers since the mid 60's, together their repertoire can fill a Fort Knox of music with songs ranging from the outrageous to sweet lullabies.

Celebrate Faith's long productive life with us. She's 91 still singing and playing the guitar. Attached are two photos I took of her singing at The Mill in 2005. She gave a daily workshop on protest songs. Tickets: Donation: \$10 individual/ \$25 max for nuclear family.

Purchasing Tickets: Order Online or call Pat Wolk Wolk Folk Garden

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# Pulling the Plug on Nuclear Power in Sacramento (and Fresno)

by Ed Smeloff & Peter Asmus

[Editor’s note: This article is part 3 of the serialization of chapter two from the book: Reinventing Electric Utilities: Competition, Citizen Action, and Clean Power by Ed Smeloff & Peter Asmus, Copyright 1997, Island Press. This is the third installment in what will be a four part series. We at the Community Alliance think our readers should know why the Rancho Seco nuclear power plant in Sacramento was shut down. This chapter is reprinted with the authors permission.]

## Seeking Out New Options

The first cracks in the community’s support for the nuclear plant were beginning to appear in 1986. Elections for the SMUD board had spawned a community debate about alternatives to Rancho Seco. One of the nuclear plant’s most avid supporters lost his seat to a newcomer who questioned the wisdom of additional investments in the nuclear power plant.

A week before the board elections, SAFE kicked off a campaign to give voters the final say on the troubled nuclear plant. The group would need to collect 25,000 signatures, a formidable task since SAFE did not have the resources to pay signature gatherers, the most common technique used in California to qualify initiatives. They went ahead anyway. The public’s response to the initiative petition was astounding. Using only volunteers, SAFE collected and delivered 50,630 signatures to SMUD on April 27, 1987. This was more than twice the number needed to qualify their ballot measure. SAFE urged SMUD to put the measure on the ballot of November 3, 1987. SMUD wanted to put the election off until November 1988.

Meanwhile, Rancho Seco was taking its toll on Sacramento ratepayers. In two years, SMUD spent \$410 million on Rancho Seco while paying out an additional \$205 million to purchase replacement power.

By mid-1987 SMUD’s rates were only 15 percent below those of neighboring PG&E. Another rate increase would put SMUD’s rates for most residential customers above those of PG&E, undermining the rationale for public ownership. SMUD was also running out of cash. By the fall of 1987 the prospect of another rate increase forced the SMUD board to consider something it had long resisted doing—seriously looking at alternatives to Rancho Seco.

SMUD President Cliff Wilcox recommended that SMUD seek bids for energy as a possible replacement for Rancho Seco and simultaneously order management to develop a “wind down” plan. Wilcox said he had heard that ere was at least 2,000 megawatts of excess energy in California. “There’s o need for Rancho Seco if there’s enough’ energy out there,” he said. As a result of Wilcox’s suggestion, SMUD issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) offering to buy power at prices below 4.2 cents per kilowatt-hour. That was SMUD’s estimate of its average cost for bulk power. If SMUD could buy power for less than that amount on the wholesale power market, it would not have to raise rates.

Competitive bidding for new power sources was initiated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission in 1984, but until the SMUD RFP it had not been done before by a utility on any significant scale. Power sales were usually arranged between utilities that were connected with each other. Long-term “integration agreements,” like the one between SMUD and PG&E were the common mechanism used to coordinate power transfers between utilities. There was a small spot market for short-term electricity sales. It was mainly driven by hydroelectric production that during a rainy year might displace the use of more expensive fossil fuel power plants.

Most independent power projects stimulated by PURPA have been developed under standardized contracts that had been authorized by state public utility commissions. SMUD’s proposal to bid for power supplies was different. It was a simple yet bold idea. The results of this competitive process helped open up the wholesale power market in the western United States. After SMUD, a number of other municipal utilities, including the giant Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, would conduct competitive bidding processes. Even the California Public Utilities Commission would experiment with a competitive process for developing new power sources as an alternative to standardized power contracts. However, none had as compelling a need to identify new sources of power as did SMUD.

Even though the SMUD board was beginning to look into alternatives to Rancho Seco, they were still very uncomfortable with the SAFE initiative. They refused to set a date for the initiative election, despite pleas from a crowd of over 200 people at one tense SMUD board meeting. The refusal forced SAFE to seek a court order to determine when the election would be held.

The majority of the SMUD board felt that the nuclear plant had value as an asset. However, several board members thought the plant was too financially risky for SMUD to run alone. They were hoping they could find a qualified utility to buy all or part of the plant. While the date of the election on Rancho Seco was still up in the air, SMUD sent out a prospectus offering to sell Rancho Seco. The price was negotiable.

PG&E decided they were not interested in operating Rancho Seco, but they did offer to buy SMUD outright and take responsibility for delivering electricity to Sacramento. They also promised to close Rancho Seco. In addition they would freeze rates for several years and hire all current SMUD employees. SMUD was, all of a sudden, in play. But, unlike a private corporation, there were no stocks for competing suitors to buy. But there were plenty of political and legal considerations. For one, a PG&E buyout would have to be approved by the California Public Utilities Commission.

As SMUD contemplated PG&E’s offer and waited to see if anyone was interested in buying Rancho Seco, it was inundated by proposals for power sales from utilities and independent power producers. PG&E itself had offered to sell SMUD enough power to fully replace the output from Rancho Seco. In making this offer, PG&E said it was willing to negotiate the terms of a power sale with SMUD, but that the buyout of the municipal utility by G&E offered the most “comprehensive benefits” for Sacramento.

The Bonneville Power Administration in the Pacific Northwest offered to sell 725 megawatts, roughly three-quarters of the capacity of Rancho Seco, at about 3 cents per kilowatt hour. Southern California Edison proposed to sell SMUD 400 megawatts of surplus capacity while an independent power developer wanted to convert Rancho Seco to operate on natural gas. Portland General Electric said it was interested in taking over SMUD’s generation assets, including Rancho Seco, and selling power back to SMUD. All of a sudden, SMUD had many ways to meet the utility’s future obligations. PG&E’s takeover proposal came under attack by Campaign California, a statewide activist group organized by then State Assemblyman Tom Hayden, the founder of Students for a Democratic Society. The group argued that a PG&E takeover would result in the cost overruns incurred at the utility’s Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant being passed on to Sacramento’s ratepayers. They also criticized the further concentration of power into the hands of the nation’s largest utility.

## New Leadership for SMUD

As these events were unfolding, SMUD recruited Richard Byrne, who had headed up the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company, an agency that had its own problems with a nuclear power plant. The Massachusetts utility had been deeply involved in the construction of the Seabrook nuclear plant in New Hampshire.

Byrne came to Sacramento determined to turn around the deeply troubled municipal utility. His first act was to authorize an independent study of options for SMUD’s future. He decided that outside experts would perform this study since SMUD itself lacked credibility with both the public in Sacramento and the financial community. Merrill Lynch Inc., the New York investment banking firm, was selected to head the study group, which was be called the QUEST team. QUEST was an acronym for Quality Energy

Sacramento’s Tomorrow. Besides Merrill Lynch, members of the EST team included nationwide experts in the fields of engineering, economics, public policy, and resource planning. The QUEST team was excited to complete its study by February 1, 1988, a month after Rancho Seco was scheduled to start running.

With a new general manager, SMUD’s relations with PG&E and other investor-owned utilities began to thaw. However, PG&E, which once enjoyed exclusive arrangement with the Sacramento utility to provide bulk power was put on notice by Byrne that it would have to compete to keep SMUD’s business.

Byrne was beginning to surprise utility and community leaders alike. In November 1987, he hinted that Rancho Seco might not be “essential to SMUD. Before a group of Sacramento businesses, Byrne announced that he was studying six alternative scenarios for SMUD. Besides the status quo” and the PG&E takeover, they included converting Rancho Seco to run on natural gas, transferring the ownership of Rancho Seco to another utility, transferring all power plants to other utilities, and replacing the output of Rancho Seco with purchased power.

Byrne’s openness to alternatives to Rancho Seco was new. For some, it was a breath of fresh air. For others, it was very worrisome. A small but powerful group of local businessmen representing large industrial customers and real estate interests had quietly been laying the political groundwork for the sale of Rancho Seco to Duke Power. Led by a prominent attorney,’ Joseph Coomes, they thought that SMUD was too political an organization to run a nuclear plant and wanted to turn the plant over to a private company. Duke operated similar nuclear plants in North Carolina and they ran better than Rancho Seco. Byrne’s comments startled Coomes and his allies in the nuclear power industry.

Byrne, who had a reputation as being a supporter of nuclear power, welcomed Duke Power’s overtures. However, he didn’t consider the Duke’ takeover of Rancho Seco to be SMUD’s only or best option. He wanted to understand the pros and cons of various options. Some of the members of the SMUD board: nonetheless, began to suspect that he might recommend the closure of the nuclear reactor. For these SMUD board members, as well as managers at the utility and a significant part of Sacramento’s business community, running Rancho Seco had become the measure of SMUD’s success as a utility. It was impossible for them to envision a viable municipal utility that did not own most of its own sources of power. Shutting down Rancho Seco would mean that SMUD would become dependent on others for power. In addition to the local concerns, the national nuclear power industry began to see that the closure of Rancho Seco might further undermine public support for nuclear power in the United States.

###

Part 4 of this article will be printed in the July Community Alliance newspaper. To read the entire chapter now, go to [www.fresnoalliance.com/home/seco](http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/seco)

For more information about the proposal to put a nuclear power plant in Fresno, see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/12/30/18342366.php>

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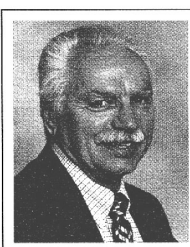
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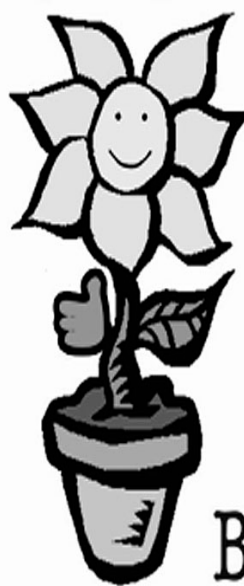
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# OPINION AND ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

## Truth is the First Casualty of War

By Ruth Gadebusch



This war in Iraq is wrong, wrong, wrong, and not much better in Afghanistan, but we seem to be totally ignorant of how to dislodge our nation from it. We have a tiger by the tail; and all because we did not think it through before catching that tiger.

The casualty list is long of Americans, Iraqis (be they Shiite or Sunni), and anyone else who happens to be caught in the wake. In addition to the human price, truth is certainly a casualty, as well as the reputation of this nation.

There is hardly any doubt that we began this war in Iraq under false pretenses and the story does not improve, despite the administration efforts to make it sound successful. Jessica Lynch has disavowed the story of her heroics on the march to Baghdad. Arguably with more reason to be in Afghanistan, the story of Pat Tillman's death was botched from the beginning, leaving his family —and even, his brother who was serving with him — extra anguish as the truth seeped out day by day.

The idea of the Department of Defense for how to handle the truth leaking out drop by drop is to forbid testimony from lower ranking military without accompaniment by someone who has passed the Pentagon's lit-

mus test. Congress must get its information only through those who have a vested interest to protect. As if that were not enough, our men and women serving in Iraq have now been blocked from access to Web sites, such as YouTube and MySpace, heretofore available to them — lest some family member learn the truth about conditions there.

I won't even go into all the other transgressions of the truth in our government on the home front: the firing of the federal attorneys at the behest of heaven only knows whom, to hear the Attorney General tell it; the leaking of a covert agent's name in order to get at her husband; the source of the information regarding Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction; the vice-president's secret energy plan; the appointees who do not believe in the mission of the department which they are selected to run; and on and on and on.

As for our reputation as the beacon of light for all that is right (as in correct) around the world, democracy has been redefined by this administration. Then we wonder why everyone else isn't jumping on the bandwagon to bring democracy to their homeland. With a president installed under questionable circumstances, who used 9/11 as the excuse to do what strong evidence indicates he intended to do anyway, who now says the Congress can't stop him because he is the Commander in Chief, and probably worst of all, calls prisoners of war (He did name it the War on Terror.) detainees and proclaims that the laws of humanity do not apply, not to mention our constitution, Do we really need to wonder why there are demonstrations around the world against this nation?

We are in trouble and must find a way to extricate

ourselves. Despite all the castigation of Senator Harry Reid for his comment that the war is lost, he is correct. The comment reflects lack of support for the administration's policies, as well as truth, not lack of support for the troops. Even when we find a way to bring our troops home, the damage has been done and the aftermath will be long and difficult. It will take a whole lot longer to repair the damage than it did to decimate our reputation.

Restoration won't be easy in the Middle East with a long history of the West's meddling in the area with little understanding of its culture. Nevertheless, it is time for us to face reality that we, the United States of America, are not the answer to their dreams. It is true that we broke it even more than it already was, but Humpty Dumpty's egg cannot be put back together without scars.

Ungraceful as it may be, we must leave Iraq. Only then can we turn our attention to the real needs of the world and our domestic ones such as education, housing, jobs, food, the economy and a fair and honest government. Maybe, just maybe, over time we can regain our reputation.

###

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

## The Shame of It All

By David E. Roy, Ph.D.



As the pain of the massacre at Virginia Tech recedes from our national awareness, many continue to ask why this happened and what might have been done to prevent it. The more recent shooting near our own Fresno State campus brought these questions home for those of us in the Central Valley.

What can we do to prevent these frightening events? Do we need to control firearms better, lock down campuses, make disturbed writing grounds for involuntary hospitalization, pour more money into security?

There are no simple answers. There is, however, one crucial element that tends to be so poorly understood that it is virtually ignored. This is the fire born from shame.

In fact, few people in our culture give the emotion shame much conscious, objective attention. Efforts to change this, even within the field of psychotherapy, have been largely unsuccessful.

Informally, many of us tend to think of shame as a troubling issue in Asian cultures, but not ours. Yet, when one looks more deeply into the shootings that have shocked us at least since Columbine, one discovers that shame is central in virtually every case. This painful and inflammatory emotion appears to drive these atrocities that have left thousands reeling from the life-long pain of losing loved-ones.

The power of shame to push people to intense fury is not well understood. It is time to understand. Psychologist Gershen Kaufman wrote one of the best books for the general public on the topic: *Shame: The Power of Caring*. Kaufman explains how shame and rage are joined. When a person feels shamed, the next emotion to emerge is rage. The function of rage is protective: "Stop or else!"

Shame is one of our innate emotions (along with anger, fear, joy, sadness and others). Shame can range from mild to intense. It centers on being seen by others as inherently and disgustingly flawed. It is being singled out as despicable.

Developmentally, shame is particularly intense during adolescence and young adulthood. Several of the background stories about the assailant at Virginia Tech suggested that others perceived him as "different," perhaps due to Asperger's Disorder.

This difference reportedly was the focus of intense and on-going shaming by peers during childhood and adolescence. By college, he seems to have found a focus for his rage: "I hate rich people, I hate women." These are two groups who apparently triggered a deep and painful sense of inferiority in him.

His comments echo those from past incidents, the details of which reveal direct, strong evidence the perpetrators felt shamed by peers and/or families.

Many brooded and planned for months about how to destroy the perceived sources of their shame in a final, furious blaze of rage. These periods of planning and rehearsals included drawings, writings, photographs, web postings and conversations. Sadly, it is at this stage that someone might have been able to intervene in a constructive fashion to help heal the shame before it led to violence.

Most of us can feel shame and recover — if there is someone available to us who can lovingly accept us despite our "gross" imperfections. Kaufman calls this "restoring the interpersonal bridge."

Many have no one to help heal these wounds and do not seek aid. Targets of shame can include appearance, poverty, race, nationality, religion, and so on. Some sources of shame are extremely difficult to manage. This includes childhood physical and sexual abuse that is intense and extensive. People can be affected negatively for a lifetime if their shame has been burned into their souls too deeply to be removed by simple acts of kindness.

When the shame-driven rage is channeled constructively, as hopefully through good psychotherapy, it can be transformed into the rocket fuel for healing. But when it is not channeled in a healthy fashion, it can be quite destructive, like rocket fuel that explodes and burns out of control. Or, like easy-to-buy guns that spew bullets.

A gun is sheer power. It confers instant respect: "Now, all the times I have been made to feel a blazing inferiority will be washed away, the score will be evened!"

Unfortunately, those killed in most cases are surrogates, innocent victims who had little or nothing to do with creating the hot core of shame.

We need to strive to be more sensitive to the impact we make on others when we say and do things that potentially are shaming. Sometimes what we do that shames another is inadvertent and unintended. To correct these mistakes we simply need to be open to feedback.

But other expressions that harm are intended. The aim? To make others look stupid so we can feel superior. This superiority is vapor, disappearing into thin air almost immediately. It needs constant replenishment. These slights are tied to appearance, gender, race, political and religious views, and so on. Too many commentators and politicians today use denigration and mockery. This is not healthy.

We need to increase substantially the respect and kindness we express. We need to share these healing expressions with all, not just those like us. Ideally, our national political, religious and commercial leaders would model respect and kindness, though often that does not appear to be the case today.

Until then, each one of us can be the nations' source of respect for others. May we all become vessels of loving kindness for others.

###

*David E. Roy, Ph.D. is the director of the Center for Creative Transformation, a California licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a Fellow in the American Assn. of Pastoral Counselors. An ordained UCC minister, he is adjunct staff at Wesley UMC. He is the chair of the Robinson Award for the Outstanding Advocate of the Common Good committee and past president of the Fresno Ministerial Assn.*

## Clearing the Air

By Alvin Valeriano



If you're part of the growing chorus of valley residents demanding healthy air and feel ignored by the recent air district plan that delays attainment of clean air from 2013 to 2024, you're probably asking, "What else can be done to turn things around?" There are many more things that



we all can do. However, let me explain something: I resigned from my Senior Air Quality Specialist position with the air district right after the adoption of the 2007 Ozone Plan on April 30. I guess you can say that I know certain things. I'd like to share some of these with Alliance readers in the form of a Q and A. So here it goes:

Question: What is ozone? What are the effects of exceeding ozone standards?  
Answer: Ozone consists of three atoms of oxygen. It blocks dangerous sun rays when it's high up in space. At the earth's surface in concentrations greater than 80 parts per billion, it's bad for you (it causes eye and throat irritation; it triggers asthma; it negatively affects the development of children's lungs); it's bad for plants (it lowers agricultural yields; it has negative impacts on trees); and ozone is also a global warming gas.

Question: What causes ozone?  
Answer: There's very complex atmospheric chemistry involved. In simplest terms: ozone is formed when nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) mix in the presence of sunlight.

Question: Where do NOx and VOCs come from?  
Answer: NOx is formed mainly through combustion; the higher the combustion temperature, the more NOx produced. As such, NOx comes mainly from vehicles, especially diesel trucks, bulldozers, tractors, trains, and passenger vehicles, more or less in that descending order. There are also stationary and area sources, such as: power plants, non-electric water heaters and space heaters, boilers used in industrial processes, etc. VOCs come from paints, dairies (in the form of emissions from

manure, from the cows' breath and flatulence, also known as cow fart), beef feedlots, swine barns, pesticides, nail polish and a wide range of consumer goods, evaporation of gasoline, recreational boats, etc., etc. possibly including the ink used for this publication.

Question: What government agencies are tasked with controlling air pollution?  
Answer: It's a three-legged stool: local jurisdiction goes to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District), state level is mostly through the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the federal portion is through the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). The District controls stationary sources (power plants, factories, paints, dairies, etc); the CARB controls cars, trucks, consumer goods, fuel standards, etc. (the Department of Pesticide Regulation regulates pesticide use and the Bureau of Automotive Repair manages the SMOG check program); the US EPA regulates trains, ships, airplanes, emissions standards, etc.

Question: What is the federal Clean Air Act?  
Answer: It is the root of all regulatory, legal pronouncements regarding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Question: What is the problem, then?  
Answer: The three agencies are not doing enough to make it possible to reach healthy levels of air emissions

Question: What can we all do to help out?  
Answer: Drive less, make sure your vehicles are well maintained, if you can afford it then use hybrid vehicles, buy low-VOC products that are available, use alternative energy sources like solar power if you can afford it, hang clothes outside to dry, use a solar cooker, use public transit when possible, limit your air travel as best as possible, support organic farming, if the drive-

through window has more than two vehicles ahead of you then don't use it (cold starts are more polluting than using the drive-through window if the wait is not too long), use electric lawn machines or xeriscape your yards.

Question: What else can we do?  
Answer: Support organizations that advocate for clean air, such as: Earthjustice, Environmental Defense, Coalition for Clean Air, Fresno Metro Ministry, Latino Issues Forum, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition (CVAQ), Association of Irrigated Residents, American Lung Association, Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment, and various other organizations that are members of CVAQ. Attend the meetings of the air district governing board every third Thursday of the month (near Gettysburg and Blackstone), express your dissatisfaction, offer solutions, and tell them what you do to help out. Write letters-to-the-editor sharing your concerns and ideas. Vote into office candidates who have proven records of good environmental stewardship. Demonstrate in front of the air district every third Thursday of the month from 8 AM to 9AM (the board meeting starts at 9AM ).

Question: Do you do these things?  
Answer: Yes, most of it. Our home is even solar-powered. Try solar clothes-drying and cooking. It's great!


Question: Is it possible to reach clean air levels sooner than the District's proposal of 2024?  
Answer: Absolutely and only if the District, CARB, and the US EPA get serious about it.

Question: What is the single most crucial impediment to attaining clean air?  
Answer: In my opinion it is the District's assertion that technology today is not sufficient to solve the problem.

Question: Is this accurate?  
Answer. An emphatic NO.

###

Alvin Valeriano, an agricultural engineering graduate of the University of the Philippines, worked in the planning section of the air district for 4 1/2 years and cofounded Fresno's Food Not Bombs in 1996. He can be reached at [alvin.valeriano@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alvin.valeriano@sbcglobal.net).



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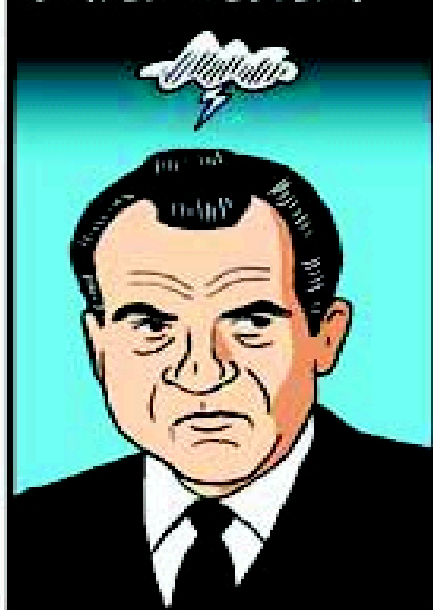
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# THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

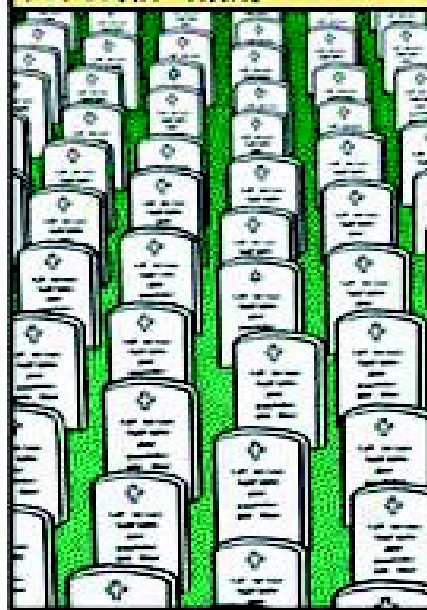
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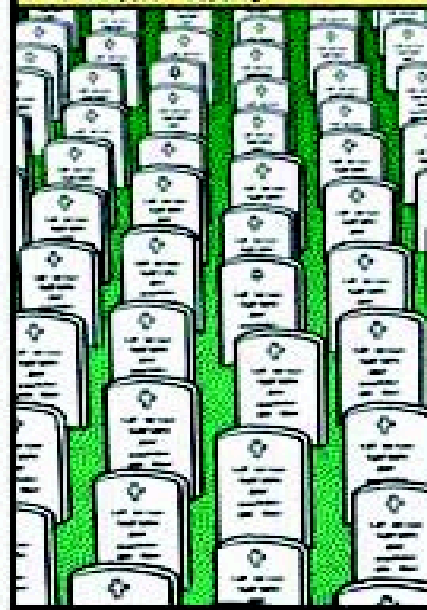
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