

Carissa Phelps Seeks Justice

By Mike Rhodes

Carissa Phelps was 12 years old when she was forced into prostitution on the mean streets of Fresno. Carissa was already on her own when, as she says, "I ended up on Parkway Drive (near Roeding Park and highway 99) because a friend's uncle saw me walking on the street. I didn't have anywhere to go. He picked me up and asked if I wanted a ride. I didn't really need a ride, but I got in anyway because I needed a warm place."

Carissa's mom had taken her to Juvenile Hall as an "out of control" youth. After spending the night in the lobby, she was put into a group home for troubled youth, but she soon ran away. Eventually she started living with the families of friends, paying for her stay by cleaning house and watching younger children. She did not attend school.

Carissa said her friend's uncle "put his arm around me and said 'I'm going to take care of you and you're going to take care of me.' He drove me to a Johnnie Quik market and bought me a hot dog and a coke. I was terrified of him, I knew he was a drug dealer and I knew all of these things that made me afraid of him, but I thought I had to follow along. I was 12 years old and just a baby. I was happy to eat something."

Carissa Phelps has returned to Fresno to put a spotlight on the sexual exploitation of youth, which she says is still happening today. Telling her story is a part of the process. After getting a bite to eat, Carissa was taken to the Villa Motel. She says, "It was really easy to be abused. All I was looking for was love and attention." But, she says she was not naive. She knew why this 40-year-old drug-dealing uncle of a friend had taken her to the motel. "I tried to get out of the window in the bathroom, but it was too small. I then had sex with him. It was the worst experience of my life. I know that I went completely out of body. This was supposed to be someone who could be trusted, an adult." He left after they had sex, promising to return so they could continue their "relationship."

Not waiting for his return, Carissa left the motel room. Where do you go when you are a 12-year-old on Motel Drive? The first person she met after leaving the motel was Linda, not her real name, who was six months

pregnant. "She was badly beaten and had an eye hanging out of her head and I couldn't leave her on the street. The street code is that you help people on the street. When someone is hurt and down and injured you help." Carissa brought this woman back to the motel room where they talked. "I thought we bonded, but really what happened is that she was manipulating me."

The relationship with Linda, who was a prostitute, and her pimp took Carissa into a world where she was sold for sex, raped, and taken to the Westside where she was sold for crack cocaine. "I wanted to die. I thought it would be better if he (Linda's pimp) just killed me." Carissa says she gets asked a lot about why she didn't go to the police to get out of this situation. "They were seen like the enemy, not like someone who would help me." The police would stop Carissa and Linda on the street and ask them about drugs and other things going on in the neighborhood. When a police officer did pick her up, Carissa says, "He did not take me to a hospital where I should have gone and be treated for rape and trauma. He took me to jail."

It was in Juvenile Hall where things started to turn around for her. "I ended up being sent to C.K. Wakefield School for Boys. This program actually had a school where teachers cared and the counselors, when they were interviewed for positions in this program, had to say they cared about kids and wanted them to change, wanted to help them rehabilitate." It was in this program that Carissa got the counseling and encouragement she needed to start rebuilding her life.

Mrs. Wegerrman, one of the teachers in the program, realized that Carissa had potential and helped her study algebra, even though the school did not have any textbooks for the subject. Students at C.K. Wakefield were not expected to do well in algebra. Wegerrman photocopied chapters of an algebra textbook for Carissa, which years later she learned was a big concern to the principal. He was afraid of possible copyright infringement.

Ron Jenkins, a counselor



who worked with Carissa, was the first person to ask her about her experience on the street. She had thought that the time she spent on Motel Drive would be a secret she carried to her grave. It was his interest in Carissa and getting her to tell her story that led to her getting rape counseling and some of the other therapy she needed. In a couple of years she attended a continuation high school, and then she went on to college where she studied mathematics. Carissa became a high school math teacher in Hanford. She says, "I loved my kids, but I could not focus on the whole classroom. I wanted to help the kids that were runaways, struggling, outcasts, but that wasn't fair to the rest of my class. But that was when I knew exactly where my passion was."

Carissa went back to school to study law. "When I went to law school I was trying to find a way to change what happened to me from happening to someone else. I knew I couldn't change it for myself, but I thought I might have been the only person who ever went through this and got to law school. I always knew, when I was 12 years old, that if I made it out of this that there would be something I would do to come back and shine a spotlight on that little 12-year-old girl that is walking down the street scared and alone, so that the right people can see her and help her and the wrong people won't be able to get her so easily."

Carissa said she thought she could change the world with law. "I realized in law school, while reading civil rights cases, that laws can change and things stay the same on the ground." That realization sent her in another direction. She asked, "How could I actually change the system? And that is why I went to business school, to find out who were the movers and shakers, why are we always talking about them doing this to us, why is it big money and big corporations that are controlling us." She went to business school, got a masters degree in business administration, and landed a coveted job in a private equity fund.

Continued on page 5

***Are Tumors, Abscesses, and
Downed Cows in Your
Hamburger?
See page 2***

MARCH 2008

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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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Mike Rhodes

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E-MAIL:
AllianceEditor@comcast.net
WEB-SITE:
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Are Tumors, Abscesses, and Downed Cows in your Hamburger?

By Mike Rhodes

Local and national media are reporting on the recall of 143 million pounds of meat from a southern California slaughterhouse. More than 70 school districts and social service agencies in the Central Valley ended up with some of that meat. But, the issue of contaminated meat might be a lot more problematic and local than we have been told. According to Steven Gomez*, who worked for six months at Cargill Regional Beef in Fresno, the practices that led to the current recall at the Hallmark Meat Company in southern California happens every day locally.

“They use downer cows all the time,” Gomez told me in an exclusive interview. Gomez said it was common practice for workers in the southwest Fresno slaughterhouse to hit downed cows with sticks and eventually pick them up with a fork lift to get them onto the kill floor. According to Karen Stump*, who also worked at Cargill, “they would shoot the cow because it couldn’t get up and then they would bring them into the kill room with a fork lift.” Both Gomez and Stump said those downer cows would be processed and put into the food stream with all of the other cows.

According to a statement from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the group that uncovered the southern California incident that led to the current recall,



This photo is from the Hallmark Meat Company in southern California where the Human Society of the United States broke the story about using downed cows in hamburger. For more information, see: <http://www.hsus.org/>

IN THIS ISSUE:

Carissa Phelps Seeks Justice	Page 1
Are Tumors, Abscesses, and Downed Cows in Your Hamburger?	Page 2
Progressives and Local Politics	Page 3
Grassroots Profile	Page 6
Queer Eye	Page 6
Military Recruiters in Fresno	Page 7
Rally in the Valley	Page 8
How to Avoid Living in a Police State	Page 9
A Debate about who should be Fresno’s next mayor	Page 10 and 11
SunMt 25 Year Celebration	Page 12 & 13
Medical Snafu	Page 16
Hacienda State Prison?	Page 16
The Peace and Social Justice Calendar	Page 18 & 19
Opinion and Analysis from the Grassroots	Page 20 & 21
An Open Letter to George Bush	Page 22
Disowned by the Ownership Society	Page 23

Quote of the Month

“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

“downer cows must not be used for food-plain and simple. As The HSUS video shows (see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/02/19/18480414.php>), this is necessary to protect animals from suffering. As science has made clear, this is necessary to protect food safety. The practice of slaughtering downed cows is especially troubling now that the link between downed cattle and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as mad cow disease, has been firmly established. Of the 15 known cases of BSE-infected animals discovered in North America, at least 12 involved downed animals.”

Derek Kennedy, vice president and general manager at the Fresno Cargill plant, which is located at Fig and North, insisted that they do not use downed cows at their facility. “If we have a downed cow it is sent to the rendering plant,” Kennedy said. He explained that an animal that is too sick to get up is euthanized, moved with a forklift, and eventually taken to a rendering plant. Kennedy did say that cattle are sometimes shot in the yard and taken into the kill room for processing. According to Kennedy, this happens if the animal is too big or its horns are too large for it to go through the chute. He suggested that my source for this story (Gomez and Stump) may have been confused about what they saw.

Gomez told me that the problems at the local slaughterhouse does not end with their use of downer cows. He said that the assembly line he worked on was sped up so fast that pieces of meat containing tumors, abscesses, and other growths would pass the line and end up in hamburger. On the line where the cows stomach was removed, he said that sometimes the intestine was accidentally cut open, resulting in fecal matter contaminating the meat.

Kennedy said that every employee on the line has the opportunity to shut it down if a bad piece of meat goes by. He said “if they’re not doing that they shouldn’t work here.” According to Kennedy, it would be rare if a tumor or abscess got on the line and that he would expect the work crew to see it, shut down the line, and decontaminate the area. He absolutely denied that tumors, abscesses, and other growths were in the hamburger coming from this plant.

The high speed of the line also resulted in what Gomez described as “work related injuries”. He said that “within the first months of employment I began to experience pain in both hands. Cramping and stiff joints caused my hands to ‘pop and lock.’ I was told that the job was ‘not easy’ and took ‘conditioning.’ I was advised that a couple of months of such labor would ‘condition’ my hands and body to perform duties safely and painlessly.”

Gomez said the on site nurse treated his complaints with hot wraps and Ibuprofen. He said “I was advised not to be concerned with the ‘popping and locking’ of my hands as it would pass as I ‘got used to the job.’ When I expressed my concerns to the on site nurse I was asked - ‘Why are you so fixated on the popping noise?’” Gomez resigned in late January 2008 because of the numbness in his hands and because he believed he was being harassed due to his complaints about working conditions.

When he called to tell me his story, Gomez was primarily focused on the unfair working conditions, how dismissive the on site nurse was of work related injuries, and how supervisors speed up the line to unsafe levels. When I asked him if he ever saw USDA inspectors looking out for bad meat or OSHA workers checking on working conditions he said that when tours would come through, the supervisors would slow down the line. “I remember one time when we had a tour coming through that my supervisor sent me home to put on a different pair of shoes.” He said that supervisors only slowed the line down and made sure everyone was wearing all of the necessary safety equipment when they had a special tour.

Kennedy said that they do slow down the line when there are tours of the plant, but he claimed that it was to protect the workers who might be distracted by the tour members. Kennedy did not give me a tour of the cutting

Continued on page 22

Letter to the Editor

I have been asked to elaborate on my statement quoted in the February Credo article that “I’m no longer a Christian.”

My spiritual roots are deep - Anabaptist ancestors invited by William Penn to help settle Pennsylvania. My father was a Christian Conscientious Objector in WWI and my brother was the same in WWII. I lived my childhood and youth surrounded by a family deeply committed to church and community, concerned always for peace and social justice. Four of my younger years were spent in Japan, 10 in Korea teaching English, hopefully sharing a spirit of love and concern. The Mennonite church has been a home and support through the deepest crises of my life. Yes, my roots are deep.

At the same time, diverse experiences broaden one. At 81 I find myself evaluating all sorts of things including my theology. The above statement was made in the light of the current political idea that our “Christian” nation somehow has the right to dominate the world economically and militarily to preserve our current “lifestyle.” In protest, I have felt compelled to stop using the term “Christian” and simply call myself a follower of Jesus. For me this means a life of love and service. It means loving my neighbors, the earth and all its inhabitants, and the One, source of it all. For me it means respecting every nation and simplifying my own lifestyle rather than stripping others of their natural resources.

I find myself everyday grateful for life and I celebrate it in rich friendships, doing field trips with school children, in painting, working in clay, and in our community garden.

Margaret Hudson

“PROGRESSIVES WIN BIG IN FRESNO ELECTIONS”

By Howard K. Watkins

For the first time in many local elections, the above headline could be true come the June 3, 2008 election. With the presidential primary behind us, most of the hotly contested races affecting Fresno on the June 3rd ballot will be local races for Mayor of Fresno, three Fresno City Council Districts, and two Fresno County Board of Supervisor Districts. Of the six races, four are open seats with no incumbent and most have at least one candidate supportive of issues important to the progressive community. Several local groups are already gearing up to have a major impact in this election.

LOCAL GROUPS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC) is holding its local candidates’ forum on Saturday, March 29, 2008, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Fresno City College Faculty Dining Room (Weldon & College Avenues). This Forum is open and free of charge to the public; all of the candidates for local office are invited to participate. The FCC Sociology Department is co-sponsoring the Forum.

The CVPPAC will then have a Meet-and-Greet the Candidates Fun-Raiser on Saturday, April 12, 2008 from 5:30 to 8:30 PM at the home of Howard and Chris Watkins. The reception is free to new and current



Many progressives will be voting for Henry T. Perea for mayor.

CVPPAC members with a requested \$20 donation from others. For more details on the Forum or reception see the CVPPAC announcement in this issue, go to www.cvppac.org, or call (559) 435-7360).

Several voter registration drives are in the works. One is called Strengthening Our Lives (SOL) lead by SEIU-UHW and other labor and community groups to help register new voters, especially in the Latino community. (Contact Chava Bustamante at chava@sol-california.com.) The Fresno County Democratic Central Committee is working on increasing the number of registered Democrats in Fresno County. (Contact Jay Hubbell, FCDCC Secretary at (559) 292-4905.) The CVPPAC plans to do a voter registration drive among eligible adults in the homeless community. With over 8,000 homeless in the City of Fresno, they can become a major voting block, especially in the Mayor’s race.

The National Women’s Political Caucus-Fresno, which is a multi-partisan group, will be looking to support pro-choice women candidates for local office. Many of the local unions will also be actively supporting candidates in various races.

THE CANDIDATES & OFFICES

Fresno Mayor: With Mayor Alan Autry termed out, current candidates include Jim Boswell, Tom Boyajian, Mike Dages, Jerry Duncan, Jeff Eben, Ignacio Garibay, Barbara Ann Hunt, Henry Monreal, Henry T. Perea, and Ashley Swearengin. As noted elsewhere in this issue, both Boyajian and Perea have strong support in the progressive community. Swearengin and Eben could also make some inroads here.

Fresno City Council District #2: Andreas Borgeas and Mike Karbassi will be competing for this open seat currently held by Brian Calhoun. Borgeas, while new to Fresno politics, has been campaigning since last summer. Karbassi, a local businessman who was most impressive on the issues when he ran four years ago, is a strong supporter for bringing housing and development to the Downtown area, creating jobs and more parks and green space,

Fresno City Council District #4: Incumbent Larry Westerlund is being challenged by longtime Democratic Party activist Susan Good. This is a key race for the progressive community as Westerlund is considered one of the more conservative members of the City Council who opposed funding for an Independent Police Auditor. Good, who currently serves in the Fresno Office for State Senator Dean Florez, has a history of supporting progressive issues.

Fresno City Council District #6: With incumbent Jerry Duncan termed out and running for Mayor, two newcomers are vying to succeed him. Local businessman Lee Brand is Duncan’s choice as his successor. Attorney Michelle Jorgensen is a refreshing newcomer to politics and is looking to be an effective representative for both her district and the city. This is another race that will likely determine how progressive the Fresno City Council will be in 2009.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors District #2: Incumbent Susan Anderson is being challenged by termed-out City Council member Brian Calhoun, and possibly by CPA Paul Dictos. Anderson is seeking her third term and enjoys strong, bi-partisan support. She has voted for and spoken out on many progressive issues. Calhoun, somewhat of a maverick on the City Council, opposed funding for the Independent Police Auditor. His Council district overlaps much of the Supervisorial district. Dictos, who lost in his recent bid for County Auditor-Controller, will be campaigning on balancing the County budget.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors District #3: Incumbent Henry Perea is seeking re-election and will likely run unopposed. Note: he is the father of current Fresno City Council member and candidate for Mayor, Henry T. Perea.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors District #5: Incumbent Bob Waterston has decided finally not to seek re-election. Two Republicans, Clovis City Council member Nathan Magsig and politically connected Debbie Poochigian, will be spending between them a record shattering \$1,000,000+ for this seat. Magsig is very popular in Clovis. Poochigian is the daughter of the late County Supervisor Deran Koligian and is the wife of former state legislator Chuck Poochigian. While she has been active in politics behind the scenes, this is her first try for County office.

WHAT CAN PROGRESSIVES DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Many progressive residents complain loudly about our poor air quality, urban sprawl, the lack of living wage jobs, the lack of affordable housing, poor public transportation, the plight of the homeless, the need for an Independent Police Auditor, and many other issues. While a change in spending priorities at the state and federal levels could make a major difference in addressing these issues, all the issues are affected by the decisions made at City Hall and by the Board of Supervisors. Those decisions are determined by who is elected to serve as Mayor or on the City Council or Board of Supervisors. If any of these issues are important to you, then you need to help make the difference in the June 3rd elections. Being registered to vote and voting for good candidates, while important, is not enough. We need to support candidates supporting our issues. They need money and they need campaign volunteers. Here are ten things you can do that will make a difference June 3rd:

1. Make sure you and eligible members of your family are registered to vote. If not, register to vote. Ask your friends if they are registered to vote. If not, help them get registered. Contact the Fresno County Elections Office directly at (559) 488-3246 to get voter registration cards.
2. Contact groups such as SOL or the FCDCC as noted above that are organized for voter registration drives and volunteer to help.



Michelle Jorgensen is running for Fresno City Council in district 6. She is the only progressive candidate running in that race.

3. Attend the CVPPAC Local Candidates’ Forum at Fresno City College on Saturday, March 29th from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM to hear directly from the candidates. This will enable you to make an informed choice as to whom you want to support.

4. Join the CVPPAC. Dues are \$100 per year, which may be paid in installments or annually. The CVPPAC was organized specifically to help the progressive community come together to support progressive candidates with money and campaign volunteers. While there are several progressive groups in Fresno, very few are able to do this. CVPPAC can and does. Endorsements are limited to local, non-partisan races and require at least a two-thirds vote of the members. Our endorsement meeting for the June 3rd election will be April 14, 2008 from 7-9 PM at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno). Only members in good standing may attend and vote at this meeting.

5. Attend the CVPPAC Meet-and-Greet the candidates’ reception on Saturday, April 12th from 5:30 to 8:30 PM at the home of Howard & Chris Watkins (1785 W. Dovewood Lane, Fresno, CA 93711). While you are there, you can join the CVPPAC and become a voting member.

6. Join the NWPC-Fresno and vote to have them endorse progressive candidates for local offices. Contact Pat Barr at (559) 292-4905 for more information.

7. If you are a member of a labor organization, work to have your union or association endorse and support progressive candidates. The Fresno-Madera Central Labor Council voted an open endorsement for the Mayor’s race, so each union can make its own endorsement for this race.

8. Once you have decided on which candidates you want to support, contact them and volunteer to help them get elected. Whether it is precinct walking, telephone calling, doing a mailing, or something else, every candidate needs volunteers and money.

9. When you have decided whom you are supporting, e-mail or call your friends in Fresno and urge them to vote for the candidates you are recommending.

10. Vote by absentee ballot. This will ensure your vote is counted in case you have an emergency on Election Day and are unable to vote then. It also frees you up to help get out the vote on Election Day.

Howard K. Watkins is a local attorney and currently chairs the CVPPAC.

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Mrs. Wegerrman (right) was one of the teachers that gave Carissa (left) the counseling and encouragement she needed to start rebuilding her life.

"I always knew, when I was 12 years old, that if I made it out of this that there would be something I would do to come back and shine a spotlight on that little 12-year-old girl that is walking down the street scared and alone, so that the right people can see her and help her and the wrong people won't be able to get her so easily."

Carissa Phelps



Carissa has left her job in the financial sector and moved back to Fresno, because she wants to end the sexual exploitation of youth and work on grassroots economic development. She said, "Community economic development is about the community creating the economic change, not someone from the outside saying we need a mega store here that will change the economics. It is about working from the ground up, people that are living it and having the access to capital in order to change what is going on at the ground level. I'm back to galvanize that community around Parkway and Motel Drive, a community that I'm just getting to know and I absolutely love."

Carissa continued from page 1

"In business school I met an aspiring filmmaker," Carissa said. "I had wanted to make a film, come back to Motel Drive with a camera and tell the story." David Sauvage, the filmmaker she met in college, was concerned about financing. Carissa, in her typically optimistic style, told Sauvage not to worry, that she would come up with the money. "We raised the money for the film, we got some partners like the Virgin Mobile's RE*Generation campaign. They were out to help homeless youth and they saw this story as something they wanted to invest in. We also had a business school professor, Jamie McCourt, who is the co-owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers, and she saw the story and saw what an impact it could make for women in leadership, and she supported us as well."

A preview screening of the documentary (see: <http://www.carissaproject.com/>) will be held on March 18 at Lucasfilm in San Francisco. After that showing, the film will be touring at movie festivals around the country, including the 4th annual Fresno Film Festival (April 18-20). Carissa says they want the 26-minute film to be shown in schools, juvenile halls, and other places where at-risk youth can see the story. In an interview last year with the *Fresno Bee* she said, "I want to give kids a chance to know that I'm the same as them and they could be the same as I am today."

You can drive down to Motel Drive today and find children, ages 12 to 17, who are being sexually exploited. Carissa said these children "are told by society and their parents that this is their fault, that they are whores or prostitutes and that somehow this is something that they are choosing. People don't understand that this is brainwashing a child. If a child was working in a factory, we wouldn't admonish the child and say 'that is your problem, why are you choosing to work in that factory, you are a bad child.' We wouldn't do



Sherri Williams (left) was homeless and in declining health when this photo was taken. She died less than a month later. Sherri lived in the Parkside Drive area where Carissa Phelps (right) was sexually exploited when she was 12 years old. If Carissa had stayed on the mean streets of Fresno, the chances are that she too would have died at an early age. Sherry was only 45 years old.



Carissa Phelps (center, bottom row) is standing next to Phillip Mangano, the executive director of the Bush administration's Interagency Council on Homelessness. City and County government elected officials are also in the photo. Carissa and Mangano were featured speakers at the December 7, 2007, joint City and County meeting to develop a plan to end homelessness in Fresno.

that, and yet we tell children that get lipstick put on them, mascara, and high heels, and we think of them as trash. We wouldn't do that if we saw a child sewing in a factory, working long hours. These young girls are going back to pimps that are beating them up, choking them, telling them they are worthless pieces of crap. If that was happening to children, or even adults in a workplace, we would stand up and do something about it."

Since her return to Fresno, Carissa has been on many stages. On any given day she can be out on the street getting to know community leaders, having an open dialogue with elected officials, building relationships with socially responsible investors, meeting with foundation executives, or speaking at a national conference. From Carissa's perspective, bringing all parties to the table is what it will take to organize and empower the neighborhood.



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Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

This month’s profile is equally about our two featured activists, Socorro Gaetti and Mario Talavera; about the organization they work on together, Lationos United for Clear Air (LUCA); and about the organizing process they are all part of.

LUCA is a group fostered by Fresno Metro Ministry in which previously uninvolved citizens (mostly parents) have been mobilized to educate about and advocate for the requisites of clean air. As a parent with four asthmatic children, Mario was attracted to an organizing meeting about two years ago held at the Holman School Resources Center. He was skeptical about the value of activism (“I thought, ‘no hace nada’”) But as he learned about steps he himself could take to help air quality (e.g. how you barbecue, reduce the use of gas mowers, recycle) he gradually began to take on responsibilities in the group. Now he finds himself acting as President, as a public spokesman for press conferences and hearings, and as a community teacher.

Mario is very grateful for the training he and other LUCA members have received from Metro, involving information and issues. But he has also learned from them how to run meetings, present himself professionally, and organize a campaign. For Mario, the change in status from househusband to recognized community leader represents a major achievement.

What makes this story especially compelling for me is the role of Socorro as a paid staff member from Metro Ministry. When I first met her, maybe 15 years ago, she was where Mario is today—a parent just learning that she could be an agent of change.

At that time, the City had (briefly, as usual) created a program ostensibly to “empower neighborhoods”. Although we (rightly) suspected it was just a tactic to get some Federal money, a group of us living in the Lowell-Jefferson area were able to act quickly and lay claim to a share of the spoils. Our Lowell-Jefferson Consortium



IDENTITY BOX

Birthplace: Mario/ Durango, Mexico
Socorro/ Zacateca, Mexico

Religious affiliation M/Catholic S/Catholic

Inspiration M/the kids S/Keith Bergthold

Motto M/ “Give help without expectations”
S/ “ I’m not afraid”

Other interest M/exercise with my children
S/ Walk and spend time with grandkids

Unexpected pleasure M/ watching soccer
S/ reading romances

street lighting, to a creating a pro-active code-enforcement task force.

One of the great spirits of our endeavors was Keith Bergthold, then an organizer with One-by-One Ministries. He set out to forge a parent advocacy group at the Jefferson School, and Socorro emerged as a born leader—capable, responsible, reliable, trusted. She speaks today with affection and gratitude of how Keith his cohort Nate gave so much support and attention...”they taught with patience and heart,” she says. They also arranged for her to go to Texas for leadership training, a big step into a larger world. And Socorro remembers too her first meeting with a City Council member (best left anonymous), and how her new strength allowed her to stand up to that person’s condescension.

Gradually Socorro became more and more an autonomous leader, and although she has moved from the area she is still looked to for guidance from her old colleagues in Jefferson. Now, having been hired by Metro, Socorro has stepped into Keith’s shoes as mentor for neighborhood leaders. What a success story for neighborhood organizing!

But to return to LUCA. Asked to clarify its goals, Socorro and Mario say, “The rallying point is clean air and healthy communities. But we want to get people off their couches and out of their comfort zones. We want people to be aware, and strong—to demand public services they deserve. We want to be able to call the police to help us with our business, not just to have them come to check our papers.”

Mario and Socorro give heartfelt thanks to Metro Ministry (especially Jennie and Carolina); to Steve Gonzalez, principal of Yokomi School; and above all to their spouses and children (“Without their understanding”, Mario says “we can do nothing.”

LUCA is currently planning a forum to be held on March 15 to highlight problems and solutions regarding air quality. They are expecting to have representatives from City Hall and the Air Quality District, and to have multi-lingual translation capacity. For information, Mario can be reached at 259-2202, Socorro at 485-1416.



QUEER EYE

Anti-Queers Are Outside Wal-Mart Because of Courts

by Dan Waterhouse

Contrary to recent reports, Wal-Mart is not assisting an anti-gay agenda at their store on Herndon Avenue in northwest Fresno.

During January, folks financed by out-of-state interests began circulating petitions around the state for an initiative banning gay marriage. The anti-queers are worried what the state Supreme Court will decide in the gay marriage cases due to be argued this April, so they’re trying to beat the justices to the punch by amending the state constitution. They’ve been trying to collect signatures from customers outside that store (and others in the area).

According to Equality California, an out-of-state organization, nationformarriage.org, is financially supporting the petition effort along with protectmarriage.com.

Wal-Mart company management say they don’t support what the petition circulators are doing and don’t want them on store property.

But Wal-Mart can’t eject them.

Why not?

The short answer is that California case law forbids it.

The longer answer is that the California Supreme Court has declared since the late 1970s that shopping malls and centers are the functional equivalent of the “public square.”

In 1979, the state Supreme Court decided in *Michael Robins vs. Pruneyard Shopping Center* that free expression

and free speech trump private property rights. Robins and several friends were circulating a petition expressing support for Israel inside the Pruneyard center when they were told by security officers that they would have to leave because they did not have permission to solicit. The officers suggested the high school students could continue their activities on the public sidewalk outside.

In its review of the California high court’s decision in the Pruneyard case, the U.S. Supreme Court determined, according to legal scholar Jason K. Levine, “. . .that the mall owner already had compromised its exclusionary privilege because the public had a general invitation to enter the mall. Having considerably diluted its autonomy, the owner thereby had weakened its position to complain about the presence of expressionists whose activity — subject to the owner’s reasonable time, place, and manner controls — would add little physical burden or other disruption to the center’s normal daily traffic.”

However, in subsequent California court cases, it was concluded that *Pruneyard* did not extend to “big box” or “stand alone” stores. The decisions in those cases generally ran that stand-alone stores did not function as “town squares.” Even certain large stores located in shopping centers were found not to be subject to *Pruneyard*.

That was the state of the law until 2004. In the *Hamburg vs. Wal-Mart* decision, the First District Court of Appeal effectively opened entry areas of stores such as Wal-Mart and Home Depot to petition circulators. The majority said that “reasonable place, time and manner”

rules could be so restrictive as to be unreasonable.

The retail industry’s reaction to the *Hamburg* ruling was to allow petition circulators free access to entry areas, unless they obstructed or harassed customers. For circulators to be ejected, a customer has to be willing to file a complaint with police.

But *Pruneyard* and its progeny may suffer a swift demise in the near future. In a case decided last December, a three-justice (of seven justices) minority of the state Supreme Court concluded that the court should overturn the *Pruneyard* case because it had been decided wrongly and that free-speech rights should not extend to private property.

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Military Recruiters in Fresno

By Dan Yaseen

In mid-February the showdown between the Berkeley City Council and U.S. Marines ended up in stalemate whereby Berkeley City Council refused to apologize for an earlier resolution, which stated that U.S. Marines were not welcome in Berkeley. Elsewhere, U.S. military recruiters have become more aggressive in their mission to recruit young impressionable students to fight America’s so called global “War on Terror.” Their presence on the campus of Fresno City College and California State University Fresno during the same period was more provocative than ever.

Federal laws require high schools and colleges to give military recruiters the same access to the campus that they provide to other groups who advise students about occupational or educational options. Here in Fresno it seems military recruiters were given not “equal” but “more” access than other groups.

Two Fresno City College students, Roseanna Spicer and Sylvia Villalobos along with some other students from Native American Inter-tribal Students Association (NAISA) and Culturas Unidas distributed counter-recruitment literature right in front of the military recruiters. Roseanna said that students and student groups on campus have more restrictions on what they can or cannot do while military recruiters are provided free and unfettered access.

Long time Fresno resident and peace activist Vincent Lavery, who has moved back to Ireland, was in Fresno in February. He was visiting Fresno Center for Nonviolence, which is located right across from Fresno City College. He has this to say, “As I exited from my rental “mini,” I looked across the street to see this disgusting looking 18-wheeler shining nearly all the colors of the rainbow in the February sun. It was another instrument of the U.S. military designed to recruit naïve young men and women to seek thrills and to turn them into killing machines. What a shame. The hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on this 18-wheeler could have been devoted to making a mobile library or a mobile medical clinic. Strange priorities!”

###

Dan Yaseen is the coordinator of the Central Valley Counter-Recruitment Coalition. He can be reached at danyaseen@comcast.net

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1) OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY, MARCH 8TH
TIME: 3:30 to 5:00 PM
LOCATION: 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. (at McKinley), Fresno
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Susan Good, Candidate for Fresno City Council District 4

2) LOCAL CANDIDATES' FORUM SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH
Free and open to the public. Great opportunity to meet & hear from the candidates. Attend and be an informed voter.
Time: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
LOCATION: Fresno City College Faculty Dining Room (Corner of Weldon & College Avenues)
10:00 AM to Noon separate panels for candidates running for Fresno City Council Districts 2, 4, and 6
Noon to 1:00 PM Candidates running for Mayor of Fresno

1:00 to 2:20 PM Candidates for Board of Supervisors # 2 and 5
2:20 to 2:50 PM Candidates for contested judicial race

3) Meet-and-Greet the Candidates Fun-Raiser Reception
Saturday, April 12th 5:30-8:30 PM
LOCATION: Home of Howard & Chris Watkins
1785 W. Dovewood Lane, Fresno (near Bullard & West)
COST: Free to current and new CVPPAC members
Others: requested \$20 donation.
Hors-d'oeuvres, beverages, and music will be provided

4) Endorsement Meeting for Local Offices
Monday, April 14th 7:00 to 9:00 PM
LOCATION: FCNV 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno
Open to CVPPAC members only; Join and help us decide

Rally in the Valley

by Scott Key

We all watched in horror as the twin towers collapsed and thousands died. Support poured in from friends and foes alike as horrific images splashed across newspapers and flashed across TV screens. The world community condemned the murderous acts and rallied behind our nation. Yet, only a few short months later, the world's goodwill vanished as the Bush Administration beat the drums of war. America was told that our enemy was a determined, elusive group named al Qaeda. We were told that we needed to take the fight to the enemy to protect all that we valued.

More than 5 years ago, as President Bush lied to America and the world, the peace community in the Valley and around the country cried out against military action. We were told that war was the only way to security. We were told that war would bring peace. We were told that military action would be quick and cheap—little money expended, few lives lost. Most people in America believed the lies and our cries fell on deaf ears as President Bush invaded Afghanistan then Iraq.

War is costly. Our nation has spent more than \$500 billion with the amount to double to more than \$1 trillion as the occupation continues and veterans need to be cared for. To make matters worse, President Bush has “paid for” this war through deficit spending as his Administration has increased our nation’s debt to nearly \$10 trillion.

War means death. The invasion and occupation of Iraq has led to the deaths of thousands of Americans and tens of thousands of Iraqis. Thousands more have been seriously injured. American and Iraqi families have been torn apart.

We MOURNED IN AMERICA on Presidents’ Day. Now, as we approach the 5th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, the people of the Central Valley and the Foothills will come together for our annual RALLY IN THE VALLEY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE . . . NOW! We gather to renew our cries that “War is not the answer!” and “War is brutal and ugly.” We gather to demand that our government end this immoral and illegal occupation of Iraq. We gather to protest the costs of war—too much blood has been shed and too much money has been wasted.



This Peace Fresno “Mourning in America” march was held on February 18. Show your opposition to the war in Iraq by attending the Rally in the Valley on Saturday, March 15th.

We gather to demand restoration of the Bill of Rights. We gather to insist on change.

The Rally is scheduled to take place at Eaton Plaza at Mariposa and ‘N’ streets in downtown Fresno near the historic Water Tower on Saturday, March 15 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

While ending the occupation of Iraq remains a top priority, the impact of war and militarism on our local communities will be emphasized. The U.S. military budget is equal to the military expenditures of all other countries in the world combined. It is time to demilitarize our country.

Our leadoff speaker will be Eli Painted Crow of the Yaqui Nation. She is a mother of two and grandmother of seven. An army veteran of 22 years, she retired as a Sergeant First Class after serving in Kuwait and Iraq in 2004. Painted Crow has been called upon by her conscience and her spirit to speak out for peace. She will be followed by local activists who will share how the war has impacted the Central Valley and the Foothills.

Besides informative and inspirational speakers, people can enjoy the music of Frank Moschella and the Raging Grannies. Numerous peace and social justice organizations will table at the Rally. There will be a children’s space where kids can create peace art. The Rally will be a time to learn and be energized for action.

Last year there were over 40 cosponsors and endorsers. We anticipate the support of these same individuals and organizations and invite others to join as cosponsors, supporters and endorsers.

Come join your neighbors to send a loud message to our elected representatives. Stop the war! Demilitarize our society! Restore the Bill of Rights!

For more information, check out Peace Fresno’s website at www.peacefresno.org or call 487-2515.

Scott Key is the president of Peace Fresno.



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How to Avoid Living in a Police State - Join the ACLU

By Bill Simon

Unfortunately, too many of us prefer a false sense of security to the only security we really have in this country; and that is the civil liberties promised us by the Bill of Rights and the California Constitution. I did a presentation on electronic surveillance (video cameras and radio frequency chips) at Fresno State recently. Many of the students listened intently. Some others objected that "Video surveillance is fine."

The studies that say it is ineffective must be wrong. As long as you aren't doing anything wrong, who cares? My argument that it depends on who is defining who is the bad guy didn't seem to carry much weight with some. When I said I could be defined as the bad guy for standing on the Peace Corner and for distributing counter-recruitment literature, some seemed to think I probably am the bad guy. But nobody would ever think they are. They'd be surprised to know how many Fresnoans just like them want an independent police auditor because of their own experiences with police officers.

I went to the District 4 budget meeting on January 29 and addressed video surveillance, the Fresno film permit, the Independent Police Auditor and garbage. Did you know that the city is checking our garbage cans at the curb? Mayor Autry said the reason is that the city had to pay \$250,000 in fines last year because garbage was mixed in with recyclables. So watch what goes into your garbage. No privacy rights there! The Mayor said that the city sent out a notice. I didn't see it. Did you?

On the subject of video surveillance, the deputy police chief (I missed his name) said signs would be posted, eventually. There are a few signs in Roeding Park where cameras are aimed at every restroom. Cameras put up for Homeland Security won't be posted. I wonder where those cameras will be. At the Peace Corner? Certainly not at the police station where newspaper stands have been known to burn to the ground.

Mayor Autry and his staff didn't respond to my complaint about the lack of an audit of video surveillance which is supposed to be ongoing but the city is trying to say it is only a yearly audit which will happen some day. With 250 cameras planned for Fresno by the middle of next year, we might soon rival London, England where the average citizen is filmed 300 times

a day. Mayor Autry had an interesting response to the surveillance and film permit issues. I didn't get his exact words in response to my objections, but it was something like: "Wouldn't you rather have the government film what you do than have some kid make a film of your demonstration and edit it to make you look bad and put it on Youtube?" I said "No."

The following two speakers at the budget meeting were believers in feeling secure rather than believing in civil liberties. One said she wants cameras everywhere because of crime, and the other said Chief Dyer is such a good police chief we don't need an independent police auditor micromanaging him. Then I left for another meeting.

We are finally branching out to the other counties in the chapter. On February 16 Donna Hardina and I will attend a meeting in Dinuba at the request of the affiliate. I received an email from the affiliate that said "Our attorneys are aware of some possible discrimination against Latinos serving on public commissions in Tulare County. It seems that at least one individual serving on a public utility commission is being targeted for removal because of efforts to hold bilingual meetings." There are complaints about at least four different Tulare County jurisdictions. So we are going to see if these complaints concern things appropriate to the ACLU. Complaints include violations of the Brown Act.

At the Board Meeting on February 13, we had a presentation and discussion of problems in area prisons and formed a subcommittee to look into what's happening in our prisons. At future Board meetings, for our own education, we plan to have presentations on California Constitutional Rights, the Hmong Community, The Community on Fresno's West Side, and the

local Native American Community. Everyone is always welcome at Board Meetings which are publicized in the Community Alliance Calendar and on our webpage: http://www.aclunc.org/action/chapters/greater_fresno_chapter.shtml Come and learn with us!

###

Bill Simon is the Chairperson of the Greater Fresno Area Chapter ACLU-NC, simonaclu@sbcglobal.net

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by TOM TOMORROW

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Why Progressives Should Support Henry T.

By Patience Milrod



I'm going to vote for Henry T. Perea for mayor, and I urge you, dear reader, to do likewise. After the Autry Administration, of course, almost any living, breathing, sentient being who actually knows how to find City Hall might be an exciting mayoral prospect. But the tragedy and waste of the last eight years is not only that we've been paying Autry a very tidy sum to work on his buns at the gym rather than on our budget in his office—it's that these eight years could have given us a critical head start on the massive problems we've already got, and some that are emerging over the horizon. We've squandered those eight years by electing someone who was either a lazy bum or in way over his head, and now we're going to have to work like demons to try to catch up.

But we Fresnans are a terribly fractious lot—it will take both vision and leadership to get us moving in the right direction. That's why Henry T. is my candidate.

For one thing, he's very smart. And hallelujah for that!! I am so tired of miscellaneous fools waking up one morning and deciding "well, shoot, why shouldn't I run for mayor?" Running a city this size requires that you absorb a truckload of data every morning before breakfast—and as a city councilmember, Henry T. has already proved that he will both read that data and put it to work. He's leapt ahead, and dragged the Council and the Mayor along with him, to create the city's first

green building policy, to advocate for solar installations, and to support real transformation in our downtown. His leadership has meant we are finally building housing downtown (a key component of the 1960s Fulton Mall project, but never implemented)—and as founder of Creative Fresno, he's given a voice at City Hall to the young professionals and artists who've clamored for downtown live/work space and nightlife, and who are actually moving into the lofts and mixed used apartment complexes Henry has championed.

But if Henry's attributes ended at understanding the City's problems and thinking innovatively about possible solutions, it would still not be enough. To be mayor of Fresno, you must also be smart enough to reach out to people who disagree with you, to bring them together to get the job done—and I believe Henry has this gift. He has often been able to balance competing interests, keeping in sight the long-term interests of all Fresno's residents. As a result, he's taken positions that have at times alienated one or another of his constituencies—voting for example against the Air District's delay in meeting federal clean air standards, to support expanding the Air Board to add medical/health experts, and against the Independent Police Auditor proposal.

Although I strongly disagree with his position on the Police Auditor, Henry's refusal to follow any particular party line, and his willingness to seek input from constituents across the political and economic spectrum, give me confidence in his judgment and his independence. For so many years, we've had venal, visionless city government, slavishly anxious to do the bidding of developers, ag interests and the business community while disregarding the welfare of our City as a whole. But Henry T. has earned strong support from working families, including endorsements from SEIU, IBEW, CWA and Carpenters 701, while maintaining a working relationship with moneyed interests. He has shown he can bring us together and get us to work together—a crucial piece in any

strategy for Fresno's future.

The other candidates don't seem to get this concept: one of them was Always Right about everything during his tenure on the city council, and most of the time I agreed with him. But he couldn't build a coalition to support his projects if his life depended on it—and his district suffered as a result. Another of the candidates famously wished for a "dirty bomb" to wipe out Fresno's liberal community. Another of the candidates has never looked beyond nor worked outside the business community. I'd respectfully suggest these folks are not prepared for the mayor's job, because they don't understand that Fresno's many-splendored complexity is part of its astonishing wealth, and must be part of any solution to its many problems.

There's one other thing I propose you consider when you think about who should get your vote for mayor: which candidate has vision enough to put Fresno into the position of regional leadership and stewardship we should occupy? So many of our challenges — economic development, affordable housing, sprawl, water supply, air quality, education — cross city lines, and county lines too. Fresno's mayor should be able to speak with authority and passion about solutions for these many problems, and to lead a team that can offer examples of best practices. He or she must be able to galvanize the region's representatives to support planning at a regional level, and to pressure Congress and the state legislature for adequate attention to our issues.

Of the candidates in the field, it seems to me that only Henry T. has demonstrated a capacity for this wide-ranging forward-thinking approach to our problems. Take a look at his website for more information (especially the terrific proposals on air quality at <http://www.perea2008.com/issues.php?id=2>). Then I hope you'll join me in voting for Henry T. Perea for mayor.

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Progressives Should Vote for Tom Boyajian for Mayor

By Ellie Bluestein



We have an opportunity to change the focus and direction of our city government, and it needs changing very badly. We can replace three city councilmen and a mayor who spent time passing ordnances about garbage cans and Christmas trees but could not find a way to deal with the serious problems of homeless people and the underlying causes of crime in the city. Councilman Boyajian, in his 8 years on the city council including, two terms as president, was never afraid to challenge the establishment even if he was alone in doing so. He is not tied in with partisan interests in the community—not the developers, not the police hierarchy, not the unions. He is an independent, intelligent individual, committed to serving the interests of all the people of Fresno. If you question the people, and businesses and organizations in his former district you will find that he is a real, grassroots person who was able to work together with everyone to get things done in the district. He will do the same on a citywide level. He is a people person who is out every day, covering all the city districts, getting a feel for who lives in the various districts, finding out what their needs and wishes for the city are, and letting them get acquainted with him. He values and respects people of all beliefs and backgrounds, and he will be very accessible to the public. You won't

have to be a mover and a shaker or send in a written request three months in advance to have an audience with him. He is a native Fresnan who attended schools here from Kindergarten—Fresno High—City College—Fresno State. He has owned a business and practiced law here for 32 years. He has a deep commitment to creating a kinder, more beautiful environment where people's needs are taken care of and equitable justice is practiced.

He is eager to deal with crime and safety in an efficient and effective manner, but he is not intimidated by the Police Officers' Association or the Police Department. Although the police department budget is more than half that of the entire city budget, the city council approves almost any request they come up with, such as an airplane (which few cities have), an accreditation process costing over \$90,000 and which few California police departments have bought, an inordinate number of tazers (which many police departments have already put in abeyance because of the inordinate number of deaths associated with their use), and of course ever increasing surveillance equipment. Tom Boyajian is the only council member who was not afraid to vote against police department expenditures when they were not proven to be necessary or effective tools for fighting crime. He is also a staunch supporter of the Independent Police Auditor, which this year was highly recommended by the Fresno County Grand Jury and has been consistently endorsed by The Fresno Bee as well as by hundreds of individuals and dozens of organizations and is a means of providing a fair process for handling complaints by victims of police abuse or discrimination.

Tom was chairperson of the Redevelopment Agency twice, member of the Transportation Authority, and chairman of the Interagency task force for more than five years. He is committed to rehabilitating and utilizing decayed portions of our city and creating an environmentally sound and esthetically pleasing environment that all people can enjoy. He promotes high-speed rail,

which we desperately need, to take some of the polluting traffic out of our valley. Read the goals he has outlined in his election materials. They are specific and positive and realistic. He has had an opportunity to work on these issues as a two term council member elected by large majorities in his district and has never sold out to private elites or pressure groups or been tainted by corrupt practices or connections.

We deserve to have a mayor who is honest, experienced, not tied to partisan interests, open to working with all people and groups in the community, and committed to dealing with the deepest needs of our lives—environment, air quality, economic development, public transportation systems, needs of youth, crime prevention and safety, equality of justice and opportunity for all who live in Fresno. At this time I think Tom Boyajian represents the best opportunity we have to bring this about, and I invite you to help accomplish this in an active way.

In the past we have not mobilized to elect people who represent our ideals and values. On the local level we have allowed narrow interest groups to dominate the elections, and by small voter turnouts have guaranteed some pretty horrendous results. If we fail again we have no one but ourselves to blame, and we are in for more disasters.

We have no Human Relations Commission, no IPA, no humane plan for dealing with homeless people, a great need for affordable and decent housing, an immediate as well as long term means of cleaning up our air and making our city green, good public transportation, a decent living wage for workers (not just for our superintendent of schools), a serious attempt to deal with the educational, recreational and cultural needs of our children. Just fill in whatever I've left out. Really, we have to put people in office who are committed to these goals and capable of fulfilling them. No more politicians who have prostituted themselves to special interests or are committed to the status quo.



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See program:
<http://www.sunmt.org/25.html>



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SMELL sweet earth from SunMt's waterless composting toilet - the first demonstration of this system in Fresno County.



SEE first solar electric system in Fresno County and talk to solar expert Don. Above Don installs panels with Sharkie & Angel on the white roof of SunHouse.



SEE passive solar "bread box" water heater, which gives SunMt all its hot water mid-May to November. John Ballis checks his recent rebuild above.

step with Big Mama and you all for Sustainability, Peace & Justice



SEE Maia's 5 window insulating treatment experiments. Here she hangs a magnetic shade panel.
See rest: sunmt.org/solwindoor.html

SEE Elfie's prints and Maia's abstract to realistic paintings that fill the SunHouse walls.
Preview: sunmt.org/artcatalog.html



MY PRIVATE SUN MOUNTAIN by Richard Stone

Sun Mt. is a Valley original, a one-of-a-kind institution that (*in my estimation*) embodies economic, social and moral values of the kind most critical to our species survival. It is with great pleasure that I sit on its Board of Directors, and help plan for its success.

The way of life on display at Sun Mt. is a direct reflection of its resident geniuses, George and Maia Ballis. Their range of knowledge, skills and concerns; their originality and willingness to experiment; their daunting integrity in walking their talk are remarkable. They have created a striking, "green-before-it-was-cool" physical environment, a history of visionary political and social engagement, artistic achievement of high level, and personal practices requiring complex con-

sideration and strong determination. Individually and as a team, George (*or Elfie, as he prefers it*) and Maia are exemplars of lives well-lived.

To enter into the world of Sun Mt. is to encounter an array of experiments in land stewardship; in environmentally-sound gardening, architecture and energy use; in food choices and preparation; in healing modalities; in justice-seeking; in spiritual engagement. You can take your pick.

My own engagement began about twenty years ago in doing what Elfie called "tribal work"—people contracting to meet one week-end each month for a year, using ceremony and creative visualizing to bond and help each other. approach our lives from a different perspective. Connections

formed in my two years of intensive practice there have endured. What I learned about integrating the various parts of my life has left me much more centered and balanced. Each visit to my friends at Sun Mt. refreshes these connections, this whole-hearted trust in the mystery of life.

Elfie and Maia's work at Sun Mt. has contributed to our Valley culture in many ways. As we celebrate the 25th anniversary, I urge those familiar with their efforts to support their enterprise with congratulations and financial sustenance. Those unfamiliar with SunMt, see: www.sunt.org and try to make the anniversary party.

On March 22nd get above the fog-line and put a little Sun in your life.

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On behalf of our Board of Directors, I have been asked to memorialize, and celebrate, the lives of Dr. Jack Welch and Valta Pointer, two of our founding Board Members who both died on Feb. 11, 2008. Although their health had its ups and down the last couple of years, I am glad to report that both were vital and alert to virtually the end. Jack, though wheelchair-bound by neuropathy, had attended his wife's funeral just two days before his death, and had even spoken of resuming writing for our page. Valta had gone to dinner with her dear friend Ron Vineyard just the evening before her lethal stroke; and, as she would have wanted it, her end was quick without a lot of useless medical procedures. - Richard Stone

The FCNV is a Host Organization

to many non-profit groups in the Fresno community.
We provide a safe meeting place and media resources
to the groups using our facility, including:

- Youth Link
- Project: Male
- CVAAS
- CVPPAC
- Teatro Immigrante
- Peace Fresno
- WILPF
- CVCRC
- CCCJC
- Community Alliance



Valta with Dr. Kapoor

I've known Valta for about 15 years through our mutual association at the FCNV. She often said the Center was the only place in her life she truly felt understood and accepted. And her support and passion will not be easily replaced. It must be noted, though, that nonviolence did not come readily to Valta--her enmity toward perpetrators of injustice and callousness easily boiled over to threats to wring the necks of those @@@###@'s. We

will have to see whether her death brings relief, or more grief, to the likes of Mr. Bush, Cheney, Schwarzenegger and Autry--I wouldn't put it past her to bend the ear of St. Peter on the way in.

Valta also became a personal friend, and then a staunch supporter during my mother's last illness (the two had become friends themselves).

I also had the privilege of editing Valta's childhood memoirs, "And It All Started in Taft", a charming and moving chronicle of the birth of conscience in a young girl, thanks to her own sensitivity and to her father's profound moral capacities. Growing up amid the roughneck oilworker families in rural Kern County during the Depression, she discovered enduring truths about the values of compassion, justice and attentiveness.

Valta lived a hard life as a single parent ("I should have known I wasn't cut out for marriage--I'm too much a loner"), putting herself through school by working multiple jobs until finally earning her LVN license. But a near-fatal car accident left her on Disability and fixed income for the last several years--though that never stopped her from buying books or making \$5 contributions to causes she supported.

Valta was a central figure in organizing tenant unions on the West Side, where she was deeply appreciated; and she was an inveterate helper at Central California Legal Services, where she was honored as Volunteer of the Year in 1999.

As per her wishes, there were no religious services; but we are holding a gathering on Sunday March 9 at 2 p.m. to reminisce, philosophize and eat--some of Valta's favorite activities. Please join us. Donations can be made in her name to the FCNV or to the Feline Society, where she found Punkin, the last of her series of beloved and pampered cats.



Jack celebrating his 90th birthday

Dr. Welch was, in manner, the very opposite of Valta, the epitome of courtesy and kindness.

Raised in Columbus, Ohio amidst Midwestern values, he might well have followed his father's footsteps and been a respectable Republican. But fate played a few tricks: a divorce, a son's suicide, a casual agreement to join a physician's tour of the then-Soviet Union. It was

the latter that turned Jack into a political analyst--he couldn't believe that the gracious people he met could be characterized as godless devils, as our cold-war governments were wont to do. Jack returned to the U.S.S.R. several time as part of a citizen-to-citizen diplomatic program; and he never fully trusted governments again. Jack is probably best known to readers of the Alliance as the long-time author of our monthly Welch Report. Jack loved reading political commentary and choosing pieces to condense for our page. He would faithfully type up his column on the same manual typewriter he had "expropriated" during his medical service in WWII. But while he began by limiting himself strictly to paraphrase, it was a delight in the the last year or two to have him begin slipping his own cutting observations into the writing, especially as the ignobility of the Bush administration frayed even his gentility.

Jack was also key to one of the Center's most successful endeavors, a Black/White Dialogue Group...in fact he sparked it. He found himself deeply distressed and confused by the racially-divided response to O.J. Simpson's criminal acquittal, and asked for help in relieving his dismay. The result was our group that continued for several years. Jack was openly grateful to have prejudices and misconceptions (that had been instilled during his upbringing) resolved. And his open-minded, caring presence as an older and seemingly conventional White professional--one stereotypically viewed by our Black dialogue mates as beyond redemption--had a deep impact. And it was he who suggested at one point that we change our name to "Black/White Friends".

Jack was one of the most pure-hearted, fair-minded people it has been my pleasure to know. I will greatly miss the warmth of his handshake and the embrace of his smile, and his genuine shock at the misdeeds of governments.

STIR IT UP

The Center's Dan Yaseen will be giving a report on conditions in Pakistan..
Wednesday, March 12, at 3 -3:30 PM,
KFCF 88.1 FM

Dorothy Day:

Don't Call Me a Saint

The film documenting the life of the extraordinary catholic anarchist, activist, and writer.

Wednesday, March 12th

Noon & 7 pm @ the Fresno Center for Nonviolence
(1584 N. Van Ness, SE Corner of McKinley and Van Ness)

Potluck @ 6:30

Discussion to follow evening showing



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15 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE MARCH 2008



WILPF Legislative committee visitors to the office of Dean Flores: Polly Victor, Intern, Christina Bachicha, Susan Good, Lydia Flores, Pat Wolk

Members of the WILPF met with Susan Good, District Director for Senator Dean Flores on January 30, 2008. Topics discussed included water issues, air quality and e-coli contamination on agriculture. According to Susan Good, Senator Flores is not in favor of building more dams without water banks. Senator Flores is particularly concerned with the recent e-coli contamination in spinach. He is currently involved with an "airborne" committee that is working on developing guidelines to ensure food is safe. He is also worried about the Valley being a dumping ground for Southern California's waste. According to Susan Good, Los Angeles is now finding alternative methods for getting rid of their wastes. Susan Good will be following up with Senator Flores on new developments in these areas and will be getting back to the committee. WILPF Legislative Committee plans to meet with other elected representatives from time to time to let them know our priorities and to continue the dialogue.

On March 8th, 2008 WILPF will be celebrating International Women's Day by honoring Emma Goldman

with a luncheon and special guest speaker Loretta Kensinger author of the book *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*. Loretta's presentation is "Radical Lessons: Thinking About Emma Goldman in Conservative Times." Emma Goldman (1869-1940) stands as a major figure in the history of American radicalism and feminism. An influential and well-known anarchist of her day, Goldman was an early advocate of free speech, birth control, women's equality and independence, and union organization. Her criticism of mandatory conscription of young men into the military during World War I led to a two-year imprisonment, followed by her deportation in 1919. For the rest of her life until her death in 1940, she continued to participate in the social and political movements of her age, from the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War. The luncheon will be at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 1610 East Shaw Ave, Fresno starting at 12 noon. Cost for lunch is \$15.00 and \$10.00 for students. For more information and to make lunch reservations, call 559-439-0280.

Upcoming events:

March 5 - Women in Black. Noon-1:00 p.m. Breezeway of County Court House

March 8 - International Women's Day Luncheon (see below for details.)

March 15 - Rally in the Valley. WILPF is a co-sponsor

March 24 - WILPF Branch meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness. 6:30 p.m.-dessert; 7:00 p.m.-meeting begins

March 27 - Women in Black noon-1:00 p.m. CSUF Free Speech Area

March - Display of the Clothesline Project at Fresno City College



Loretta Kensinger will speak about the life of Emma Goldman (photo above) at a luncheon on March 8 celebrating International Women's Day.

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MEDICAL SNAFU

Ongoing Prison Problem

By: Boston Woodard

The good folks of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus could not put on a zanier presentation than the pseudo-organized confusion that defines the medical system within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). What a joke, what a burn, what a mockery and a rip-off of billions in taxpayers' tender.



Another punch in the gut further impeding the reclamation of California's severely crippled prison "health care" system was thrown by Judge Thelton Henderson. Henderson, a senior judge in the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco and member of the "three-judge-panel" assembled in late 2007, was seated to fix the deep wounds of the CDCR, in particular, horrific medical care for prisoners and severe overcrowding (housing more than 170,000 prisoners in a system designed for half that number). Henderson was thought to be the savior of a health care system responsible for the unnecessary and preventable deaths of as many as one prisoner per week for years; he has the power as a federal judge to deflate the severe overcrowding throughout the prison system by ordering a cap on the prison population.

In the latest installment of stupidity connected with the woebegone medical services provided to prisoners, Judge Henderson fired federal receiver Robert Sillen. Sillen was hired in 2006 by Judge Henderson to repair the crumbling health care system at California's 33 state prisons. Henderson let Sillen go on January 23, 2008, saying it was time for a joint effort approach to the problem.

Sillen was a former Santa Clara County health care director, who is said to have become "brash" and "impetuous," according to state prison officials and legislators, while rapidly pushing forward his vigorous plan to breathe sanity and purpose back into the medical sideshow managed by the CDCR.

Pernicious ultra-right-winger Todd Spitzer, (R) Orange, chairman of the Assembly Select Committee on Prison Construction and Operations, on Sillen's dismissal snorted, "(Sillen) is a one-man show who had utter disdain for the legislature. He would constantly threaten us that if we didn't do it his way.... He would back his truck up to the Treasury and would take whatever amount of money he needed."

Spitzer's incongruous assertions on Sillen are intended to malign the first person to confront and take on the surfeit of incompetence and arrogance that define prison officials in decades. Toddy-boy is of an extreme minority group of whining right-wing demagogues (in Sacramento) hell-bent on depriving prisoners of quality medical care and will stop at nothing to block anyone who attempts to bring humanity back into the prison system or who attempts to eliminate draconian practices behind prison walls.

With the social skills of a pissed-off wharf rat and the compassion of an over-paid executioner, Spitzer can only blow smoke up the asses of those dumb enough to listen to his diatribe on Mr. Sillen.

In a scathing report late last year, Mr. Sillen wrote that "66 (confirmed) inmates succumbed to preventable or possibly preventable deaths in the California correctional system" in 2006. Sillen attributed the fatalities to a "systematic failure in the prison medical care system." Mr. Sillen also expressed, "My goodness, these are human beings and they ought to be treated as human beings."

There were changes for the better, albeit a little slower than hoped for, beginning to happen in the prison's medical system. Prisoners got to triage a little quicker; nurses seemed more attentive, and rumor has it many were admonished and/or retrained; and prisoners were finally seeing specialists, often after waiting many years. Some prisoners were finally, after waiting years in many cases, receiving long overdue surgeries. Most prisoners ascribed the changes to Mr. Sillen's unwillingness to be intimidated by prison and medical officials when it was time for them to answer the real questions.

"Why were potentially serious signs and symptoms missed or misdiagnosed?" Why did you fail to "tailor the pace of evaluation to the clinical situation?" And "Why didn't you follow well established guidelines

for care?" These were some of the questions posed by Sillen in his attempt to fix the problems.

About the same time Judge Henderson was demonstrating his lapse of good judgment by eliminating Sillen, an interesting development was brewing behind the walls of Solano State Prison.

Solano State Prison in Vacaville had arguably one of the ugliest medical situations in the California prison system. (See "They Don't Triple-Bunk Dogs!" at: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/08/13/18297041.php>)

On or about January 9, 2008, Solano's Chief Medical Officer, A.C. Traquina, received information that a prisoner, after weeks of complaining of respiratory problems, was suspected of having tuberculosis (TB). Subsequently, the suspect case was removed from the prison and transferred to an outside hospital for further medical evaluation. If the prison's medical department had paid attention to screening protocol, this prisoner would not have been placed in the general population to potentially infect thousands of other prisoners and prison staff.

Building #14 (one of 24 throughout the prison) was placed on a "Medical Modification Program" (quarantine) pending completion of TB testing. Before that protocol was completed, after only five days, Building #14's 340 prisoners were allowed back into the general population to work, play sports and mingle with other prisoners for two full days.

When the mistake of releasing possibly infected prisoners was realized, Building #14 prisoners were once again placed on quarantine status. Two more buildings (approximately 350 prisoners per building) were also placed on quarantine. Medical staff had now to administer hundreds of new TB tests including X-rays to prisoners in those buildings.

Two days later, after medical staff's irresponsible attempts to read the TB tests by checking for abnormalities on forearms, all prisoners were once again back in their dormitories to have a re-read of the botched TB protocol. You had to have been there to witness the Keystone-Cop-like way this all went down. Unbelievable!

During the second attempt to read the TB tests, Solano's Warden D.K. Sisto and Chief Medical Officer Alvaro C. Traquina made a perfunctory appearance in at least one of the quarantined buildings. This time, the lines and procedures overseen by medical and custody staff were more orderly and an attempt to seem attentive by medical staff was apparent.

Warden Sisto sat talking with an unidentified staff member at one of the prisoner's dayroom tables in Building #13 for a few minutes and then left. Warden Sisto did not speak with the prisoners during his brusque visit.

Chief Medical Officer Traquina was asked if he would answer a few questions prisoners had pertaining to the TB scare. The prisoners wanted to know how much danger they were in and what preventive measures they could take to avoid becoming infected.

Unexpectedly, Chief Medical Officer Traquina snapped, "No! You cannot ask any questions! I don't answer questions!"

As of this writing, Solano State Prison has not issued one word of information pertaining to the prevention of tuberculosis to its general population. No hand-outs, no flyers, no bulletins, no speeches, nada, zilch, nothing.

Explosive attitudes such as Chief Medical Officer Alvaro C. Traquina's demonstrate the very behavior that most likely contributed to a federal receiver taking over the entire medical department within the CDCR. When a top medical official displays abhorrent outbursts and will not answer pertinent questions regarding the health and welfare of his charges, the entire system has failed.

Approximately a week before the initial quarantine for tuberculosis, more than 100 prisoners were transferred to a private prison in Mississippi, some from the same building as the infected prisoner. Hopefully, the CDCR notified that prison and those potential carriers were tested.

Mr. Sillen was replaced with "long time California government troubleshooter" J. Clark Kelso, a McGeorge School of Law professor. Judge Henderson is now calling Sillen's 20-month reign the "primarily investigative and evaluative phase" and Kelso's the "implementation phase" with "more cooperation and less con-

frontation." The math on this one is easy; the CDCR (masters at pressuring yes, even federal judges) now have a man (representation) on the inside to curtail and head off at the pass hundreds of medical lawsuits filed on behalf of mishandled and neglected prisoner patients.

Among Sillen's accomplishments were the following: reducing the gaping vacancy rates in the ranks of the California prison doctors and nurses and raising their pay; ordering a new acute care center at San Quentin State Prison and kicking off other medical construction projects throughout the state; improving specialty care; making sure medical contractors get paid on time; and a litany of other solutions and recommendations for overall improvement in the prison's medical system.

So now, Robert Sillen, an experienced administrative medical expert, is gone, replaced by a lawyer who has been a government ringer for decades, to handle phase II of a medical disaster he knows nothing about? Mmmmmmm. Go figure.

In the meantime, while Judge Thelton Henderson, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Assemblyman Todd Spitzer are recklessly dealing with the lives of sick and dying prisoners, the rest of us may as well save our band-aids as there will be nothing for prisoners in the last phase of this three-ring circus.

###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who has written for the San Quentin News and the Soledad Star, and edited The Communicator. The Department of Corrections has pulled the plug on all three publications.

A free subscription to the Community Alliance newspaper is available to any prisoner who asks. Requests should be sent to: Community Alliance, PO Box 5077, Fresno Ca 93755

Hacienda State Prison?

By Mike Rhodes

There are plans to turn the old Hacienda hotel, located on Clinton near highway 99, into a correctional facility. The proposal has created a serious debate in both the progressive community and the neighborhood where the facility is located about whether or not this is the best use for the Hacienda

The debate was started in late January when Carissa Phelps (see the story on page 1) warned the Parkside Drive community that if they did not act fast, a private corporation was going to develop the old Hacienda Hotel into a state prison, complete with razor wire, correctional officers, and high security. Phelps said that some city officials approved of the plan because it would provide some emergency housing for homeless women and it passed the Planning Commission on a 7-0 vote. Going into the January 30 "Truth on the Table" community meeting, set up by Fresno mayor Alan Autry, the proposal seemed like a slam dunk.

Yolanda Salinas-Bowen was the first resident at the mayor's meeting, held at the Golden Palace Event Center (across the street from the Hacienda), to complain about the proposal to build a privatized state prison in the neighborhood. She said "from what I heard it is going to be a half way house, a homeless space, there are going to be guards, and 24 hour a day video surveillance. How can you put kids in that facility with barbed wire around the place? Is that a good environment for them to be raised in?"

Autry responded that there was not going to be any razor wire and compared it to the Betty Ford rehabilitation center. He said that the community needed a facility that would take care of the homeless and women who had drug and alcohol problems. Autry seemed to be taking the moral high ground when he argued against NIMBY'ism (Not In My Back Yard) and argued that these people need help and that the facility has to go somewhere.

Phelps, who helped organize many of the neighbors to the meeting, reminded mayor Autry that the residents in this area had not been given proper notice that this facility was being considered. Most of the people in the audience raised their hands when asked if they had less than three days notice. Phelps said that all the community is asking for is time to be heard on this issue. She said, holding up the Planning Commission staff report, "it does say inmates in here, it does say

Hacenda continued from page 16

correctional officers, and it does say correctional center.”

Phelps asked Autry to appeal the proposal so the community could have input into the decision making process. Autry responded that he was inclined to support the proposal for the facility, but it was clear he was being moved by some of the testimony. Phelps asked Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer why his department had not commented on the facility. Dyer said he had not seen the proposal and would like some time to look at it. With that, Autry agreed to appeal the proposal and the audience cheered.

Since that meeting a debate has circulated in the progressive community about the desirability to have a correctional facility, housing about 400 women, at the Hacienda. Supporters of the proposal, like Catherine Campbell and Maria Telesco, argue that there is a need for alternatives to the existing State Prisons and that a small community based facility would be more humane and give inmates the ability to be closer to families. Being close to their families would help them reintegrate into the community once they are released.

Debbie Reyes, Central Valley Coordinator of the California Prison Moratorium Project, doesn't believe we need to be building more prisons, particularly not in the Central Valley. In an email sent to the Fresno chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom listserv she asked why the

facility wasn't proposed for the Palm and Herndon area, suggesting there are elements of dumping this facility in a part of town that already suffers from high crime and poverty.

Reyes went on to write that there are “over 3,300 folks, mostly in the two women's prisons in Chowchilla and other women not supporting this local facility here or anywhere.” She identified some of the progressive opponents as Angela Davis, Dolores Huerta, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore. Reyes also encouraged people to read

an article in the San Diego Union about the nonprofit corporation that wants to run the Hacienda facility: http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060820/news_1n20mental.html

Carissa Phelps did say that upon further reading of the plans the facility would not have razor wire. Phelps, Reyes, Campbell and many others who care about this issue were planning on attending a City Council meeting on February 26. The outcome of the hearing will be posted on <http://www.indybay.org/centralvalley/>



Carissa Phelps, speaking at the January 30 community meeting about converting the old Hacienda Hotel into a state prison.

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PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 28 - March 8

The Rogue Festival - Celebrating Independent and Performance Art. For more information see: <http://roguefestival.org/>

February 28 - April 19

“Cesar Chavez Tribute” at the Arte Americas Upper Gallery at 1630 Van Ness in downtown Fresno. Local artists capture the spirit of César Chávez: His work for social justice, and farmworker equality. Exhibiting Artists: Jose Elias, Manuel Gasca, Elia Barajas, Miguel Alvarez, Martin Valencia, and more!

Hours:

Open Tues - Sat ~ 11am - 5pm, Thursdays until 8pm, Closed Sundays. ADMISSION: General \$3 Students & Seniors \$2 Members & Children under 5 Free

Saturday, March 1

10:30 AM

African American March for Justice: Marchers assemble at 9:30 am Rally 10:30 am Mary Ella Brown Community Center * 1350 E. Annandale Ave Fresno, CA 93706 (Bring canned food donation) March begins at 10:30 am End at the Free AME Church, 806 Collins Fresno, CA. Program begins 12:00 noon— Awards Ceremony. Donations Payable To: Fresno Center For Nonviolence, Vendor Tables available: \$20.00. For more info. call Patricia Miller at (559) 803-0006 Patricia12miller@yahoo.com or visit www.nancal.org



Saturday, March 1

1 PM

Sprawlzilla vs. Main Street’ —where else would you be able to sing along to a catchy song called ‘Operation Rezone’?

Local songwriter Blake Jones takes a two week break from his well-loved local pop band The Trike Shop (the same folks who went to Liverpool this past summer), and joins his daughter Chelsea and their friend Todd Severson in creating ‘Sprawlzilla vs. Main Street’ — a musical production dealing with the troubles of sprawl, and the enduring dream of ‘Main Street’.

Will singing clever songs, dressing in funny clothes and writing haiku transform the Fulton Mall into a vibrant and ‘happening’ center of activity? Will it keep Kingsburg and other surrounding Valley towns from slipping into the well-worn pattern of faceless sprawl? Yes! Yes! A thousand times, yes! Come see the show as it debuts at the Rogue Festival. All shows are at Veni Vidi Vici and cost \$4. Show times are: Saturday, March 1st at 1pm; Sunday, March 2nd at 3:30pm; and Friday, March 7th at 7:00pm.

Saturday, March 1

7 PM

“Honest Sancha’s Used Mexican Lot”
“The Two Faces of the Boss”

This play is directed by Agustin Lira and performed by Teatro Immigrante. The show will be at Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness in downtown Fresno. Tickets are \$10. Seniors, students, and Arte Americas members \$7. This show will also be performed on March 2 at 4

PM, March 7 at 7 PM, and March 8 at 7 PM (all at Arte Americas).

An additional performance will be held on Saturday, March 15 at 7 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2672 Alluvial Avenue (between Willow and Cedar).

Monday, March 3

6:30 - 8 PM

Health Care for All meeting will be held at the California School Employees Association, 2501 W Shaw #107 (the second building on Hughes behind the SW corner at Shaw, between Marks and West).

Wednesday, March 5

4 - 6:30 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry (FMM) will hold a reception for their new executive director Richard P. Yanes, J.D. Yanes will replace the Reverend Walt Parry who successfully led the organization for more than 23 years as the senior executive. Reverend Parry retired this January.

FMM is located at 1005 N. Van Ness Avenue, Suite H, in Fresno and may be reached by calling 559-485-1416 or by email at metromin@fresnometmin.org . FMM is inviting the friends of Metro Ministry to meet Yanes at the FMM offices. Hors d’oeuvres and refreshments will be provided.

violence they endure on a daily basis. A panel discussion follows the film, featuring formerly incarcerated women — including a plaintiff and attorney involved in the Shumate v. Wilson lawsuit — and other activists who are challenging inhumane prison conditions and the prison industrial complex. Light snacks provided and extra credit possible for students.

Our Voices Within: Out of the Shadows The stories of domestic violence survivors incarcerated in state prison for crimes related to their experiences of being abused. The film features interviews with six domestic violence survivors released from prison and their connections to Free Battered Women, a grassroots coalition working for justice and freedom for abuse survivors who are incarcerated. Footage from Free Battered Women’s community event celebrating these and other survivors’ freedom links their remarkable journey to freedom with the larger movement to end domestic violence. Our Voices Within: Out of the Shadows explores hope in the face of injustice; resistance to state violence; struggles for freedom; and the power of solidarity.

Presented by Free Battered Women, the California Coalition for Women Prisoners, the California Prison Moratorium Project

Post-screening discussants: representatives from Free Battered Women and the California Coalition for Women Prisoners

This film will be shown in McLane 121. Parking is relaxed after 4:30PM on Fridays in area parking lots. Check the campus map to see which parking area is most convenient. <http://www.csufresno.edu/univrelations/map/>

Friday, March 7

6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Documentary: No End in Sight A chronological look at the fiasco in Iraq, especially decisions made in the spring of 2003 - and the backgrounds of those making decisions - immediately following the overthrow of Saddam: no occupation plan, an inadequate team to run the country, insufficient troops to keep order, and three edicts from the White House announced by Bremmer when he took over: no provisional Iraqi government, de-Ba’athification, and disbanding the Iraqi armed services.

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

Saturday, March 8

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Monthly Board Meeting of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, at 1584 N. Van Ness. Public is invited.

Saturday, March 8

All Day

International Women’s Day. For more information see: <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/womday97.htm>
<http://www.indybay.org/womyn/>
<http://www.womensaynotowar.org/>

Saturday, March 8

11:30 AM

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) will sponsor a luncheon-presentation to celebrate International Women’s Day. Dr. Loretta Kensinger of CSUF will discuss her book on the life of Emma Goldman. The title of Loretta’s presentation is: “Radical Lessons: Thinking About Emma Goldman in Conservative Times.” This event will take place at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 1610 E. Shaw. Lunch reservations are \$15, \$10 for students. For more information, call 439-0280 or 301-6676.

Saturday, March 8

3:30 - 5 PM

Fresno City Council candidate Susan Good will be the speaker at the Central Valley Progressive PAC meeting. Members and the public are welcome to hear and ask questions of Susan as she discusses major issues facing Fresno County. The meeting is at the Fresno Center for Non-Violence (1584 N. Van Ness Ave. (at McKinley), Fresno. For more information, visit www.cvppac.org or call 559-435-7360.

Thursday, March 6

Opens at 5 PM

Art Show - FOOT FETISH at Silva/Salazar Studio and Gallery, 654 Van Ness Avenue. Arthop

Featuring some feet of Fresno, including Mike Rhodes, Cynthia Sterling, Brian Calhoun, Mayor Autry, Chief Dyer. Stafani Boorogian, Bebe Long, Maria Franco, Richard Silva, Dixie Salazar and many more. Come see who was willing to take it all off for photographer Cynthia Chapman Manuszak and who was not! Also, a beautiful photograph of the late Pamela Kincaids’ feet. Hope to meet you there! Gloria Nazzartta, will be on site offering relaxing foot massages at an affordable rate. For more information contact Cynthia at 559 709 2263 Cynsart@webtv.net

Friday, March 7

5:15 PM

Cineculture Club presents: Celebrating Women’s Herstory Month. Charisse Shumate: Fighting for Our Lives (2005)

Freedom Archives (Editor) and California Coalition for Women Prisoners (Contributor). 35 min. USA. Not rated.

The story of women prisoners — many of them domestic violence survivors — who stood up to the CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to demand quality health care for imprisoned women. Charisse Shumate and dozens of other women filed a lawsuit against the state of California (Shumate v. Wilson) to fight this medical neglect and the systemic

Saturday, March 8 7 - 9 PM

The Women's Study department at CSUF is sponsoring Dr. Nehzat Farnoodi - her topic is "The grassroots strategy movement of Iranian women in Iran and outside the country". She will be speaking in Farsi for the Iranian Arts and Culture Club at Fort Washington Elementary School, 960 East Teague.

Sunday, March 9 2 PM

Celebration of the life of Fresno Center for Nonviolence Honorary Board Member - Valta Pointer, who died on Monday, February 11th. In accordance with her wishes, no religious services will take place. The center is holding a gathering to reminisce, philosophize and eat - some of Valta's favorite activities. Donations in her name may be made to the Fresno Center for Nonviolence or to the Feline Society, where Valta found Punkin, the last of her series of beloved and pampered cats.

Monday, March 10 7 PM

Ever wonder what a trip to Cuba would be like? There will be a public meeting about what is involved in going to Cuba with Pastors for Peace. This meeting will be held at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N Van Ness.

Tuesday, March 11 10 AM - 2 PM

In celebration of International Women's Day, Fresno City College will hold a "Festival of Women" at the FCC Free Speech Area.

Wednesday, March 12

In celebration of International Women's Day, Fresno City College will hold the following events:

"Her-story Workshops" location: SO-110

9:00 a.m. - Consent

10:00 a.m. - Queer Issues

12:00 p.m. - Women of Color

5:00 p.m. - Sex Workers

Wednesday, March 12

12 Noon & 7 PM

Monthly Every Second Wednesday Video Presentation at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, At the Center, 1584 N, Van Ness. Potluck at 6:30 PM. The video will be "Dorothy Day: Don't Call Me a Saint," a film documenting the life of this remarkable social activist. It tells the story of the New York writer and Catholic anarchist whom the Vatican is currently considering for canonization. But Dorothy is no ordinary saint. Her career began as a writer for radical newspapers during the Bohemian whirl of 1917 in New York's Greenwich Village. There was a doomed affair, an attempted suicide, an abortion, love anew, the birth of her daughter, and a conversion to Catholicism. The film begins at the height of the Depression with Dorothy meeting the French peasant-philosopher, Peter Maurin. Bound by the teachings of Christ they created the Catholic Worker, a social justice movement that persists. 57 minutes. FREE. For info call 237-3223 Mon-Fri 11-2.

Friday, March 14

5:30 PM & 8:15 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "Honeydripper" at the Tower Theatre. Filmmaker John Sayles examines the complexities and shifting identities of American subcultures via this fable about the birth of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s. The citizens of Harmony, Alabama - played by an ensemble cast of actors including Danny Glover, Charles S. Dutton and others - provide the rhythms for an understated portrait of the South under Jim Crow. Tickets cost \$10 general and \$8 for students and seniors, and can be purchased at the Tower Theatre box office, 815 E. Olive Ave., JA Photography, 2003 N. Van Ness Ave., and at the door. Tickets can also be purchased online through PayPal at www.FresnoFilmworks.org. For more information, call the Filmworks info line, (559) 221-0755, or go to www.FresnoFilmworks.org

Saturday, March 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the April, 2008 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net

Saturday, March 15

1-4 PM

Peace Fresno and other community groups will sponsor the Rally in the Valley for Peace and Justice . . .

NOW!. This event will be held at Eaton Plaza in downtown Fresno. There will be information tables, speakers, music, and a peace/justice march. The march begins at 1:00 p.m., so come early and listen to music (starts at 12:30 p.m.). If you or your organization would like to endorse, co-sponsor and/or table, or if you would like to volunteer, contact Scott at president@peacefresno.org or (559) 487-2515.

Saturday March 15 7:30 PM

ALASDAIR FRASER in concert with NATALIE HAAS, cello. Fresno Art Museum's Bonner Auditorium "The musical chemistry between Scottish fiddle legend Alasdair Fraser and young cello ace Natalie Haas is a rare, felicitous thing." -Daniel Gewertz, Boston Herald www.alasdairfraser.com. \$20 advance; \$25 at door Advance tickets available at Patrick's Music, National Hardware, online www.fresnofolkconcerts.com or phone Pat at 431-3653 Sponsored by the Fresno Folklore Society.



Thursday, March 20

Open 6:30 Video 7:00 Discussion 9:00

Progressive Thursday Presents "Zeitgeist" at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N. First Street, Fresno, CA [SW corner of First and Bullard]. This event is hosted by the Fresno County Green Party and is free, wheelchair accessible and open to anyone interested in progressive topics. Contact: Larry Mullen 559 227-0293 www.fresnogreens.org

Thursday, March 20

7 PM

The next meeting of the Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative (ISJC), at the Unitarian Universalist Church 2672 E. Alluvial, Clovis. All are welcome! For more information contact Mary Hetherington 346-1680.

The ISJC is a local organization which works to promote social justice activities of various faith traditions. They have sponsored educational forums on affordable housing, climate change and mental health. They consciously work to break down barriers between people and encourage justice and right relationships. They began their work with a few houses of worship and have grown. Meetings usually are on the 3rd Thursday of the month at a different house of worship in Fresno.

Saturday, March 22

Noon - dusk

Celebrate SunMt's 25 years. See green living demonstrations: solar oven, waterless composting toilet, the first solar electric system in Fresno County, and more. See Maia's paintings, Elfie's prints and posters, and SunMt's multimedia studio where they create docu-poem DVDs. Sample some SunMt Herbal Cookery recipes. Join the sunset equinox ceremony. For reservations & map: mail: mail@sunmt.org or 559.855.3710.

Thursday, March 27

12 Noon - 1 PM

Women in Black will hold a silent vigil at the CSUF free speech area. Women in Black is a world-wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. As women experiencing these things in different ways in different regions of the world, we support each other's movements. Co-sponsored by: POWER, Campus Peace & WILPF. Please call Meta Schettler 278-4593 or email mschettl@csufresno.edu for more information or see www.womeninblack.org to learn more about Women in Black worldwide.

Friday, March 28

5:15 PM

Cineculture Club presents: Celebrating the work of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta Freedom Archives

(Editor) and California Coalition for Women Prisoners (Contributor). 35 min. USA. Not rated.

The New Haven Raids/ Las Redadas de New Haven

Director: David Koff. 10 min. USA. Not rated.

Early on the morning of June 6, 2007, Fugitive Operations Teams of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the Department of Homeland Security conducted a series of raids in New Haven's largely immigrant neighborhood of Fair Haven. Five of those detained speak out on their experiences.

I Want My Parents Back

Teen Producers. 10 min. USA. Not rated

In the film a group of San Diego teens explore the issue of immigration and the effects of recent ICE raids on the community and specifically, the Munoz family.

Post-screening discussants: film director, David Koff

This film will be shown in McLane 121. Parking is relaxed after 4:30 PM on Fridays in area parking lots. Check the campus map to see which parking area is most convenient. <http://www.csufresno.edu/univrelations/map/>

Saturday, March, 29

8 AM - 4 PM

Faith in Violence-Free Families: Building Partnerships for Change. A Workshop for Faith Leaders and Domestic Violence Prevention Advocates. Sponsors: Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, Fresno Metro Ministry, Marin Abused Women Services, CA Department of Public Health

Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno

2111 East Nees Ave / Fresno, CA 93720

8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. (Registration & morning refreshments at 7:30)

Participants will receive an official Certificate of Completion, signed by the California Department of Public Health.

For more information Phone: (415) 526-2545 x TDD/TTY: (415) 457-24211 fvff@transformcommunities.org x www.transformcommunities.org

Saturday, March 29

10 AM

The annual march to honor the life of Cesar Chavez will start at Holmes Playground.



Saturday, March 29

10 AM - 3 PM

Local Candidates Forum at Fresno City College's Faculty Dining Room near Weldon and College Avenues, Fresno. A time certain for each of the races will be set later this month. The races currently planned to be included are Fresno Mayor, Fresno City Council Districts 2, 4, & 6; contested Board of Supervisor races, and possibly the contested race for Fresno Superior Court. The Forum is free and open to the public. The news media is invited to attend. This Forum is co-sponsored by the FCC Sociology Department. Relaxed parking on the FCC campus. For more information, visit www.cvppac.org or call 559-435-7360.

An updated version of the Peace and Social Justice Calendar can be found at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/calendar.htm>. Subscribers to this newspaper can also receive the calendar (updated every week) by email. Send a message to AllianceEditor@Comcast.net for details.

OPINION & ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

In the Name of National Security

By Ruth Gadebusch

The president seems to think that he can do anything he pleases so long as he says it is in the name of national security. The worst part is that it has worked for him ever since September 11, 2001, even with the Democratic Congress. How would he have managed if the tragedy of 9/11 had not happened?



As this is written the U.S. Senate has given him free rein to continue his spying on email and phone calls without warrants — as if the secret court warrants were not sufficient. Until last year we innocents thought procedures of the secret court were used. Little did we know. When word got out regarding the cooperation of the telecon companies, some forty legal suits were filed. It is for protection from these suits that Bush is so insistent on passage *retroactively* exempting the telecon companies. Interesting enough, he claims that he already has the authority, which begs the question of why he is so insistent to get Congress's blessing on the activity. So far the House of Representatives has not succumbed to his pleading.

Just this week (mid-February) a federal judge dismissed a case against a San Jose company that transported prisoners of the CIA for interrogation in foreign countries. Who thinks rendition, as it is called, was for honorable purposes? This was the third case in which a federal judge accepted the Bush administration's claim that to try such a case would expose state secrets.

Most of us believe that the "state secrets" are matters beyond the law and, even more, immoral. There isn't much doubt that these inmates were mistreated in ways we did not think this nation indulged. Now, the detainees have no recourse in our legal system. This applies to both citizens and foreign nationals caught up in this system. One Attorney General was forced to resign with his approval of this type of torture and other abuse of the law, only to be replaced by another who refuses to say that waterboarding is unacceptable. That is, unless it applied to him! Both the Senate and the House have passed legislation clearly prohibiting waterboarding and other harsh methods of interrogation, but the president threatens to veto it.

As if this were not bad enough, a top official of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement admitted that the agency has mistakenly detained U.S. citizens. Those arrested by the agency are not entitled to representation by an attorney. We are all aware that in the name of national security many have been arrested, largely because they look Mexican or Muslim. The Vera Institute of Justice, at one point in 2006, identified 125 citizens detained by ICE. There are cases of people dropped off without legal recourse in a receiving nation where they have never lived and where they do not speak the language.

Paranoia reigns when it comes to immigration in this nation. How ironic for a nation that was formed by immigrants. Have you seen that ugly, ugly fence built between San Diego and Tijuana? Now there are all kinds of plans to build along the entire border, but as the governor of Arizona said, if a 50-foot fence is built, someone will have a 51-foot ladder. The reality is, so long as economic disparity exists there will be border crossing, illegal or otherwise. It is time to work out a plan that serves the citizens of both nations.

The areas of virtual fence have not worked any better than the physical one. A push is being made to build such a fence between us and our neighbor to the north. After all, great hoards of terrorists are waiting to cross at the first opportunity; or so, the president would have us believe.

Most of us accept as necessary the security measures in airports, but in the name of national security much more identification is now required when one leaves the country. All manner of identification is proposed for other activities such as preventing illegals from voting though no evidence exists of great violation by illegals. It is part of our paranoia that continues to be fed by the president, candidates for public office, media

pundits and others, for purposes of their own.

The coming elections are our opportunity. We must be vigilant in whom we support. National security does not depend on becoming a police state. It is time to respect the needs and contributions of all our citizens. We must restore this nation's reputation around the world by once again living our principles. We must return to our constitutional principles for ourselves, the citizens of the USA.

CORRECTION to February Column: It is the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (not the 14th) that granted the vote to former slaves (male) and not women.

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Ruth Gadebusch is a former naval officer, 13 years as a Fresno Unified School District Trustee, Vice-President of the Center for Civic Education, Community Activist.

"Affordable Housing" Oh, Joy – Here We Go Again! By Donna Larsen and Maria Telesco

More senior "affordable" housing right in our Southeast backyard. A public meeting at Sunnyside High School Cafeteria. The night was dark, parking lots poorly lit, no directional signs, nobody who knew their way around campus. We drove around like the legendary "Flying Dutchman" ghost ship, until we stumbled upon the Cafeteria's secret location. Light seen through a window; doors locked.

Donna limped around searching for an unlocked door, while Maria banged her cane on doors and windows. Eventually, someone responded. We hobbled in. Several attendees were complaining how hard it was to find the meeting site. A presenter said "I couldn't find it either."

"It" was a presentation by men from ROEM corporation, real estate developers and builders since 1978. The acronym represents the initials of gazilionaire owner, Robert Ememi, who lives near San Jose. Ememi, in his spare time, hosts Rupert Murdoch and other prosperous entrepreneurs at fund-raising cocktail parties for political candidates.

A presenter began speaking. Nobody could hear him. Someone fiddled briefly with the sound system, then gave up. None of the speakers seemed able to hold the mic close enough to his mouth to make words discernable. Several gentlemen had foreign accents, unfamiliar to American, or at least Fresnan, ears. Every once in a while, the speaker of the moment would mumble "Can you hear me OK," and prattle on before he could acknowledge the "no"s and "uh-uh"s.

ROEM, working with Fresno City and County, plan to build an "affordable" low income senior apartment complex on Kings Canyon, opposite Wal-Mart. It would include a bus terminal, so buses from all over would converge, enabling residents to avail themselves of public transportation. The bus terminal would have vending machines, and seats to sit on while waiting for the bus. And two rest rooms,

What about parking – for tenants, bus riders, park visitors? "Well, we haven't exactly figured that out yet. But we will."

How many apartments? "Um, 129, all one bedroom, for singles or couples, about 500 to 700 square feet. The population density for the apartments will be 1.5 to 1.9." Donna turned to her husband, beside her, and asked if he would be 1.5 or 1.9. Someone thought that meant most apartments would house couples, fewer would have singles. Or was it the other way around?

The rent? Presenters huddled. "Go to the web site." We did, later on, and the web site for all their many projects said "Phone office for [rent] information."

Would there be a community room where seniors could congregate? "No, but they could sit and visit in the bus terminal, get coffee from the vending machines. There would be a large, grassy public park for use of residents and people from the community. And places for children to play."

What about public toilets and water fountains for park

visitors? "None planned, but they could use those at the bus terminal. But there will be some BBQs for the tenants." Would there be seating and tables to enjoy those BBQ foods? "No, but the tenants on the first floor would have patios where they could sit and eat." What about those on the second floor? Mumble, mumble, huddle, huddle. "Let's move along, we can discuss that later."

What about tenants' fitness and recreation? "Uh, there's a walking/jogging path around the perimeter." Are there benches to sit and drinking fountains for those using the path? "Well, not exactly, we haven't figured that out yet. But you can always go inside the bus terminal to sit down, and drink from that fountain."

Cut to the chase. What about the rent? What about the income level? "Uh, well, between \$350 to \$550." That's hardly for low income. What's the minimum income to be eligible. "\$20,000. You mean I have to make at least \$20,000 a year before I can move into that place? Most of us barely make half of that. "We have to keep it high so the wrong people won't move in."

Another presenter spoke: "No, the minimum is \$20,000. That means that \$20,000 is the most income you can make." So what does that mean? Is \$20,000 the minimum or the maximum?

"All right now, we have a lot of ground to cover. We appreciate your input, we will consider your suggestions, and get back to you in a few months."

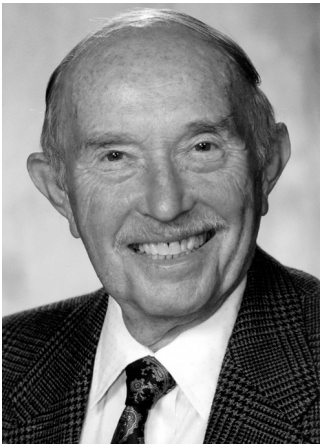
One final question: How many senior citizens were involved in planning this project? "None. We knew we could get all the input we'd need from you at this meeting. Thanks for coming. Good night."

Yeah. Whatever.

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From The Greenhouse by Franz Weinschenk

Last June, the third largest solar power plant in the world went on line in Nevada, right near Las Vegas. Called "Nevada Solar One," this plant is currently generating 64 megawatts, enough electricity to power approximately 47,000 homes. Ninety-eight percent of its power is produced by the sun — and only two percent by natural gas; therefore, virtually no greenhouse gases are emitted.



Contrary to what you might think, this plant does not use voltaic solar panels like the ones we're used to seeing on people's roofs. Its power comes from parabolic troughs lined with mirrors that reflect and concentrate the sun's rays on a single oil-filled pipe running down its central focal axis. Because of their concave shape, the mirrors inside these troughs reflect and focus all the rays of the sun that land on them directly onto that central pipe. In short order the oil inside the pipe heats up to roughly 700 degrees Fahrenheit.

The hot oil is then pumped into a heat exchange area where it turns water into steam that, in turn, operates steam turbines that generate electricity in the traditional way. As the plant operates during the daytime, it collects extra heat that it stores in phase-changing molten salts, which hold the heat until it is needed for nighttime power generation. The mirrored troughs are manufactured by Schott Glass, a German firm that has pioneered a special process to coat the insides of the steel troughs with mirrors in such a way as to avoid differential expansion and contraction between the metal and glass. Although the plant was planned and constructed by a number of companies with the aid of the US Department of Energy, it is now owned by the Spanish energy conglomerate Acciona. Three similar plants are currently planned, two 50-megawatt plants in Spain and a 100-megawatt facility in Israel.

So the question arises, are similar solar plants a possibility for Central California? And how do they com-

Continued on page 21

pare with nuclear plants, about which there has been so much conversation lately?

To begin with, there certainly is enough sunshine here in our valley to operate plants of this type. Out of 175 American cities, Yuma, Arizona, gets the most sunshine. Las Vegas is fourth, just a little ahead of Fresno, which is number eight. That surely tells us we have an abundance of sunshine, enough to make plants similar to Nevada Solar One work in the Valley.

Since solar plants take up quite a bit of space (Nevada Solar One is located on a 400-acre site), where might they be located? The answer is probably either in the foothills or on the West Side, where there is an abundance of marginal, desert-like land. A site that's around 1,000 feet or higher is preferred since it would be above the Valley's winter fog.

And while there might be some concerns about constructing solar plants, they pale in comparison with the risks and problems connected with nuclear plants. Should there ever be an accident in a solar plant, there is little danger to nearby civilians or their property. That is not the case with any kind of nuclear facility – especially since radioactivity is involved. A nuclear accident or a terrorist incident could devastate the whole Valley! It also needs to be remembered that earthquakes do happen here. I have lived through two of them – the Tehachapi in 1952 and the Coalinga in 1983.

While it is probably true that nuclear plants are safer today than they used to be, we still have to ask the question, if they are so safe, why is it that no private insurance company will insure them?

Solar plants emit no greenhouse gases whatsoever, nor are there any waste products. That's contrary to nuclear plants, which produce radioactive waste that needs to be shipped to places where folks don't want it. In some instances it takes many thousands of years for that kind of waste to become non-radioactive. In addition, before any new nuclear plant can be built, existing laws have to be changed, exhaustive environmental studies have to be completed, and somebody has to figure out where the water to cool the reactors will come from.

In conclusion, since power plants like Nevada Solar One pose virtually no risk to their surroundings, produce totally renewable energy, are absolutely clean, and could be on line many years before their nuclear counterparts, isn't it abundantly clear that they are much preferred over nuclear plants for supplying the Valley's future power needs?

###

Franz Weinschenk has been a teacher and school administrator in Fresno for over fifty years. He can be contacted by e-mail at franzie@SCCCD.org



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line. I was however given a tour of the stock yard, shown a couple of long horned steer, and saw hides coming off a conveyor belt into a truck. Cargill even brought out Mark Klein, director of media relations, from Minneapolis Mn to answer any questions I might have but he would not show me the chute that was too small for the long horned steers.

On the same day of my tour of Cargill (February 25), State Senator Dean Florez held a hearing on the issue of meat contamination in Sacramento. Prior to the hearing, Florez said “As thousands of pounds of frozen ground beef sit ‘on hold’ in school cafeterias across the nation while the USDA determines whether or not it is safe for our children to eat, I have scheduled a hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Food-borne Illness into the events that got us into this situation, as well as other disturbing issues brought to light by the investigation.” The hearing attempted to answer the question: “Are we allowing E-Coli contaminated beef to enter California’s food supply?” Florez asked participants of several panels what, if anything, the state could do to respond to the recall and what could be done to prevent another incident.

The first testimony came from Dr. Michael Greger, the Director of Public Health and Animal Agriculture for the Humane Society of the United States. His testimony stated that “the horrific treatment of animals we documented is being downplayed as an unconscionable aberration—the work of just a handful of rogue employees. We do not believe this is an accurate characterization.” Greger concluded his testimony with the following: “we encourage your committee to recognize that this case demonstrates some deep and systemic flaws in USDA’s oversight of slaughter plants. USDA has an inherent conflict of interest, with its prime mission being to promote agriculture, a mission that seems too often to trump its other responsibilities.”

Florez expressed frustration with the job the USDA was

doing to protect our food supply and asked several times if it would be a good idea to install video surveillance cameras at the state’s slaughterhouses. These cameras would monitor the facilities to guarantee the humane treatment of animals and to ensure that downer cows are not entering the food chain.

Two employees of the now shuttered southern California Hallmark Meat Company were charged on February 15 with animal cruelty in the aftermath the massive meat



Derek Kennedy, vice president and general manager at the Fresno Cargill plant says all of the cows that come to their plant are humanely treated. “If we have a downed cow it is sent to the rendering plant,” Kennedy said.

recall. “Americans know cruelty when they see it, and the HSUS investigation has outraged millions,” said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. “The suffering of animals shown in the HSUS video is beyond comprehension.”

After being provided videotaped evidence and a detailed report of the undercover investigation, San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael A. Ramos charged Daniel Ugarte Navarro with five felony counts under

California’s anti-cruelty statute and three misdemeanor counts alleging the use of a mechanical device to move “downer” cows, those unable to stand on their own. Convictions on the felony charges could bring a sentence up to 15 years in prison and \$100,000 in fines, plus additional penalties on the misdemeanor charges. The second worker, Jose Luis Sanchez, was charged with three misdemeanors involving downers. He faces up to 18 months in jail and \$3,000 in fines if convicted.

There is no way for the Community Alliance newspaper to verify the claims of former employees at Cargill or to know how well the company is able to keep all contaminants out of the food supply. That is the job of the USDA or the courts.

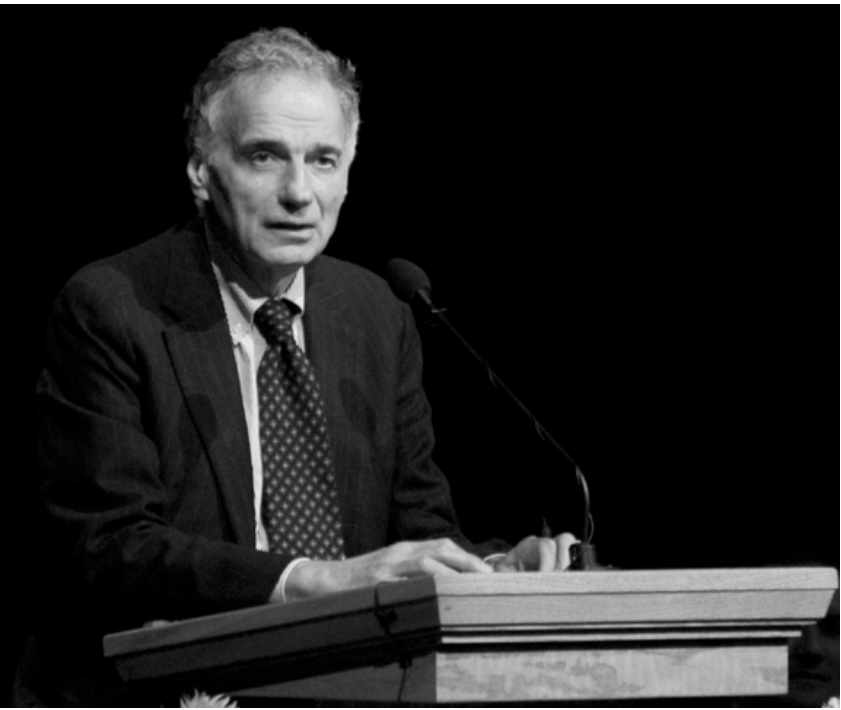
It is the job of the USDA to protect our food supplies. But with their failure to monitor the slaughterhouse in southern California, which resulted in the largest recall in US history, a lot of people are questioning how much we can trust the USDA. Why did it take a clandestine film crew to uncover this situation when the USDA was on site and supposedly monitoring the situation?

Repeated attempts by this newspaper to get a comment from a USDA inspector at the Cargill plant was unsuccessful. USDA representatives were invited but did not attend the legislative hearings in Sacramento.

Senator Dean Florez’s suggestion to put video surveillance cameras at all California slaughterhouses might not be a bad idea. Put the live video on the Internet so consumers can see for themselves that the cows being processed are being humanely treated and that no downer’s go into onto the kill floor. Until consumers can trust the USDA again, this might be the best we can hope for.

###

**Steven Gomez and Karen Stump are fictitious names. The Community Alliance newspaper has changed the two whistle blowers names to protect their privacy.*



Open Letter To George W. Bush

by Ralph Nader
First published on www.CommonDreams.org

Dear President Bush:

I was listening to your address before the self-described Conservative Political Action Committee gathering in Washington, D.C. last week, while reviewing materials on occupational hazards in the workplace. The contrast between your declarations and the ongoing annual tragedy of 58,000 Americans losing their lives due to workplace diseases and traumas (OSHA figures) was astonishing and deplorable.

Your remarks included such phrases as “You and I believe in accountability;” “People should be responsible for their actions;” “Maintaining a culture of life;” and that “My number one priority is to protect you;” “All human life is precious and deserves to be protected.”

These are words and phrases that you have been using year after year in your capacity as a judicially-selected President who has sworn to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the land.

Therefore, let us apply your verbal sensitivities about accountability, responsibility and the safety of working

Americans, to your sworn duty to uphold the job safety laws of your Administration.

Having been deeply involved in the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 1970-during the Nixon Administration, I know that its principal mission was regulatory: to establish federal workplace safety standards, enforce them and upgrade them to avoid obsolescence.

Although in its 37 year history, OSHA regulations and inspections saved many lives, the latter two-thirds of its history has witnessed a serious deterioration in its performance. It is now a captive of industry, under budgeted, understaffed with a consulting attitude rather than a law-and-order, live-saving determination.

Under the Clinton Administration, not one chemical control regulation was initiated and issued in eight years. Under your regime, OSHA is dormant. Your Secretary of Labor ignores it where she does not actually operate to keep it asleep. Yet, on average, every week over 1000 Americans die from the workplace exposures.

Under the Reagan Administration, the White House rejected an urgent request by the physicians at the Centers for Disease Control for a three million dollar budget to send certified letters to 250,000 workers found in a lengthy field study to be exposed to significant hazards-chemical and particulate-in their factories, foundries and mines. The letters were to urge the workers to have their doctors check them out for actual or incipient diseases. Instead, the workers were left defenseless.

Last week, an explosive fireball imploded the century-old Dixie Crystal sugar refinery in Port Wentworth, Georgia, taking, at latest count, seven lives and causing many serious injuries. This is only the latest of a steady series of explosions, mine collapses, cave-ins at construction sites and other fatally traumatic occurrences.

And who can forget the gripping, prize-winning series in The New York Times in January, 2003 that began with these words:

“Tyler, Texas-It is said that only the desperate seek work at Tyler Pipe, a sprawling, rusting pipe foundry out on Route 69, just past the flea market. Behind a high metal fence lies a workplace that is part Dickens and part Dar-

win, a dim, dirty, hellishly hot place where men are regularly disfigured by amputations and burns, where turnover is so high that convicts are recruited from local prisons...”

Tyler Pipe is owned by McWane, Inc. of Burmingham, Alabama, which is a very large manufacturer of cast-iron sewer and water pipe. Since 1995, according to a nine-month investigation by the Times, PBS and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “at least 4,600 injuries have been recorded in McWane foundries, many hundreds of them serious ones.” They included fatalities.

Numerous coal companies were finally caught a few years ago faking their coal dust samples to avoid federal regulations designed to diminish coal miners’ Pneumoconiosis. Fines for these deliberate violations were, as usual, slaps on the companies’ wrists. Since 1900, more coal miners have lost their lives from coal dust and mine collapses than all the Americans lost in World War II. And that is just one industry!

So, where is George W. Bush? The man who says his Job One is to protect the safety of Americans. Has he visited any of their disasters caused by corporate wrongdoing, not by natural disasters? Has he ever made a major speech or proposed a decent budget and stronger enforcement and authority for the federal worker safety and health agencies?

Has he been maintaining “a culture of life” under an “accountability” framework? Does he believe that he and his top appointees have “been responsible for their actions.” Not at all.

Perhaps you are not worried about this lonely epidemic of death, disease and injury day after day, since it is not caused by terrorists. Even if every three weeks, workplace conditions lead to a fatality toll greater than 9/11. Imagine, every three weeks, on average.

Remember Mr. Bush, you said “all human life is precious and deserves to be protected.” This is especially so when the perils are so preventable by timely regulatory inspections and enforcement of up-to-date life-saving standards.

It comes back, in the final analysis, to that oath of office you took, doesn’t it, to enforce the laws under our Constitution whose preamble starts with “We the People.” Not “We the Corporations.”

###

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His most recent book is The Seventeen Traditions.

Disowned by the Ownership Society

by Naomi Klein



[This article was first published in The Nation magazine - see: <http://www.thenation.com/>]

Remember the “ownership society,” fixture of major George W. Bush addresses for the first four years of his presidency? “We’re creating...an ownership society in this country,

where more Americans than ever will be able to open up their door where they live and say, welcome to my house, welcome to my piece of property,” Bush said in October 2004. Washington think-tanker Grover Norquist predicted that the ownership society would be Bush’s greatest legacy, remembered “long after people can no longer pronounce or spell Fallujah.” Yet in Bush’s final State of the Union address, the once-ubiquitous phrase was conspicuously absent. And little wonder: rather than its proud father, Bush has turned out to be the ownership society’s undertaker.

Well before the ownership society had a neat label, its creation was central to the success of the right-wing economic revolution around the world. The idea was simple: if working-class people owned a small piece of the market—a home mortgage, a stock portfolio, a private pension—they would cease to identify as workers and start to see themselves as owners, with the same interests as their bosses. That meant they could vote for politicians promising to improve stock performance rather than job conditions. Class consciousness would be a relic.

It was always tempting to dismiss the ownership society as an empty slogan—“hokum” as former Labor Secretary Robert Reich put it. But the ownership society was quite real. It was the answer to a roadblock long faced by politicians favoring policies to benefit the wealthy. The problem boiled down to this: people tend to vote their economic interests. Even in the wealthy United States, most people earn less than the average income. That means it is in the interest of the majority to vote for politicians promising to redistribute wealth from the top down.

So what to do? It was Margaret Thatcher who pioneered a solution. The effort centered on Britain’s public housing, or council estates, which were filled with die-hard Labour Party supporters. In a bold move, Thatcher offered strong incentives to residents to buy their council estate flats at reduced rates (much as Bush did decades later by promoting subprime mortgages). Those who could afford it became homeowners while those who couldn’t faced rents almost twice as high as before, leading to an explosion of homelessness.

As a political strategy, it worked: the renters continued to oppose Thatcher, but polls showed that more than half of the newly minted owners did indeed switch their party affiliation to the Tories. The key was a psychological shift: they now thought like owners, and owners tend to vote Tory. The ownership society as a political project was born.

Across the Atlantic, Reagan ushered in a range of policies that similarly convinced the public that class divisions no longer existed. In 1988 only 26 percent of Americans told pollsters that they lived in a society bifurcated into “haves” and “have-nots”—71 percent rejected the whole idea of class. The real breakthrough, however, came in the 1990s, with the “democratization” of stock ownership, eventually leading to nearly half of American households owning stock. Stock watching became a national pastime, with tickers on TV screens becoming more common than weather forecasts. Main Street, we were told, had stormed the elite enclaves of Wall Street.

Once again, the shift was psychological. Stock ownership made up a relatively minor part of the average American’s earnings, but in the era of frenetic downsizing and offshoring, this new class of amateur investor had a distinct shift in consciousness. Whenever a new round of layoffs was announced, sending another stock price soaring, many responded not by identifying with those who had lost their jobs, or by protesting the policies that had led to the layoffs, but

by calling their brokers with instructions to buy.

Bush came to office determined to take these trends even further, to deliver Social Security accounts to Wall Street and target minority communities—traditionally out of the Republican Party’s reach—for easy homeownership. “Under 50 percent of African Americans and Hispanic Americans own a home,” Bush observed in 2002. “That’s just too few.” He called on Fannie Mae and the private sector “to unlock millions of dollars, to make it available for the purchase of a home”—an important reminder that subprime lenders were taking their cue straight from the top.

Today, the basic promises of the ownership society have been broken. First the dot-com bubble burst; then employees watched their stock-heavy pensions melt away with Enron and WorldCom. Now we have the subprime mortgage crisis, with more than 2 million homeowners facing foreclosure on their homes. Many are raiding their 401(k)s—their piece of the stock market—to pay their mortgage. Wall Street, meanwhile, has fallen out of love with Main Street. To avoid regulatory scrutiny, the new trend is away from publicly traded stocks and toward private equity. In November Nasdaq joined

forces with several private banks, including Goldman Sachs, to form Portal Alliance, a private equity stock market open only to investors with assets upward of \$100 million. In short order yesterday’s ownership society has morphed into today’s members-only society.

The mass eviction from the ownership society has profound political implications. According to a September Pew Research poll, 48 percent of Americans say they live in a society carved into haves and have-nots—nearly twice the number of 1988. Only 45 percent see themselves as part of the haves. In other words, we are seeing a return of the very class consciousness that the ownership society was supposed to erase. The free-market ideologues have lost an extremely potent psychological tool—and progressives have gained one. Now that John Edwards is out of the presidential race, the question is, will anyone dare to use it?

###

Naomi Klein is an award-winning journalist, syndicated columnist and author of the international and New York Times bestseller *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.



DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Dolores Huerta Foundation (DHF) is a growing statewide 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire and motivate people to organize sustainable communities to attain political and social justice. DHF was founded in 2003 and is based in Bakersfield, California. Following three years of base-building and significant victories, the DHF is positioned to grow. We are seeking committed individuals who are committed to achieving social and political justice to join our dynamic organization.

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cchavez@doloreshuerta.org or Fax: (661) 322-3171

▪ Please state the position being applied for ▪

JOB DESCRIPTION | Administrative Manager

SUMMARY: Under the direction of the Executive Director and DHF Board President, the Administrative Manager is responsible for executing administrative functions and human resources for the Dolores Huerta Foundation.

Qualifications: Commitment to civil, worker & women's rights, Experience in human resource matters, Supervisory experience of office personnel, Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Outlook, Access, Excel, Excellent written and oral communication skills (English & Spanish), High degree of self-direction and initiative, Able to work on multiple projects simultaneously.

JOB DESCRIPTION | Poder Popular Program Manager

SUMMARY: Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Program Manager is responsible for coordinating the Poder Popular Project in Southern Kern County. The Poder Popular/Promotores Comunitarios project aims to actively engage, mobilize and empower agricultural workers and their families to improve the social and physical environmental threats in their communities as a means of achieving improvements in their health and well being, and ultimately creating a more supportive and healthier environment in their neighborhoods and towns.

Qualifications: Commitment to civil, worker & women's rights, Minimum 2-3 years community organizing experience, Supervisory experience a must Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Outlook, Access, Excel & Internet, Written & spoken fluency English/Spanish, Excellent interpersonal & communication skills, Ability to work independently and as a team, Willing to work evenings and weekends, Public speaking skills, Patience.

JOB DESCRIPTION | Development Associate

SUMMARY: Under the direction of the Development Director, the Development Associate is responsible for assisting with fundraising events, technical writing and other development projects for the Dolores Huerta Foundation.

Qualifications: Commitment to civil, worker & women's rights, Fundraising experience and event planning a must, Proficient writing and editing skills, Strong Interpersonal communication skills, Efficiency in Access, Word and Excel, Ability to work as a team player, Ability to meet deadlines, Some evening and weekend work, High degree of initiative, Written & spoken fluency English/Spanish a plus, Web design/management a plus.

AN OPEN LETTER

A CALL FOR Fair Treatment

We thank the doctors, nurses and staff at Community Medical Centers for devoting themselves every day to caring for our relatives, friends and neighbors who need healing.

We all value fair and respectful treatment. We know that the CMC employees who wish to form a union with SEIU-United Healthcare Workers are dedicated caregivers. They wish to work constructively with management to improve patient care and secure a brighter future for themselves and our region's most vital hospital system.

We believe that the question of whether to form a union is one that CMC employees must answer for themselves. We respect their freedom of choice.

The healthcare workers who formed the CMC Union Organizing Committee have called for a Free and Fair Election Agreement – an enforceable code of conduct for a secret ballot union election. Such an agreement would promote conciliation and minimize conflict, laying the groundwork for positive labor-management relations that would serve our community well.

We join the members of the Fresno Fair Election Commission – a group of local elected officials, clergy and other community leaders – in supporting the workers' call for a Free and Fair Election Agreement.

Sincerely,

Dean Florez
State Senator
State of California

Sarah Reyes
Former Assembly Member
State of California

Susan B. Anderson
Supervisor
County of Fresno

John Donaldson
Former Supervisor
County of Fresno
Fresno Fair Election Commission

Bob Waterston
Supervisor
County of Fresno

Harry Armstrong
Mayor Pro Tem
City of Clovis
Fresno Fair Election Commission

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City Council Member
City of Selma

Martin Castellano
City Council Member
City of Sanger

Dennis Lujan
Mayor Pro Tem
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Former City Council Member
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Fresno Fair Election Commission

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Firebaugh City Council

Craig Schanton
Former City Council Member
City of Fresno

Cynthia Sterling
City Council Member
City of Fresno

Michelle Asadoorian
Trustee
Fresno Unified School District

Mary Curry
Former Trustee
Fresno Unified School District
Fresno Fair Election Commission

Charles Francis
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Cal Johnson
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Fresno Unified School District

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For more information, call (559) 291-3818