

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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Calhoun's Too Modest Proposal

by Jeremy Weir Alderson

The problem with Council member Brian Calhoun's proposal to criminalize panhandling on median strips is that it doesn't go far enough. It will amount to no more than cynical grandstanding if it isn't tied to an appropriate punishment, and in this case, what's called for is the death penalty (of course, children apprehended panhandling on a median strip should just be removed from their parents and housed in juvenile detention until they attain their age of majority). Fortunately, it is now up to the city attorney to come up with a practical plan, and in the hope of influencing his deliberations, let me review here just four of the reasons why Calhoun's proposal, as recently supported by the City Council, is grossly inadequate.

First, Calhoun's proposal is self-contradictory. Calhoun wants a punishment so light that violators will merely learn that the city is "not friendly," or, as he put it, "Once the word gets out that Fresno is not friendly to those who panhandle from median island[s], the people doing it will leave." But if these people haven't already figured out that Fresno isn't friendly to them, they are mental defectives who cannot be helped by a mere slap on the wrist. Didn't the city bulldoze homeless encampments and throw away homeless people's possessions? Hasn't a private developer now followed suit, no doubt emboldened by the city's trailblazing hand on the heavy equipment throttle? Haven't there been persistent reports of police abuses against the homeless that have never been properly investigated? Aren't homeless people already turning up dead in Fresno with no real effort by the city to keep them alive? How could they not know that Fresno doesn't want them around?

Kind, sweet Calhoun seems unable to comprehend the drastic measures that have already been taken to make the homeless population move on, and the still more drastic measures that must be taken to finally solve the problem. Public policy towards median panhandlers shouldn't be based on Calhoun's big heart, because ticketing them won't get them out of Fresno. Killing them will.

Second, Calhoun's proposal is unjust. He would protect median panhandlers more than other citizens. "What if they get killed or injured?" he has asked, but while he's looking out for the panhandlers, he's not proposing to protect pedestrians at other locations, not even the



ones where pedestrian fatalities have actually occurred. No, he just cares about his precious median money grubbers so much that he forgets about everybody else, and that's not right. Panhandling should be banned, and there should be the death penalty for all panhandlers (excepting juveniles as noted above), without regard to where they are in the city or their proximity to traffic accidents.

Third, Calhoun's proposal is naive. What kind of conditions does he think homeless people are living in now? Mayor Autry, objecting to the Federal court's ruling against the destruction of homeless people's property, remarked, "This mattress that the judge says we should have gave back was riddled with human excrement and urine and riddled with everything from e. coli to hepatitis." Surely Autry wouldn't have lied about that, so it's not like the city doesn't already know that homeless people are in potentially lethal situations, and not just when they are crossing the street. Calhoun should face it that he's out of step, because no one else cares. You don't see Autry lifting a finger for the homeless, do you, even though he knows they might be killed by their mattresses? Calhoun's compassion won't get these people out of the median strips any more than Autry's leaving them to die got them out from under the over-

passes. If you actually want to get rid of them, you have to actually get rid of them.

Fourth, Calhoun's proposal is unneighborly. On this year's Homelessness Marathon, I interviewed Mayor Paul Leon of Ontario, California who, like Mayor Autry is a Republican. Leon opened up a field where the local homeless could pitch tents without fear of the police and get basic amenities like sanitation facilities and water. In other words, the kind of place Fresno has wisely forbidden, and sure enough, Mayor Leon ran into a problem. "We didn't believe," he says, "that it was going to grow from the original 15 people that we directed there to hundreds in just a couple of months." Proving that down this road lies madness, Leon still insists, "We have to help as many as we can and not give up."

What really bothers Mayor Leon isn't the growing number of homeless in his field, but that it "isn't really fair" that other people's burden have fallen on Ontario. "I think every community needs to fess up to the issue," he says, "and take responsibility and accountability for those in their community that are in need." Leon's got a point, even

though his ideas about letting homeless people enjoy the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are just plain silly. It's wrong for some cities to push homeless people out the door only so other cities wind up footing the bill. Fresno should do its duty to communities like Ontario by killing median panhandlers instead of encouraging them to move on.

All of these reasons put together do not, however, fully convey the absurdity of Calhoun's proposal, because when you think about it, who are the median panhandlers anyway? They're just poor people, and where is it written that poor people and other social undesirables should be subject only to small penalties and not large ones? It's not like Calhoun got his big idea from the Bible. No, Calhoun is being arbitrary, and if the penalty for being poor is just going to be whatever we say it is, then I say let's kill them all.

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Jeremy Alderson is the director of the Homelessness Marathon, which is broadcast to over 100 radio stations throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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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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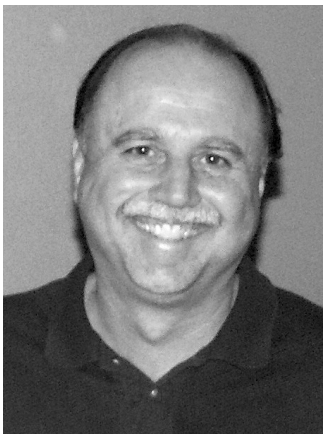
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From the Editor



How can progressive activist in Fresno leverage the work they do to have more impact and influence on public policy? Is there a strategy that we could implement that would make the sum of our parts more effective and greater than the whole? The answer is YES.

The situation right now is that we have dozens of progressive groups in Fresno working on a variety of issues - immigrant rights, an end to the war/occupation of Iraq, environmental justice, labor unions that are organizing the unorganized, health care reform, etc. Progressive activists feel passionate about the issues they are working on and that is great. But, if we want to win political power, we need to do more.

The Community Alliance newspaper has played a role in linking the progressive community, there is a greater awareness of progressive activity in the area, and we have given a voice to activists so they can frame their issues (in their own words) - they no longer are forced to rely on the corporate media to get their message out. As important as having an alternative/independent media and a vibrant progressive movement in Fresno is, it is not enough. . . if what we want to do is change the world. . . or at least Fresno.

If members of the progressive community want to change the political landscape in Fresno, they need to play a larger role in local electoral politics. Decisions affecting all of our issues are made at the local level by elected officials. Conservatives on the right have figured that out and that is why they mobilize their base to elect politicians to local office that will represent their interests.

The left in this community does not have a unified electoral strategy, even though a progressive victory in local elections would benefit each of the groups that are so busy working on their single issues. Every progressive group would benefit and could win significant victories if they had more influence in electing representatives at City Hall and on the County Board of Supervisors.

The trap the left in Fresno has found itself in is that we

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<i>Special thanks to Dixie Salazar and John Alden for the image on page 1.</i>	

Correction:

Last month's Credo included misinformation about Stan Poss. Stan reports, "I did not have the honor of growing up in Missouri—it was my mother who did. As for me , it is quite possible I never grew up at all."

react to an injustice or a problem in the community, we form a committee, and the group spends years trying to right a wrong. Sometimes we win on a single issue and sometimes we lose. Even when we win, there are ten more issues that pop up to demand our attention. The right has got us trapped into being reactive and not thinking strategically about how to win the political big picture.

Progressive groups need to join together and support a united electoral strategy that will get progressive candidates elected. When we do that, we will have a fighting chance to achieve social and economic justice on local issues. As long as the right can keep us divided, reactive, and hacking away at the tentacles of injustice we will be playing their game.

It is my belief that the vast majority of Fresno voters will support a progressive agenda, but we need to be able to articulate a clear and unified vision for peace, social and economic justice. Our candidates need to demand that the money being wasted on the war in Iraq be re-directed to improve our schools and decaying infrastructure, they will demand that jobs pay a living wage, work towards a public policy that treats our homeless with dignity and respect, and end urban sprawl that is degrading our air and water quality.

Fortunately for us all, there is already an organization in Fresno that is working toward the goal of getting progressive candidates elected to office. The Central Valley Progressive PAC (www.cvppac.org) holds public forums so candidates who are running for office are asked questions of concern in the progressive community. Where does each candidate stand on the Independent Police Auditor question? Do they support the needle exchange program? Do they want to see a nuclear power plant built in Fresno or do they support alternative and sustainable energy like wind and solar? This issue of the Community Alliance newspaper includes the mayoral candidates answers to many questions of interest to the progressive community. See page 4. For more about what the mayoral candidates had to say, plus responses from Fresno City Council and Board of Supervisor candidates, go to: www.fresnoalliance.com/2008election

The CVPPAC also raises money and endorses candidates who most clearly match its members values. Howard Watkins, the current president of the CVPPAC, has an article on page 3 analyzing the local races and making recommendations about who deserves our vote.

One goal of the CVPPAC is to move beyond just analyzing the existing candidates and to support progressives to run and win in local elections. That will take more resources and people who understand that achieving political power, at the local level, will benefit all of our causes. You can find out more about how to join the CVPPAC by going to www.cvppac.org or calling (559) 435-1992.

Running and supporting progressive candidates is just the start. Once elected, those politicians must be held accountable to the grassroots. That means ongoing involvement in the electoral political process. I was embarrassed at the March 29 CVPPAC candidate forum when only a handful of people came to hear what the candidates had to say. The lack of attendance was bad because it could lead the candidates to think they don't have to take us seriously. The other problem with poor attendance is that the progressive community does not hear directly from the candidates about their positions on the issues. Also, these candidate forums are a great opportunity to develop a personal relationship with elected officials. It is much more effective to contact the mayor or someone on the City Council when they know who you are.

In addition to working on the nuts and bolts of the electoral process, those of us on the left should be working for campaign election reform. We need to level the playing field so that more people vote and money is less influential in who wins an election. Less than 30% of registered voters are expected to vote on June 3. If you include the people who are eligible to vote but aren't registered, the actual voter turn out will be closer to 15 - 20%. Then, there are people who are residents, but for a large variety of reasons can't vote (they are felons on parole or in prison, undocumented workers, etc). When you take that into account, you are down to about 10% of adults that will vote in the upcoming election. We absolutely have to work to get more voter turnout or democracy has no meaning. How about getting the elections department to take voting booths into the Fresno County Jail? Most of those people have not been convicted of a felony (or anything) and they literally can't get out to vote. There are thousands of homeless people who have been disenfranchised because they move around a lot and don't believe they are eligible. It is shameful (perhaps criminal) the way so many people have been cheated out of their vote.

Campaign finance reform is needed because the rich and powerful in this community (primarily the builders and developers) have undue influence in the current system. Poor and working people simply can't compete when politicians are forced to sell themselves on TV like they are a bar of soap. We need to establish public financing of political campaigns so elections are about a candidates positions on the issues, not about a 30 second advertisement or who has the most signs up in town. Media should, as a public service, provide an opportunity for all candidates to make their case for why you should vote for them. That is why this newspaper has a grid in this month's paper in which the candidates for local office answer the questions of interest to the progressive community.

The future of this community is in your hands. Vote on November 3, join the CVPPAC, and work to hold our elected officials accountable to the grassroots. Think Globally, Act Locally!

Special Election Section

Progressives Will Make a Difference June 3rd

By Howard K. Watkins

Simply stated, the June 3rd election will be the most significant local election I have participated in since moving to Fresno in 1973. The outcomes in races for Mayor of Fresno, three Fresno City Council Districts, and two Fresno County Board of Supervisor Districts will have a major impact on the future of Fresno.

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. Now is the time for every eligible resident to be currently registered to vote (May 19th is the registration deadline for the June 3rd election) and then to vote in the June 3rd election. Voting can be by absentee ballot or at the polls.

With an expected turnout of 25-30 percent of the registered voters, a few hundred votes or less will likely decide many of the races or who makes the November run-off election.

With a high turnout of progressive voters June 3rd, we will make that difference. If progressive voters do not turnout, then others will make the decisions for us.

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC) held a candidates' forum, which Comcast Cable Television has rebroadcast several times, and a candidates' reception. Both were open to all of the candidates and the public. We also invited those candidates interested in a CVPPAC endorsement to answer a set of questions concerning progressive issues affecting the City and County of Fresno. Those responses are available at www.cvppac.org and are summarized in this issue, along with some additional candidates' responses to the Community Alliance.

The CVPPAC then held its endorsement meeting and by at least a two-thirds vote of the members at the meeting, we endorsed the following candidates. For Fresno City Council District 2: Michael Karbassi; District 4: Susan Good; and, District 6: Michelle Jorgensen. For Mayor of Fresno, we did a co-endorsement of Tom Boyajian and Henry T. Perea. For Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 2: Susan Anderson; District 3: Henry R. Perea; and for District 5: Nathan Magsig.

What impressed our members with the candidates we endorsed were their commitment and understanding of our issues, these included improving air quality, a turn from urban sprawl to smart growth with strong support for downtown and the older parts of Fresno. All of the endorsed candidates for City Council and Mayor oppose any effort for a nuclear power plant and support expanded use of solar energy sources. They support bringing back our Human Relations Commission as an important resource to help bring our diverse community together and to help resolve disputes. While only Tom Boyajian advocates for an Independent Police Auditor (IPA), many of the candidates supported improved alternatives to maintaining the status quo with complaints against the Fresno Police Department. While several of the other candidates would likely make good representatives, the CVPPAC concluded that our endorsed candidates would make excellent representatives for the people and help lead Fresno and the County into a much brighter future.

Here is a snapshot about our endorsed candidates.

Fresno City Council District #2 (NW Fresno Area) Michael Karbassi is a businessman raised in Fresno and is bi-partisan in his approach to issues. His endorsements include the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. He supports active neighborhood patrols over expensive video camera surveillance as a more cost-effective way to prevent crime. A strong supporter for revitalizing downtown Fresno and in-fill housing, he also wants to see Fresno develop clean, functional mass transit, such as a Bus Rapid Transit system in the near future. This promises to be a close race, as incumbent Brian Calhoun has termed out.

Fresno City Council District #4 (Central East Fresno Area) Susan Good, as the District Representative for State Senator Dean Florez (and for Jim Costa before him), has a wealth of knowledge about government at both

the state and local level. She is a strong proponent for open and honest government, including a 21-point plan to ensure transparency in City government. She speaks to the need for maintaining urban boundaries and creating more high paying jobs and affordable housing. One of her goals is to reduce crime and the fear of crime, so residents will no longer feel a need for security doors. She is endorsed by three former District 4 Council Members—Brad Castillo, Karen Humphrey, and Linda Mack. Good, while an articulate and knowledgeable campaigner, was thrown a curve when the incumbent, Larry Westerlund, was called up for military service and is no longer available to debate her on the issues. While one can respect the incumbent's service to our country, this should not distract from the fact that he has been one of the most conservative members of the Fresno City Council during his term in office. This is another race where progressives can decide the outcome.

Fresno City Council District #6 (NE Fresno Area) Michelle Jorgensen is a fourth-generation Fresnan, an attorney, and new to local politics. She wants a Fresno where her children can live with healthy air and a high quality of life. In addition to air quality and smart planning, she supports expanding our public parks and arts and cultural programs. She understands that this will produce jobs, retain a creative workforce, and make Fresno a better place for all of its residents. She faces a tough election as her opponent is better known in the district and he is endorsed by the termed-out incumbent, Jerry Duncan. She opposes any nuclear power plant and her opponent is willing to consider having one in Fresno.

Mayor of Fresno: There are 11 candidates in this race. We have co-endorsed former City Council Member Tom Boyajian and current City Council Member Henry T. Perea. Our members felt that either would make an excellent Mayor, but did not reach a two-thirds vote for either individually. Boyajian has a consistent voting record for supporting progressive issues during his 8 years on the City Council. Perea, while not as solid on all progressive issues (i.e. he does not support having an IPA), is bringing together a broad coalition of community leaders and voters and is a champion for making Fresno a leading community for solar and other alternative energy sources. This race will result in a run-off and if both cannot be in it, one of them needs to be.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors District #2: Susan Anderson is seeking her third term on the Board and has shown great dedication to the District and the County. She is not afraid to tackle difficult issues and does so in a constructive manner. She is able to bring together divergent groups. She advocated for a stronger dairy ordinance and publicly supports a fair election process for the workers at the Community Medical Regional Center. With two challengers, this race could end up in a run-off, but will not if progressives turn out and vote.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors District #3: Henry R. Perea is unopposed for re-election. He is an outstanding member of the Board and deserves re-election.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors District #5: Nathan Magsig is a member of the Clovis City Council and former Mayor of Clovis. He is a strong advocate for regional planning and is very supportive of programs that help people. While he may not fully agree with all of CVPPAC's positions, he is open to discussion and being persuaded with additional information. His business background will be an important asset as the County struggles to meet its growing obligations with limited resources.

Conclusion
Progressives will decide the results in the June 3rd local elections. If we vote in large numbers, we will elect progressives to office. If we stay home, we will abdicate our responsibility and others will make a different choice for us. The outcome depends on each one of us. The CVPPAC ad in this issue has information on how to contact our endorsed candidates to help in their election. So get out, support these candidates, vote, and urge others to do the same! Thank you.

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Howard K. Watkins is the president of the Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee.

Proposition 98 – A Deceptive Attack On Renters

By Dean Preston

These are difficult times for California's 14 million renters. Rents are rising while household incomes stagnate. Vacancy rates are among the lowest in the nation. Foreclosures are displacing tenants and homeowners alike, forcing more people into the rental market and further driving up rents. It seems like California's landlords are the only ones doing well in today's real estate market.

Not satisfied with record profits in recent years, California's biggest landlords are scheming to deny basic protections for renters, seniors and working families. Landlord groups are backing one of the most deceptive and mean-spirited ballot measures to come along in years – Proposition 98 on the June 3, 2008 ballot.

Prop. 98 is the worst kind of ballot measure — it says it's about one thing when it's really about another. Proponents claim the measure is about eminent domain reform, a popular issue following the 2005 U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*. At first glance, Prop. 98 looks like an eminent domain reform measure, prohibiting the government from "taking" property for "private use." But the devil is in the details.

Prop. 98 defines "taking" in an unprecedented way. Under Prop. 98, any limit on the price at which property can be rented or sold is defined as a prohibited "taking." Prop. 98 therefore prohibits laws that protect renters from unreasonable rent increases, including rent control laws in many mobilehome parks and cities across the state. "Private use" has an even broader definition under Prop. 98, prohibiting regulations that "transfer economic benefit to one or more private persons at the expense of the property owner." Most ten-

Continued on page 5

HOWARD'S HOPEFULS

Here are my voting recommendations for the local races in the June 3, 2008 primary election. Most are clear choices, some are close calls. I hope you find this list helpful. Remember, most of these races will be decided on June 3rd with no run-off. With an anticipated voter turn-out of 25-30 percent, a very few voters will decide many of the outcomes. So, PLEASE VOTE! Thank you. Howard K. Watkins, Community Activist

FRESNO COUNTY	
Superior Court #10	TREISMAN
Board of Supervisors #2	ANDERSON
Board of Supervisors #3	H. R. PEREA
Board of Supervisors #5	MAGSIG
CITY OF FRESNO	
Mayor	H. T. PEREA
City Council #2	KARBASSI
City Council #4	GOOD
City Council #6	JORGENSEN
STATE PROPOSITIONS	
98	NO
99	YES

Where Do they Stand on the Issues? By Mike Rhodes

The Community Alliance newspaper, in coordination with the Central Valley Progressive PAC, asked the Fresno City Mayoral candidates their views on issues of interest to the progressive community. We received a response from 9 of the 11 candidates. Henry M. Monreal did not respond to the questionnaire and Barbara Hunt’s reply was non-responsive to the questions asked.

We also asked each of the Fresno City Council and Fresno County Board of Supervisor candidates where they stand on the issues. To read their complete responses, go to: www.fresnoalliance.com/2008election . Here is what the mayoral candidates had to say:

Mayoral Candidates:

Do you think video-camera surveillance is a cost-effective way to reduce crime?

Tom Boyajian - I have not seen any studies proving this to be true. Studies done in San Francisco on this matter have resulted in no positive correlation between crime reduction and the utilization of video-camera surveillance.

Jim Boswell - No. I believe it is especially a waste of taxpayers money when we are in a budget crisis. However, I do not support the installation of cameras.

Ignacio C. Garibay – No.

Henry T. Perea - I have supported the use of video-camera surveillance in the past. In fact, due to the city’s use of surveillance, the Police Department has apprehended many people for graffiti and other crimes. The critical piece is to ensure there is complete transparency so no abuse of this power takes place.

Doug Vagim - It might save the cost of crime within the camera’s view but it will also move the crime to other areas out of the camera’s view.

Jerry Duncan – It can be. As long as the rights of citizens are protected, they can be a strong deterrent and can be the key to solving criminal acts. Properly done video is a part of the solution. I was the Councilmember who pushed for the proper protections and policies for the Fresno video surveillance program that protects our rights.

Mike Dages – Yes.

Jeff Eben – Video surveillance can work, but we need a thorough analysis of its cost effectiveness.

Ashley Swearingin – Video camera surveillance can be an effective tool for reducing crime and should be used as a part of a comprehensive approach to improving public safety in a cost-effective manner. However, at all times we must be cautious about protecting the privacy and rights of our citizens. I believe a balance has to be struck.

Do you support building a nuclear power plant in Fresno?

Tom Boyajian – No.

Jim Boswell – No. I am avidly against this. I have developed clean energy plans that will provide more power to our community at a lower initial investment and absolutely no greenhouse gas emissions. Unlike EVERY COUNCIL MEMBER AND TWO OTHER of my opponents who are financially backed by Mr. Hutson and the nuclear companies.

Ignacio C. Garibay – No.

Henry T. Perea - No. As Fresno is poised to see a tremendous amount of growth, we must take a serious look at how we will meet the energy demands. I strongly support the use of renewable energy and will aggressively pursue policies to reflect that. I believe we can create a new economy based on renewable energy and create “green” collar jobs.

Doug Vagim – I support nuclear power, but not a nuclear plant in an urban area such as Fresno. A nuclear plant needs to be located in an area with sufficient resources to accommodate its needs; such as water and physical space. A nuclear plant in Fresno would be too disrupting.

Jerry Duncan – We need to look at all forms of alternative energy that does not harm our air quality. It is impossible to generate enough clean energy to meet

the needs of our area without nuclear. Current technology has made this a safe, clean, reliable alternative and with the current proposal before us, the real possibility exists that millions of dollars will come into our area that will allow us to tackle so many of our regions long term problems such as housing, homelessness and poverty. Open your minds and take a fresh look at this.

Mike Dages – It is illegal to build a nuclear power plant anywhere in the State of California.

Jeff Eben – At this point, it is moot. There is a law against building a nuclear power plant.

Ashley Swearingin – I am not supportive of the construction of a nuclear power plant in Fresno. However, I am very concerned about the long-term, cost-effective sources of clean energy for the San Joaquin Valley, our state, and nation. I am open to learning more about whether the moratorium, safety and site locations could be resolved.

Do you support the hiring of an Independent Police Auditor?

Tom Boyajian – Of course I support an IPA, I am the one who initiated the concept of an IPA here in Fresno. I believe a police auditor is a great opportunity for everyone. As a councilman I saw a great deal of issues come before the city in closed chambers. Many of these matters are kept confidential. From this experience, I feel a police auditor- structured separate from the Mayor and City Manager- will provide a level of protection between rank and file officers and the administration they work for.

Jim Boswell – I would need to know just cause. I believe that we should, as a community, work with the Police department. I also believe that if we have a responsible Mayor who will work for the people, it will not be necessary.

Ignacio C. Garibay – Yes.

Henry T. Perea – No, but I do support the re-establishment of the Human Relations Commission.

Doug Vagim - I can’t support an independent police auditor. That position is just another way for the elected officials of the city to dodge responsibility. The mayor is responsible for the performance of the police chief through the city manger and together they are responsible for the PD.

Jerry Duncan – No. No one has agreed as to what this position would even be let alone identified a significant need for it. If I felt some form of additional oversight was needed I would agree with it.

Mike Dages – No.

Jeff Eben – I think an IPA is viable. In order to solve the problem, though, we need a thorough discussion with council members, the D.A., and the Chief to come to consensus.

Ashley Swearingin – I am supportive of independent oversight of our police department.

Do you support re-establishment of an independent Human Relations Commission?

Tom Boyajian – Yes.

Jim Boswell – As of this moment, I do not believe we, as a city, should include any further or unnecessary commissions as there are quite too many commissions right now that cost our taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars that could be better utilized towards public safety and education.

Ignacio C. Garibay – Yes.

Henry T. Perea – Yes. As a member of the city council, I found the HRC to a tremendous asset to the people of Fresno. I relied on the HRC many times to resolve neighborhood disputes and ensure the public had access to a third party to resolve issues.

Doug Vagim - The HRC did serve an important purpose in our city. Many divergent ideas were brought forth. The problem was – not enough divergence was allowed. An HRC must truly be open.

Jerry Duncan – I’m not sure what the term “independ-

ent” means when discussing the HRC but if there is an organization that is non-political, actually works to bring people together and actually tries to reduce the tensions that divides us, I would support that. I worked hard to encourage the former HRC into that direction but they wouldn’t do it and after they cost the taxpayers \$60,000 in a lawsuit that could have cost us a lot more, the Council majority properly voted to disband the former Commission.

Mike Dages – Yes.

Jeff Eben – I would support a Human Relations Council, but I’ll also hire people who reflect the diversity of our community.

Ashley Swearingin – Yes.

We all want to end homelessness. Rate from 1- 10 (with 10 being the most important) the following ideas for ending homelessness:

Tom Boyajian – I don’t think a rating process is appropriate to finding humane solutions to Fresno’s homelessness. There are many programs in use in other areas that take a far more pragmatic approach to this issue. I think if you look at the models used in San Jose, and San Francisco, it makes very good sense to break down the reasons behind homelessness into different categories and then begin to problem solve from there. It does not make sense to lump all homeless people into one category and attempt a “one size fits all” solution.

Jim Boswell – I have developed a plan to end our city’s homeless problem and I have attached that plan (see: <http://www.jimboswellformayor.com/>) as I do not completely agree with any of the above solutions, much less the embarrassing solution that our council members have adopted.

- Ignacio C. Garibay** – (1) Implement the Housing First program in Fresno
(2) Build more tool sheds
(3) Support the Rescue Mission
(4) Support the Poverello House
(7) Put facilities like portable toilets and trash bins in homeless encampments
(0) Bulldoze the homeless encampments
(10) Provide more public services for the homeless (mental health, food stamps, etc)
(9) Encourage more affordable homes to be built in Fresno
(8) Reduce the unemployment rate
(9) Pass a living wage ordinance

- Henry T. Perea** – (10) Implement the Housing First program in Fresno
(2) Build more tool sheds
(5) Support the Rescue Mission
(6) Support the Poverello House
(4) Put facilities like portable toilets and trash bins in homeless encampments
(1) Bulldoze the homeless encampments
(8) Provide more public services for the homeless (mental health, food stamps, etc)
(7) Encourage more affordable homes to be built in Fresno
(9) Reduce the unemployment rate
(3) Pass a living wage ordinance

Doug Vagim - Supporting the Rescue Mission is the most important factor in dealing with the homeless. There is no reason in today’s society for someone to not get help – housing, food stamps and other programs. What complicates the matter is those with mental health problems, especially with those ID as dual diagnosis, i.e. substance abuse and mental illness. Until someone is jailed government programs treat either substance abuse or mental illness. Charitable organizations such as the Rescue Mission are the more flexible alternative to helping elevate homelessness.

Jerry Duncan – This question demonstrates the very basic problem with how this community has tried to deal with this issue. We will not solve the problem by picking a couple of ideas or ranking them. We will ONLY get a handle on this issue when we quit looking at this problem from a “pick your project” perspective but from a comprehensive approach that looks at the whole picture. That is why the current effort to develop the “10 Year Plan to End Homelessness” is so critical and important. This will develop the missing community plan that puts everyone on the same page.

Mike Dages – The most important issue to me is to

provide more public services for the homeless (mental health, housing, etc.).

- Jeff Eben** – (10) Encourage Affordable Housing
(9) Housing First
(8) Support Rescue Mission and Poverello House
(7) Reduce Unemployment
(6) Provide Public Services
(5) Living Wage Ordinance
(4) Portable Toilets..etc.
(3) Build Tool Sheds
(2) I would not bulldoze encampments.

- Ashley Swearengin** – (10) Implement the Housing First program in Fresno
(2) Build more tool sheds
(7) Support the Rescue Mission and the Poverello House
(3) Put facilities like portable toilets and trash bins in homeless encampments
(1) Bulldoze the homeless encampments (9) Provide more public services for the homeless (mental health, food stamps, etc) (We need to improve coordination of our existing service providers to increase services)
(8) Encourage more affordable homes to be built in Fresno
(8) Reduce the unemployment rate (increase job training)
(3) Pass a living wage ordinance

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The Valley's Voice for Progressives

The results of the June 3rd election will shape the future of our community for years to come.
The members of the CVPPAC urge you to help elect the following endorsed candidates. Together, we can move Fresno forward by supporting these outstanding candidates.

Fresno City Council Districts

#2 Michael Karbassi	www.joinmichael.com	(559) 449-9700
#4 Susan Good	www.good4council.com	(559) 681-8107
#6 Michelle Jorgensen	www.jorgensenforcitycouncil.com	(559) 696-3335

Mayor of Fresno: Co-endorsements

Tom Boyajian	www.votetom08.com	(559) 233-8935
Henry T. Perea	www.perea2008.com	(559) 431-1053

Fresno County Board of Supervisors Districts:

#2 Susan Anderson	www.susanbanderson.com	(559) 222-7411
#3 Henry R. Perea	Unopposed	
#5 Nathan Magsig	www.nathanmagsig.com	(559) 324-1983

Things you can do to help elect/re-elect these progressive candidates on June 3rd:

- Be sure you and your friends are registered to vote by May 19th and vote by absentee ballot or on June 3rd
- Contact the candidates and volunteer to help them by walking precincts, donating money, hosting a coffee, making telephone calls, putting up a yard sign, and asking your friends to support them, etc.

Remember—most of these races will be decided on June 3, 2008.

Now is the time to make a difference for our future!

Prop 98 dcontinued from page 3

ant protection laws (such as 60-day notice for no fault eviction and fair return of security deposits) transfer economic benefit and would likely be struck down if Prop. 98 were to pass.

Proposition 98 does not stop at eliminating renter protections. The measure would jeopardize a broad range of environmental and land use regulations that protect communities across California. Even basic zoning laws — like laws prohibiting your neighbor from building a factory next to your home — could be thrown out because of the overbroad language in Prop. 98. Prop. 98 would also stand in the way of construction of water projects, prompting the Association of California Water Agencies, the Western Growers Association and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to oppose the measure.

Who would fund such a reckless and deceptive measure? California landlords who stand to make millions if Prop. 98 passes. Over 80% of the funds supporting this bogus “eminent domain” measure come from landlords and landlord groups.

One such group is the Apartment Owners Association of California. The landlord zealots at AOA have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to pass this measure. Their rhetoric is particularly offensive.

The AOA calls people who believe in protecting renters from exorbitant rent hikes and evictions “terrorists”. According to the AOA’s website, these “suicide bombers” are terrorizing landlords all over the state by throwing “bombs and explosives” such as rent control, building codes, sixty-day notice requirements and eviction laws. AOA warns “we are at WAR and there is only one way to stop these terrorists. Hit them with the big ‘bomb’ — pass this California state constitutional amendment that will prohibit them from having their ‘explosives’ that they use to destroy housing and housing providers.” If nothing else, these statements reveal that Prop. 98 is backed by the lunatic fringe.

In contrast, a broad coalition has come together to oppose the landlords’ hidden agenda scheme. Hundreds of groups oppose Prop. 98, including AARP, League of Women Voters, League of California Homeowners, Sierra Club California, California Teachers Association, California Alliance for Retired Americans, California Police Chiefs Association, California Chamber of Commerce, and Coalition to Protect California Renters. All major labor, environmental, tenant and senior groups oppose the measure.

Fortunately, the more that people learn about Prop. 98, the less they like it. A recent PPIC poll found only 37% of respondents in favor of Prop. 98. While this might lead one to conclude that the measure will be defeated easily, it is not that simple. This is a June election after a February primary, and turnout is expected to be very low. That’s why the proponents chose to put the measure on the June ballot. Prop. 98 could pass, unless people get out and vote on June 3, 2008, to defeat it.

Voters who want real eminent domain reform should also vote for Proposition 99, another measure on the June ballot. Prop. 99 offers eminent domain reform without the hidden provisions of Prop. 98. Proposition 99 simply prohibits the government from taking owner occupied homes for private development. Prop. 99 is a straightforward measure that protects homeowners without attacking renters.

Vote ‘no’ on the landlords’ hidden agenda scheme (Prop. 98) and ‘yes’ on real eminent domain reform (Prop. 99). For more information about Propositions 98 and 99, visit the campaign website at www.no98yes99.com.

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Dean Preston is an attorney and Executive Director of Tenants Together, California’s statewide organization for renters’ rights. He can be reached at Dean@tenantstogether.org. For more information about Tenants Together, visit www.tenantstogether.org

5 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE MAY 2008

MAY 2008 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE 6

JUDICIAL RECOMMENDATION FROM LOCAL ATTORNEYS

The June 3rd primary election includes a contested race for Fresno Superior Court seat number 10. The attorneys seeking election are Jim Kelley, Glenn LoStracco, Gary Shinaver, and Douglas Treisman. The Community Alliance asked some local, progressive-minded attorneys whom they supported. Here are their comments.

Charles R. Barrett (Criminal Defense) “I support Doug Treisman for Superior Court Judge because I have seen in him, over the years, some depth and substance. I suspect him of thinking. He tends to be patient, careful, open-minded, and seems to work hard to get it right. I doubt if he has an agenda other than dutifully correct judicial service. For these reasons, he has my vote.”

Charles Magill (criminal & First Amendment defense) and **Laura Guzman Magill** (criminal defense & former Dep. DA). We jointly support Douglas Treisman for Superior Court Judge. We speak from over 30 years of combined criminal defense practice when we say that

Mr. Treisman has been a fair and honest prosecutor. He is intelligent and views criminal cases with an understanding of the Constitution and without disdain. His experience is varied. He began practice as a civil attorney and has worked in most of the units within the DA’s office. We believe Mr. Treisman, of all the candidates, is the most involved in the community with non-profit organizations. Mr. Treisman has always been a man of his word. We have never known him to misuse his authority as a prosecutor and he has always treated our clients with respect, as they should be treated. He has always taken his position of authority very seriously. In a profession that may have its share of arrogance, Mr. Treisman has remained honorable and humble over the 20 years we have known him. We believe he will not be any different as a judge. His focus has always been justice, not ‘just us.’

Patience Milrod (Criminal Defense & Civil Rights Attorney) “I’m supporting Doug Treisman for the open judicial position. People who know me will be sur-

prised I’m supporting a DA—but people who know Doug will understand. Doug is really well suited to be a judge: he’s smart, reasonable, compassionate and realistic. He doesn’t spout victimologist platitudes, but (in the cases I’ve had with him anyway) looks for a result that’s truly fair — even for the defendant. He listens well, works hard, and will tackle the challenges of the bench with energy and creativity. He’s also a nice guy!”

Sal Sciandra (Criminal Defense) “I have handled many cases with Mr. Treisman as the prosecutor. I have found him to be knowledgeable on the law, an aggressive prosecutor, but most importantly, he has always displayed a strong desire that in the end his prosecution resulted in justice for both sides.”

Howard K. Watkins (Civil/Juvenile) “The four candidates would all make excellent judges, but I believe Doug Treisman to be the best one. In addition to being ‘tough, fair, & sensible’ and an excellent trial attorney, he understands the need to make our courts more accessible to those with limited financial resources to resolve their grievances.



QUEER EYE

City Council Members Running for Fresno Mayor Mostly A Waste of Time for Voters

by Dan Waterhouse

As the campaign for Fresno’s new mayor winds down towards the primary on June 3, a few clowns are marching in.

The presumptive front-runner, Henry T. Perea, was a relative unknown on the Fresno City Council until the River Park teen curfew issue reared its head last year. Perea sprang into action and formed a “youth advisory council,” made up of mostly adults and few youth to address the curfew and other issues, such as a lack of healthy or safe activities for kids in Fresno. The council did what most of these groups do—it issued a report that was promptly filed. More than a few felt Perea used the River Park dust-up to get his face and name on television.

Many in the progressive community like Perea. He comes off as a moderate, especially when compared with fellow council members and candidates Mike Dages and Jerry Duncan. However, in his nearly eight years on the council, he has refused to sit down with representatives from Fresno’s queer community. He “just doesn’t have time.” Is he afraid he’ll wreck a future in politics by consorting with the queers? His father, Fresno County Supervisor Henry Perea, came out in support of gay marriage several years ago while considering a run against then “do nothing” Assembly member Sarah Reyes, and it didn’t seem to hurt him.

The pundits say Ashley Swearengin and termed-out north Fresno council member Jerry Duncan will battle for second place. Swearengin isn’t that well known. She’s a newcomer to the local political scene and is best known for her work on the Regional Jobs Initiative.

On the other hand, Duncan is best known for chillin’ at Blackstone and Shaw with the Freepers and his infa-

mous comment that if he had had a ‘dirty’ bomb he could’ve wiped out every liberal in Fresno. After being at odds with the city’s progressives, he’s seemed to have adopted a “kinder, gentler” image lately. However, in looking at his answers to questions posed at a recent mayoral forum about downtown, one wonders how much he’s really changed. For example on the homeless: “We must deal with this problem and move this population away from the downtown core. While many Mayoral candidates are trying to ignore this problem, this issue is significant enough to prevent downtown from ever being what it can be if it is not dealt with. Part of this effort should result in a new campus facility that will have the non-profit resources available with on-site government services that can help these people get back on their feet if they choose to.” Duncan has long proposed to move the homeless and the agencies that serve them out to the old city landfill at Jensen and West avenues.

He also blasted the historic preservation community: “The Armenian Town project would be near completion if not for the three lawsuits filed by people who are trying to kill the whole project over nothing more than the location of some houses that need to be moved a couple of blocks away.” Truth of the matter is, it has taken lawsuits to get local government to do the right thing for our historic building stock. It seems Duncan would allow the private sector to decide by default whether one of our historic buildings is torn down or not.

The one candidate with a consistent progressive record while on the council, Tom Boyajian, is thought to be “too liberal” to be electable. Boyajian was one of the gay community’s best friends when he was on the council, and would continue to be if he is elevated to the

mayor’s office. He fought urban sprawl and tried to hold developers responsible for the impacts of their development, especially west of Highway 99. He wants to emphasize “people, not politics” and says Fresno residents have a right to expect development to work for them. “We need people to start thinking of Fresno as a community, and not seven shopping centers in search of a community. We can no longer approve developments in a piecemeal way. Fresno is a city on the move, and smart growth and accumulative planning are an integral part of our future.” Some think that Boyajian might finish in the top two.

Last but not least of the council folk seeking the top job is Mike Dages. Another termed out council member, he represents Southeast Fresno. He was council member Sal Quintero’s aide before being elected himself. City Hall insiders say the talk was that Dages and Quintero would swap being on the council every eight years. However, Quintero was arrested for DUI a few months ago, making a try for the council questionable.

Dages is also no friend of the homeless. City Council minutes indicate Dages was very much at odds with the police department for a long time over a large homeless encampment somewhere along Kings Canyon Road. Dages wanted the homeless rousted on their way because he was getting complaints from business owners; however, the camp was on private property and the owner reportedly had no problem with it being there. The southeast cop shop told Dages and his constituents that there was nothing they could do. Both Dages and Duncan support the continued expansion of the police and fire departments, even at the expense of other city programs.

The other candidates are: former county supervisor Doug Vagim, businessman Jim Boswell, business owner, current deputy mayor Jeff Eben, realtor Ignacio Garibay, perennial City Council watcher Barbara Ann Hunt, and police officer Henry Monreal.

There’s been some buzz about Eben. He’s the former principal of Clovis East High School who was living in Clovis when Bubba Autry appointed him to the deputy mayor’s job. He’s since moved into the city. Some observers consider Eben’s candidacy as Autry’s stealth attempt at picking his successor. Others view him as possibly a political outsider. While most feel he has little chance of making the top two in the primary, a few think he just might surprise the rest of the field.

Me, I’ll probably vote for Boyajian.



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Fresno Won't Be "Nuked" in 2008!

By David Weisman

You know it must be the start of the baseball season, because it's time to remember legendary Yogi Berra's famous quip, "it's déjà vu all over again."

So it was on April 7, 2008 when Rochelle Becker, the executive director of The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, along with Dan Hirsch, president of the Committee to Bridge the Gap, testified in opposition to a pair of proposed bills that would have allowed new reactors to be sited in California. For the second time in as many years, Assemblyman Chuck DeVore (R-Irvine) proposed legislation (AB 1776 and AB 2788) which would have overturned the state's 30 year moratorium on nuclear power—a law which requires that there be a certified, approved and demonstrated technology for the disposal of high level radioactive waste—before any new plants are constructed.

Appearing before the California Assembly's Natural Resource Committee, Ms. Becker stated: "AB 1776 was a smokescreen that would have substituted California's protective legislation passed over three decades ago for a law that assumed the state might allow construction of nuclear reactors in seismically active areas or in areas where once-through-cooling is acceptable."

Simply put, a permanent means for safe disposal of high-level radioactive waste does not exist. Nuclear utilities are now storing high-level radioactive waste onsite in seismically active areas, even though the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's own policy discourages such sites. Furthermore, estimates for the opening of the proposed nuclear repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, have been extended to the point that there is no certainty it will ever open.



Peter Bradford (photo above), who served as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (1977-1982), commented on John Hutson's plan to build a nuclear power plant in Fresno. He said "the idea that a new California plant could send its waste to France is another one of those occasions where you should ask the proponent to take a drug test."

AB 2788 would have eliminated exclusive state power to certify all energy generation sites in California. It would have removed one of the very few rights of our state to address the costs, benefits and risks of nuclear reactors. Instead, it would allow the first interested utility to obtain an early site permit from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission without California Energy Commission or California Public Utility Commission approval. For over three decades, those who have addressed the dangers of nuclear power generation have heard elected representatives respond that they fully agree with our concerns, but are pre-empted from addressing these issues. "To give up even one protective right to question the safety, security, seismicity and safe radioactive emissions from nuclear reactors is a disservice to state residents and an unconscionable decision for California's future generations" stated Becker.

Both bills failed to pass out of committee along party-line votes. This comes as a blow to John Hutson, CEO of Fresno Nuclear Energy, who has been trumpeting his plans for building a new reactor in Fresno. Mr. Hutson would need the moratorium to be lifted in order to proceed with his project, but he was not visible as a witness on behalf of Mr. DeVore at the hearing. Perhaps a clue to his absence can be found in a statement from Mr. Hutson appearing in the McClatchy newspapers on March 16, 2008 under the headline, "Nuclear industry wants a reboot."

Hutson said his idea is to avoid the state moratorium by not producing any waste. Used fuel would be shipped to France for reprocessing, rather than encased in steel and concrete "dry casks" and stored on site until a permanent repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada is opened.

This is a curious development, and a strategy not suggested by any other proponents of nuclear power. In a recent video interview, The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility put this question to Peter Bradford, who served as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (1977-1982) as well as chair of the New York Public Service Commission and the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Bradford replied:

"The idea that a new California plant could send its waste to France is another one of those occasions where you should ask the proponent to take a drug test. The French law is that they will take spent fuel from other countries for reprocessing only under the condition that they can return the reprocessed wastes



The Sacramento Municipal Utility District shut down their nuclear power plant at Rancho Seco because of safety concerns. This is the plant today, generating solar power. Photo credit: Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

to the country of origin. So the spent fuel that's sent to France is going to have to come back to the U.S. The U.S. has not approved any U.S. spent fuel for export to other countries. When the Shoreham nuclear plant explored that option in the early 90s—the first Bush administration—the Department of Defense recommended against it because of the danger involving U.S. spent fuel in reprocessing would contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world. This particular concern was with North Korea. So I think anyone who states with confidence that they are going to be able to send spent fuel from a US reactor to France or to any other country for disposal is smoking something."

This recent legislative defeat, combined with shrinking capital markets, may put an end to any plans for a new nuclear reactor in Fresno. It does not appear, however, to have stopped plans for the new solar facilities planned for the nearby Mojave Desert, or the solar facility at the Fresno airport.

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility strongly supports union jobs and clean energy, but California cannot afford to again go down a nuclear path without analyzing all economic consequences of our actions. At best these bills were premature until the analysis of the full costs, benefits and risks of continued reliance on nuclear reactors—as mandated by California's legislature—is complete, adopted and implements. Precious resources squandered on nuclear power would have resulted in reduced funding for our state's precedent-setting clean energy policy. Readers are invited to visit the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility at www.a4nr.org for updates on the future of energy in California.

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David Weisman is the outreach coordinator for the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, www.a4nr.org (805) 704-1810



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Protecting the Rights of Fresno Filmmakers

By John Moses

If you are an independent filmmaker in Fresno, you can rest easier these days. The regulations that the city had originally planned for your artistic pursuits will not become municipal law.

Last July, the Fresno Film and Entertainment Commission (with the backing of the Economic Development Department, the Office of Risk Management, and the City Attorney) first published its new Film Permit Policy, requesting that *every* filmmaker working in the city—professional and nonprofessional alike—apply for a permit before filming anywhere in the city—on private as well as public property—and with that application show proof of \$2 million in liability insurance. The policy did distinguish between “Minimal Impact” and “Beyond Minimal Impact,” but the only exceptions to the permit itself were for news media, studio filming, and “‘incidental’ filming/taping for private use” (a description that was frustratingly vague). Students filming on school property were also exempt, but once they stepped off their campus to film, they needed the new permit too. In effect, the Commission wanted to keep track of all filming in the city, even in cases where it created “zero . . . interference to citizens.”

When the policy was quietly published last summer (as I write this article, that document can still be found at the Commission’s website, www.fresnofilm.com), a few film teachers in the Fresno area (like myself) wrote letters to the film and entertainment commissioner, Ray Arthur, asking that the policy be reconsidered, pointing out that it unfairly and unnecessarily restricted student and amateur filmmaking. We were politely told that liability issues outweighed any freedom of expression argument that might be raised—and that no other city in California had been swayed by such arguments either.

But there was one other clause in the original policy that should have made anyone doubt that civil liberties were irrelevant in the matter: “It is . . . the intent of the COF to not consider requests [for film permits] that may reflect poorly on the City.”

Enter the Board of Fresno Filmworks, the local non-profit film society, of which I

am president. We decided to test those claims about legal priorities and called on Michael Risher, San Francisco staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, to look into the matter. Last September Risher surprised the city’s film commissioner with a letter challenging the constitutionality of the permit and asking that the policy be substantially modified. Risher argued that the city had insufficient justification for limiting free expression and for placing this financial burden on non-commercial filmmakers. He also pointed out that, with no municipal code authorizing the policy, it was not law and added that, even if it were to be codified, the city had no authority to dictate insurance requirements for filming on private property. Finally, of course, the ACLU attorney challenged the policy’s outrageous censorship clause.

Not until January of this year did Commissioner Arthur respond publicly to the ACLU arguments. At that time he announced the Film Commission’s intentions to bring a revised permit plan before the Fresno City Council—one intended to satisfy at least some of the objections that had been raised. First, the proposed ordinance would give the permit legal authority, along with a new penalty clause: if convicted, violators of the ordinance could be fined up to \$1,000 for each violation. Perhaps most importantly, the city had dropped the censorship clause, “to not consider requests that may reflect poorly on the City.” The liability insurance requirement for filming on private property had also been dropped; however, the requirement of \$1 million in liability insurance remained for filming on city property. The city would also adopt a “Rule of Three”: crews of three or fewer would be exempt from the permit requirement if their productions were “non-impact” and if the filmmakers applied for “a signed letter of exemption.”



John Moses, president of Fresno Filmworks, speaking before the City Council on February 26, 2008 in a successful effort to protect our civil liberties.

little inconvenience to the citizens of Fresno, would be subjected to nearly the same legal and financial requirements as commercial filmmakers with large productions. And while the Rule of Three exemption promised to be a simpler process, it was still an application that required approval of the film commissioner.

Whether already predisposed against the new regulations or swayed by the arguments, the council members present at the meeting were not receptive to the proposed ordinance. Council Members Perea, Westerlund, Calhoun and Duncan all expressed serious concerns. Westerlund said it did not achieve “the right balance” between protecting freedom of expression and liability protection for the city, while Duncan called the ordinance “absolutely unnecessary.” The discussion ended with Commissioner Arthur being asked to come back with a proposal that focused more on large commercial productions and imposed less regulation on small independent filmmakers.

Thanks to the council’s directive, the Fresno Film Commission has done just that. A revised ordinance is scheduled to come before the council on April 28 with major changes. Not only will student films be completely exempt from the regulations, but under the newly written “Rule of Fifteen” so will many small independent productions (if cast and crew do not exceed fifteen and only handheld equipment is used). Significantly, these new exemptions will involve no formal waiver process—they will be automatic, thus insuring little to no interference for most documentary projects.

If the guidelines the city originally proposed had gone unnoticed and unopposed, Fresno would already have a film ordinance that most progressives would regard as one more sign of eroding civil liberties. Fortunately, this is a story that will have a much happier ending.

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John Moses is a film instructor at Fresno City College and president of Fresno Filmworks. He can be contacted by email at jmoses@fresnofilmworks.org.



Michael (the dragon slayer) Risher is an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union. In addition to working on the film ordinance, Risher was instrumental in defending Fresno youth’s right to be at River Park in the evening by challenging the proposed curfew. He is also on the team of attorneys that stopped the City of Fresno from bulldozing homeless encampments

On February 26, the proposed ordinance was taken up by the Fresno City Council. Before that meeting, Risher’s September letter

Standing UP for Civil Liberties - the ACLU-NC

By Bill Simon

Most of us are involved in local social justice organizations. We have a meeting and decide what to do. If an activity strays a bit from our main purpose, it’s no big deal if everybody agrees. The ACLU, on the other hand, is a very different proposition, highly disciplined and always precisely focused. This makes it difficult when members of the community see a problem and want to get the ACLU Chapter involved at a press conference or as a cosponsor of an event. If the ACLU doesn’t have a position on an issue, we can’t speak to the issue as ACLU spokespersons; and we can’t cosponsor the event. But this is as it should be. The success of the ACLU is because it is focused. Who wants me spouting my thoughts and claiming they are ACLU positions? The first time I tried to guess at the ACLU position on an issue, I was totally wrong. And now that I know more about the issue, I know why I was wrong.

The other thing that makes the ACLU more difficult than a local action group is in understanding its mission. We tend to think that, if the ACLU’s mission is to preserve our civil liberties, then they should take my case if my civil liberties are violated. The reality is that the ACLU looks for civil liberties issues that affect large numbers of people. If you get arrested and your civil liberties are violated, you will need to find a lawyer. But you should still call the ACLU civil liberties counselor at 415-621-2488. Your problem will help them decide which issues they need to address. For example, the ACLU campaigns

for independent oversight of police departments because of the great number of people who have had problems with the police. It was able to address the City of Fresno’s illegal response to police complaints because of the responses everyone gets when they file a complaint. For more on this issue, see the article about the IPA Forum elsewhere in this issue. And who knows? Your case might be the case that the ACLU lawyers are searching for to go to court to argue an issue.

With these limitations, you would think that members of the board of the Fresno Chapter would sit around twiddling their thumbs. On the contrary, our plate is very full. Once in a while, we can actually say “mission accomplished” about an issue. This seems to be true about our involvement in the River Park Curfew, the use of the Fresno County Library meeting rooms by political groups, and the fee to register voters on Fulton Mall.

Some issues we look at; and, for one reason or another, we can’t pursue them. These would include a police problem at City College and charges of discrimination in Tulare County.

Other issues seem to drag on forever. It looks like the issue of the Fresno Film Ordinance will soon come to a successful conclusion. For more on the Film Ordinance, see John Moses’ article elsewhere in this issue.

We are involved in the homeless situation, including the median issue. And now that the City of Fresno has an injunction against it for destroying homeless people’s property, the City seems to be responding by forcing landowners to evict people in homeless encampments and destroy their property. This seems to be equally illegal.

We continue to work on the issue of video surveillance which attacks our first and fourth amendment rights. This issue, too, has become more complicated. The City Police Department now seems to be using traffic cameras for crime surveillance. Not only is video surveillance ineffective and harmful to civil liberties, but using traffic cameras for the purpose brings other problems. Traffic cameras are supposed to be used to insure the smooth flow of traffic through the city. The next time you’re caught in a traffic jam, think about this one. But you might soon be on candid camera hundreds of times a day.

The emerging use of radio frequency chips adds to civil liberties issues around surveillance. They also add to problems with ID theft. RF chips are already in your passport and will soon be in your driver’s license. We have lobbied Juan Arambula about RF id chips. Big Brother has arrived.

We have heard from people about problems in the Hmong community, in the Native American Community, in area prisons, and about police problems in the Huron farmworker community. We have established a subcommittee to look into the problems in area prisons.

Finally, when we get bored, we can work on affiliate issues like FISA, the LGBT amendment, free speech issues around the Olympic Torch, and the SAVE ACT.

Want to learn more? Come to the next Board Meeting on June 9 at 6:30 pm, location to be determined. You can contact us at: simonaclu@sbcglobal.net. Our mailing address is 4974 N Fresno St. #185, Fresno 93726-0317. Or check out our webpage: http://www.aclunc.org/action/chapters/greater_fresno_chapter.shtml

Every Month is a Bicycling Month, but May IS Bike Month.

By Louise Colbert-Mar

Imagine a community that is bicycle friendly, where children go to school by bike and adults go to work, run errands and recreation by bike - where streets are less congested, cities are less noisy, skies are bluer, and, yes, by George, those are the Sierra Mountains on the horizon.

The Fresno County Bicycle Coalition (FCBC), which began in 2000, works all year toward these, albeit, distant but not impossible goals. Our founding purpose was and our mission still is to make Fresno County bicycle friendly "two wheels at a time." Throughout the year, we talk with city and county planners, transportation staff, elected officials about providing, maintaining and improving bike lanes and trails - facilities that will encourage bicycling and healthy lifestyles. We attend meetings to make sure that the bicyclist's viewpoint is heard.

We work on promoting bicycling all year; but come spring we begin to concentrate on one month - MAY. See our website to find out about the Coalition: <http://www.fresnobike.org>.

In 1956, the League of American Bicyclists established National Bike Month, encouraging cities all over the United States to host events to motivate communities to get out and bike. The League (www.bikeleague.org) continues to promote May as Bike Month. This year, May 12 - 16 is denoted Bike to Work Week (or Bike Commute Week for those of us going other places).

There will be many bicycling events in May 2008, some sponsored by the Bicycle Coalition, some by other local groups. Here's the schedule:

Bike Month: events:

Thursday, May 1st. 5:30 pm Bike Hop
Meet at Tower Velo at 1435 North Van Ness Avenue in Fresno (south of McKinley, north of Home) for an evening tour of local Art Galleries. This is being held in conjunction with Art Hop (1st Thursday of every month). Admission to galleries is free. Look for bicycle related art. Wear a helmet and be illuminated!

Saturday, May 3rd. 10:00 am. Official celebration of Friant Road improvements
Meet at Old Friant and (new) Friant Road on your bike for the official Fresno County celebration of the completion of the Friant road and bike lane improvements.

Saturday, May 3rd. Kirch Flat Century and Metric ride
The Fresno Cycling Club is sponsoring these rides for members only. Ride the lovely hills around Pine Flat Reservoir. If you are not a member, join up: <http://www.fresnocycling.com>. Find Kirch Flat ride details there.

Tuesday, May 6th. 9:00 am. Fresno County Board of Supervisors
1133 Tulare Street, Room 301, Hall of Records, Fresno
Come hear the Board proclaim May as Bike Month in the County of Fresno. The FCBC will accept the proclamation on behalf of all cyclists in the county.

Thursday, May 8th. 6:30 - 7:30 pm Yoga for Bicyclists
Meet at Tower Velo at 1435 North Van Ness in Fresno for - Yoga for Bicyclists. Local yoga teacher, Deborah Eacock, will provide an introduction to yoga and guide attendees through some basic moves that will be beneficial to cyclists. Wear comfortable clothes; bring a towel/mat (if you have one) and water. Free and sponsored by the Fresno County Bicycle Coalition. Also see Thursday, May 29th.

Saturday, May 10th. 11am - 4pm. CVCCA's 2nd Annual Fresno Cycling Festival
Come to Woodward Park in Fresno for an all day cycling event sponsored by the Central Valley Cycling Charitable Association. There'll be rides, races, booths, entertainment, a blood drive. See <http://www.fresnocyclingfestival.com/> for more information.

Saturday, May 10th. 11 am - 4pm. Swap Meet
The Fresno Cycling Club will hold its annual swap meet at the Cycling Festival in Woodward Park... bring bicycle stuff to sell, trade or come to buy.

Monday, May 12th. 7:00 pm. Clovis City Council
Council room, Clovis City Hall, 1033 5th Street, just east of Clovis Ave. (bike and auto parking) Come to hear the Clovis City Council proclaim May as Bike Month in the City of Clovis.

Tuesday, May 13th. 8:30 am. Fresno City Council
Fresno City Hall, downtown Fresno. Come to hear the Fresno City Council proclaim May as Bike Month in the City of Fresno.

Wednesday, May 14th. Annual FCBC Bike to Work Ride, AKA - Manchester to Downtown Fresno coffee ride.
Meet at Manchester Center near the Fresno Area Express (FAX) site on Blackstone at 7:45 for an 8:30 group departure. Clovis riders, meet at the rest stop on the Old Town Clovis trail (near Ashlan Avenue and Clovis Avenue) at 7:00 am to ride together to Manchester Center. From Manchester Center will be escorted by the Fresno Police Department Bike Cops. Refreshments will be provided by Milano and Café Corazon on Fulton Mall.

Thursday, May 15th. 3rd Annual FCBC Corporate Challenge. RIDE TO WORK!
Get a team, ride to work, win prizes. See the Fresno County Bicycle Coalition's web site for more information on how to participate, contest rules and how to win! www.fresnobike.org

Thursday, May 15th. Fresno Area Express (FAX) and Clovis Transit free bike rides.
FAX and Clovis Transit will provide bicyclists with free rides all day. Ride your bike and get a free bus ride!!

Saturday, May 17th. Clovis Police Department Bicycle Rodeo
Clovis Police Department will be celebrating Bike Safety Month by hosting a bicycle rodeo in the evening of

May 16, 2008 at Weldon Elementary School. We will have 12 stations, including bike safety and a skills section. There will be 1200 people attending the event. Please contact Officer Folliard for further information (559) 324-3424

Thursday, May 29th. Yoga for Cyclists.
This FCBC sponsored Yoga for Cyclists class will happen in Woodward Park at 6:30pm. Come for a sunset stretch. Teacher is: Deborah Eacock. Look for signs or check the Coalition's web site for details.

REST OF THE MONTH: Ride, Ride, Ride

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Louise Colbert-Mar, LCI 1805 is a member of the Board of the Fresno County Bicycle Coalition, a League of American Bicyclists - League Certified Instructor for children and adults and a local librarian. She can be contacted at: bikeclovis@aol.com. The Fresno County Bicycle Coalition can be contacted at: info@fresnobike.org

Why Does Fresno Need An Independent Police Auditor?

By Bill Simon

The Central California Criminal Justice Committee and the First Congregational Church are sponsoring a Forum: Why Does Fresno Need An Independent Police Auditor? The Forum will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2008, from 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm at the Big Red Church, 2131 N Van Ness Boulevard in Fresno. The main speakers will be Barbara Attard, the Independent Police Auditor for the City of San Jose, and Mark Schlosberg, the Police Practices Policy Director of the ACLU of Northern California. There will also be testimony from citizens who have been mistreated by the Fresno City Police Department. The Fresno Area Chapter of the ACLU is among the cosponsors and endorsers of the Forum.

Every time the issue of an IPA comes before the Fresno City Council, the Council Members vote against it. The reason they most often give is that Fresnoans don't see the need of an IPA so the council members can't vote for it.

This is despite the fact that the ACLU strongly champions independent oversight of police departments because it is in police work that our constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties are most often violated. This is despite the fact that a 2007 Fresno Grand Jury Report strongly endorsed an IPA.

This is despite the fact that, absent an IPA, members of the CCCJC have had to spend a great deal of time helping people file complaints against the police department. The police department response to these complaints is a thank you but..."Pursuant to California Penal Code 832.7, I am unable to provide you with the specific details of this personnel investigation."

On the contrary, Mark Schlosberg of the ACLU wrote a letter to Chief Dyer on February 21 pointing out that penal code 832.7 "requires a police department to notify complainants as to the disposition of complaints..." The City replied that, while the city is in compliance with the code, it will incorporate Mr. Schlosberg's suggestions. Now we have to wait and see what happens.

While we wait, come to the Forum and learn more about the need for an IPA. When you are convinced, you can convince your council member to vote in favor of an IPA next time. Fresno is the largest California city without independent police oversight.

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Food Not Bombs serve food to the hungry several times a week. They need you to volunteer and help.

Food Not Bombs

By Kelly Borkert

After more than twelve years of weekly Saturday afternoon meal servings, the Fresno Food Not Bombs group that performs this service is facing some big changes. One of the saddest is the retirement and departure of Jean Chipp. Jean is well known and highly regarded for her efforts within Food Not Bombs, through the Sleeping Bag Project she has directed for years, and on the streets of Fresno, confronting the War Machine she wishes to starve. All this, while homeless and low income families line up every week, hungry for a meal of beans, rice, soup and salad.

This dynamo of commitment and action has just retired from a career at Kaiser Health’s pharmacy to much fanfare from Kaiser, who proclaimed her their “Everyday Hero” and placed large signs at their facilities recognizing her selfless efforts. While she is no stranger to awards and acknowledgments, she might not receive as much notice for her current and future efforts in caring for her charming, 92-year-old mother, Mabel Chipp, in their native Kerhonksen, New York, where she will be residing for some time to come.

Another sad change in the works is the departure of founding member Alvin Valeriano, who intends to leave his adopted home of Fresno for his native Philippines, leaving behind a wealth of fond memories and a sign that reads “Gone Fishin’.” It is difficult to imagine Food Not Bombs without either Alvin or Jean, and there is no doubt that Alvin’s absence is going to be a painful one for the scores of impoverished children he has traditionally favored with affection, concern, pastries and meals. These commodities he provided weekly, making the rounds to the baked goods suppliers who have always helped make the Saturday serving a success, particularly for those who were able to take home loaves of bread, stretching the meal for hours or days. On those occasions when turnout at the park was lower than expected, Alvin was indefatigable in taking left-over food to nearby motels housing ultra low income families, making the Food Not Bombs effort as effective as possible, even at the end of a hard day’s effort when most volunteers are feeling the aches and exhaustion of procurement, cleaning, cutting, cooking, and serving. Alvin may not be immediately replaceable, but hope is being held that he can be cloned, and in a few short decades an army of unstoppable, thoroughly compas-

sionate volunteers can be unleashed on our community’s needful citizens, assuming the need remains.

Currently, we see longer lines forming every week, and with demand growing, we can only hope that a supply of volunteers will always exist to fill these bittersweet voids. The infrastructure of financial and material support for our activities is stronger than ever, but that means little without the personnel, an ingredient which is in constant flux as members come and go due to personal, professional and educational demands that often pull them away from the weekly volunteer effort. No matter the difficulties, more than 12 years of servings have scarcely been interrupted. A daunting record, but a reassuring pattern, proving it can be done. Alvin deserves much credit for that incredible run.

Perhaps a dozen Fresnans make up the current roster of regular participants, and what an impressive lot to be associated with. If they were profiled, the community would take a great deal of pride in each person’s character and actions. As it is, these heroes go unmentioned for the most part, but happily they seem to find their own rewards compensation enough to continue the weekly struggle.

There are certain limitations to the Saturday group’s abilities, and they need to be mentioned here in the hope that they can be understood and overcome. As a contact person for the Saturday operation, I receive frequent requests from community groups to attend and provide food and beverages to participants in marches, rallies and special events throughout the Fresno area. While this is a part of what Food Not Bombs wants to do, it is not always possible. In the last several months we have attended events for CSUF student groups, Peace Fresno’s Rally in the Valley, and various marches and fundraisers, all with different challenges in terms of logistics and most importantly, availability of volunteers.

One of our biggest disappointments was not being able to attend an event put on by Reverend Floyd Harris, where an award of appreciation for Food Not Bombs was presented to our stalwart representative Al Williams. But due to limited volunteers that weekend, we could not attend with food at the same time as our Saturday meal serving. This particular issue of timing conflicts is perennial as most events are scheduled on Saturdays, usually at the same exact time as our serving at the park. It’s worth noting that another Food

Not Bombs group serves on Sunday, and their services might be sought if you are planning a Saturday event concurrent with our regular serving.

Another possibility has occurred to us in the course of struggling with limited resources: If local groups would like to have Food Not Bombs serve at their event, they might consider sending some of their own members to the Wesley United Methodist Church kitchen (located at Barstow and Millbrook), where we prep and cook, in advance of their own event. In this way, not only can they see and help with the FNB experience, but as they learn they can prepare to do some of the work involved in catering their own events.

At the recent Rally in the Valley, we received donations totaling \$151. Quite a nice tip for such fun work. We met so many vital people, and received terrific assistance from some highly talented folks who had already made the effort to secure food and beverage donations from sources we have been unable to exploit. Our experience was so completely positive that we can only hope to replicate it. In anticipation of future dual (dueling?) events, we have decided to put that \$151 toward the purchase of another very expensive large pot, suitable for cooking a large batch of beans or soup in addition to the normal meal, which now requires all the cookware we have. These pots with lids are upwards of \$300 apiece, so it is no small investment. For this expenditure to work, we have to hope that other organizations will have the volunteers who would be willing to donate some of their own time to helping us while learning the procedures, and then assist in the preparation, transportation and serving at their own events. This may sound like a lot to ask, or perhaps a quid pro quo proposition, but really it’s just the best idea we can come up with to expand our abilities to work more widely with the community while trying to offset the losses we experience when hardcore participants like Jean and Alvin depart for far corners of the world.

It is with deep sadness that we bid farewell to two of our most highly respected associates, and with equal regret we recognize that we have been unable to show our actual support for events where our efforts were being acknowledged, even in our absence. We want to do more, as much as we can, and we may need your help to do that. It’s more fun than you would imagine, and once you participate, you’ll see nothing is too hard to imagine doing, if we do it together.

The Saturday Fresno Food Not Bombs group meets every Saturday at Wesley United Methodist Church from 9:30 AM until we leave for Roeding Park, where the meal is served at 1 PM. Volunteers are always welcome to show up at either location and see what goes on. Questions about Saturday FNB activities can be directed to myself at (559) 438-4088 or through email to kellyborkert@hotmail.com



Food Not Bombs volunteer Alvin Valeriano is moving to the Philippines.



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The Big Red Church

Progressive Religion ... is Not an Oxymoron!

By David E. Roy



The social and political progressive movements in the United States often have had an uneasy and ambivalent relationship with religion. Unfortunately, there are all too many good reasons for this rocky relationship: Some of the most visible religious leaders are vigorously outspoken in their opposition to many of the specific goals

progressives hold the most dear, goals that aim to bring about peace and justice for all. To make matters worse, these religious leaders claim to be rooted in the center of their religious traditions. They cite numerous sacred texts to prove this.

And yet there are an enormous number of religious leaders and followers, liberal as well as conservative, who do not align themselves with these firebrands. It is important that social and political progressives understand that they have strong allies among the religious progressives; and to understand what about their religion that motivates them to act on behalf of the progressive values of peace and justice for all.

This need is what gave birth to the idea of a short series of articles that hope to bring the news of what is happening in various progressive religious movements, including Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Buddhist, to the readers of Fresno's Community Alliance.

The Reality of American Empire

During the current administration, the veil has been lifted on a long-standing issue concerning the nature of the relationship the US has with the rest of the world. For many years (some would say since our nation's founding), there have been imperialistic dimensions to our international relationships. However, US leaders consistently have denied that we have sought to be a global empire by means of our economic and military power. Today, however, the neoconservative movement that has dominated the Bush Administration's political, social, judicial, and military decisions and actions has also made it crystal clear that we *are* an empire and that this is a good thing. They have seen this as something to be reinforced wherever and whenever possible by whatever means necessary.

In addition to some of the most obvious actions taken in recent years to expand the role of the American Empire (e.g., the invasion and occupation of Iraq and the Patriot Act), the administration's neocons have mounted a largely invisible, skillfully engineered and highly successful legal campaign within the government to accrue nearly absolute power to the executive branch. This campaign has been waged largely out of sight until very recently. (For the history and details of this largely unchecked campaign see Charlie Savage's *Takeover: The Return of the Imperial Presidency*.) The American empire now has an emperor with all the unilateral, unchecked power necessary to impose his will upon the world.

So, what has this got to do with Christianity? More than a century of biblical research by thousands of scholars has brought to light some important facts con-

cerning this historical Jesus, the context for his ministry, and the nature of the early Christian church.

These academic biblical scholars, at least the vast majority, for a long time have described Jesus of Nazareth as a Jewish rabbi who lived, preached, and acted in the midst of a people who were under the fierce control of the Roman Empire. Virtually everything about his brief recorded ministry must be understood in that context. This perspective extends to the writings of the apostle Paul as well as to most of the other books of the Christian New Testament. This even includes the book of Revelation!

This means, for example, that when Jesus is quoted as speaking of the Kingdom or Reign of God, this needs to be understood (and would have in that day) as being in direct contrast to the oppressive Kingdom or Reign of Caesar. This was a subversive viewpoint. When his early followers called Jesus, "Lord," this was in opposition to the requirement to call only Caesar, "Lord." This was a subversive act.

Jesus' concern for the poor and oppressed, which is considered central to his ministry by most Christians, also must be seen in this context. In fact, many progressive Christians, with the support of leading biblical and theological scholars, believe that Jesus' outspoken opposition to the greed and power of the Roman Empire was what led to his gruesome execution at the hands of the ruling power of the day. The emperor and his advisors do not like to have their priorities challenged.

Bad Theology can be Dangerous

The book of Revelation has been used for many years to divide Christians from non-Christians, and even Christians from Christians. Recently it has been given massive attention through the Left Behind mega-business involving books, films, and even video games. The interpretation given to the meaning of the book's highly symbolic and metaphorical content by this series is dramatic and quite dark. In essence, those Christians who are "true" Christians will be spared from and joined with God by means of the Rapture. Everyone else will be "left behind" and, if they do not convert, they will be plunged into the fiery abyss of hell. This is something like a 24 series for Christians.

However, many serious scholars would disagree and argue instead that Revelation is to be understood as depicting a hoped-for scenario for the evil Roman Empire. This year's local Interfaith Scholar Weekend, for example, included New Testament scholar Prof. Barbara Rossing (Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago) who made this point quite clearly (see her book, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in The Book of Revelation*). Another New Testament scholar, Prof. Marcus Borg (Oregon State University in Corvallis), who has visited Fresno several times in the past two decades, makes the same argument in his recent book, *The Heart of Christianity*.

Nonetheless, there are Christian leaders (John Hagee, for example) who subscribe to the dark picture and its accompanying storyline. This, in brief, requires Israel to be restored. This is followed by a cataclysmic (i.e., nuclear) struggle in the Middle East – at which point the world as we know it would be utterly destroyed. The danger is that some of those who believe in this story are actively trying to promote a war in the Middle East. They are promoting a war in the name of the Prince of Peace.

A Christian Response to American Empire

Perhaps the best book on the topic of the Christian response to American Empire is *American Empire and the*

Commonwealth of God, by David Ray Griffin, John B. Cobb Jr., et. al. (Cobb is considered by many to be one of the most important theologians of our time and is someone who has long been concerned about the impact of our current form of global economy in relationship to the human community and the environment. [See *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, by former World Bank senior economist Herman Daly and Cobb.] Griffin, a former student of Cobb, has written extensively in many areas of philosophy. Interestingly, he is one of the top 100 recommended scholars to read in China today.)

In this brief book (181 pages), the authors present a clear history of American Empire, particularly since the end of WWII. They argue persuasively that American Empire is neither accidental nor benign. They go below the surface and present information not readily available in the mainstream media. For example, in terms of military domination, they mention a little known fact about US policy for space (the US Space Command). One component of this is called *Global Strike* which would permit us to destroy anything anywhere on the planet within 45 minutes. (p. 13) This is a potent form of world domination.

Whereas military imperialism tends to be largely obvious, economic imperialism is often neither obvious nor of great interest to most people. The chapters on our economic imperialism, however, make it painfully clear what far-reaching and disastrous effects our economic "way of life" has had on a vast number of impoverished nations around the world.

The authors assert that economic theory has become the *de facto* religion of our culture. In the economic current model, there is “no place for community, no place for justice, and no place for the natural world.” (p. 23) Instead of the economy being in the service of society and the environment, it is the other way around: Society and the natural world have become subordinate to economic theory. Current economic theory and practices do not benefit the common good; instead, they benefit transnational corporations, governments, and the “elites” who have the power personally and through these institutions to make things happen – or not.











The authors call for the citizens of the world to make radical changes. These changes are ones that are in keeping with the deepest religious values reflected in the teachings and actions of Jesus to seek justice for all and to oppose economic systems that are inherently unjust, even when these systems are maintained and enforced by an empire ... Roman or American. These deep religious values are quite similar to ones that can be found in Judaism, Islam and Buddhism.

These ideals are a challenge to follow and promote within our culture, the culture of empire. As Alliance readers know all too well, people who lift up these ideals are often ignored, marginalized, or attacked. When social, political and religious progressives are able to join together, the result will be greater strength in the efforts to realize these ideals here in the real world.

I invite readers to share with me your feedback and your questions and concerns on the topic of progressive religion. The only requirement I have is that whatever dialogue we have must remain respectful. You can reach me via admin@cctnet.com. Thank you!

###

Ordned in the United Church of Christ, David Roy is a pastoral counselor and a California licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who directs the Center for Creative Transformation. He has a Ph.D. in theology and personality from the Claremont (California) School of Theology.

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Emma Goldman and Political Violence in her Times and Ours

By Loretta Kensinger

The following is a shorter version of a longer talk presented for WILPF on March 8th, in celebration of International Women’s Day. That talk itself was part of an even longer work considering our times in light of the life and words of Emma Goldman.

INTRODUCTION

Since that fateful day in September 2001, and in its aftermath, I have often sought inspiration from a wider community of humans seeking to create a less terrifying world. In a 1912 piece called “The New Year” Emma Goldman boldly asserted “Out of the chaos the future emerges in harmony and beauty.” The chaos is all too easy to feel these days. To give but a few examples, around 2,974 people died in the attacks of 9/11, thousands continue to die in the on-going war in Afghanistan, the Web Group Just Foreign Policy reports over a million Iraqis have died in the bombing and occupation of that country, and CNN reports over 4,000 coalition deaths, US soldiers making up the majority, to say nothing of the maimed and scarred. Wars, police actions, insurgencies, environmental disaster, acts of ethnic and religious hatred, class desperation, imperialism and nationalism rage throughout the globe. The chaos can certainly seem overwhelming.

But this starting quote of Goldman’s also reminds me that out of such moments of chaos links to a new future are forged. And links to a future, must of their nature, be forged in a past. Seeing Sept 11 in the context of a larger array of human catastrophe opens me to consider the possible lines not of chaos, but of a whole host of connections, to the past, the present, and the future, just as my car’s need for gasoline is one link between me and the war in Iraq. Certainly Emma Goldman’s (1869-1940) life, history, and ideas are not the only reminder that acts of political terrorism are not new to the U.S. Still Emma Goldman’s life, times, and ideas provide their own illuminating materials from which to view more recent events that might give us a different lens on our world today. I locate these reflections in my readings of Goldman, but they may not be lessons Goldman intended to teach or would necessarily have liked to have inspired. Here I lay out a few initial thoughts on problems of definition and the importance of complexity and context when trying to understand political violence and terrorism.

LOADED TERMS

To quest for a solitary definition of “terrorism” or “political violence” in general, is like running in sand. It is not that the concepts “terrorism” or “political violence” have no meaning. Rather, the term is over-determined, weighted by shifting considerations of power, oppression, efficacy, and legitimacy. As Goldman’s life and words reveal, “political violence” and specifically the use of concepts like “terrorism” is frequently loaded, reflecting more light on the political polemics of the day rather than any real understanding the types, nature, and realities of events that might be encompassed within the definition of these terms. Goldman was painfully aware of the loaded use of terms like “violence” and “terror,” as they were accusations that haunted her throughout her life.

In her own writings about violence within the political realm Goldman is clear that one problem with the use of the concepts is the way they draw attention to some types of violence, leaving other violence obscured by the rhetoric. Thus, Goldman distinguishes in her discussion of political violence between the uses of violence as coercive force by those in power (the state, capital, etc.), violence used as an act against such power, and violence used to hasten or defend revolution.



Emma Goldman (June 27, 1869 – May 14, 1940) was an anarchist known for her political activism, writing, and speeches. She was lionized as a free-thinking “rebel woman” by admirers, and derided as an advocate of politically-motivated murder and violent revolution by her critics.

In “The Psychology of Political Violence” Goldman states “Compared with wholesale violence of capital and government, political acts of violence are but a drop in the ocean.” Indeed, Goldman believes the state will try to label as violent and terrorist any who threaten its existence, and will use this label to squelch even the most peaceful forms of resistance if they gain too much popular momentum (see Goldman’s essay on “Anarchism: What it Really Stands For.”)

“Out of the chaos the future emerges in harmony and beauty.”

The reminder of the loaded political nature in the use and defining of these terms is a lesson we need to remember because today, just as in Goldman’s time, the powerful are in a better position to establish what will be called an act of “terror.” For example, the March 31, 2005 *New York Times* reported that direct action environmentalists who engage in property destruction made the list of most dangerous terrorists in the country, while the latest homeland security report of that

period left off domestic extremist groups “like World Church of the Creator, Aryan Nations or anti-abortion activists, which have previously been identified by federal officials as domestic terrorist threats.”

What does not fit within the current framing “terror” by the powerful will often remain outside mainstream vision. Consider how we think about terrorism, political violence, and women. As C. Sheffield points out in her 1997 essay “Sexual Terrorism,” when considering what constitutes terrorism what is often disappeared from discussion is the fact that women are the majority of victims of acts of violence that certainly would fit under one common view of terror that finds “terrorism aims to frighten, and by frightening, to dominate and control” (published in O’Toole and Schiffman). The Taliban’s attacks on women in Afghanistan were seldom discussed as “terrorist” threats, but their link to the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks did earn them the label of “terrorists.” Terror often becomes viewed as an exceptional public act, negating the everyday experience of terror by women in the form of the stalker, the rapist, the batterer, or the sexual harasser. Still, even if we limit our definition to the more public space political bombings that typically are meant by these concepts, the primary location of many such attacks are the public spaces most frequented by women: marketplaces, shopping malls, shopping centers, though few outside feminism notice.

Goldman’s ideas and life serve as a reminder that if we are to understand political violence in our age we must look beyond the labels. Any use of the concept of “terrorism” should be treated as a marker of the beginning point for analysis, than the boundary of reality. When such terminology is raised, it requires critically reflective inquiry into who is speaking, about whom, and to what end.

CONTEXT AND COMPLICATIONS

In her essay “The Psychology of Political Violence” Goldman seeks to explain the causes that drive “Violent protest against our social and economic iniquities.” Goldman reminds us to be leery of claims about the perpetrators of such acts, noting “it is a fact known to almost everyone familiar with the Anarchist movement that a great number of acts, for which Anarchists had to suffer, either originated with the capitalist press or were instigated, if not directly perpetrated, by the police.” Goldman’s refers here to common concerns in that period about the 1887 Haymarket bombings. Yet her indictment of the press and the witch-hunts against anarchists could easily apply to scapegoated groups in our own day. Recall, for example, that some early press accounts after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombings quickly and falsely attributed the acts to unidentified Islamic organizations.

Anyone who might critically seek to understand the roots of such actions, both in Goldman’s day and ours, runs the risk of being perceived as aiding terror. In Goldman’s essay (noted above) she states “If such acts are treated with understanding, one is immediately accused of eulogizing them. If, on the other hand, human sympathy is expressed with the *Attentäter* one risks being considered a possible accomplice.” Those who have sought to raise critically reflective voices about the events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath understand this dilemma. Canadian feminist Sunera Thobani came under attack after a speech she gave critical of post September 11 US policies. As we are reminded in *After Shock: September 11, 2001/Global Feminist Perspectives*, the resulting backlash against Thobani included “...investigation by the Canadian police for “a potential vio-



Goldman (shown here in Union Square, New York in 1916) urged unemployed workers to take direct action rather than depend on charity or government aid.

lation of Section 319 of the Canada Criminal Code—inciting hatred against an identifiable group.” No formal charges were made, however.

Regarding the causes of some individual acts of political violence, Goldman notes “The indisputable fact is that homicidal outrages have been the reply of goaded desperate classes, and goaded desperate individuals.... Such acts are the violent recoil from violence...they are the last desperate struggle of outraged and exasperated human nature.” Goldman claims such perpetrators are often “supersensitive to injustice.” Regardless

detailed in by Falk, et.al., in their “Introduction” to Volume II of *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*. In 1902 New York passed a statute that made it a crime to express, “‘by word of Mouth or writing’ the ‘doctrine that organized government should be overthrown by force or violence, or by assassination of the executive head or of any of the executive officials of government, or by any unlawful means.’” Backed by a revised Comstock law prohibiting mailings deemed “obscene” this act threatened to curb a vibrant independent press. Attacks on immigration also followed the assassination. In 1903 a national immigration act

causes of violence and to protect rights necessary to the free exchange ideas can have major impacts for the future. The A.C.L.U., for example, arose as a lasting institution of cross-progressive solidarity from struggles during Goldman’s times.

CONCLUSION:

From Goldman we are reminded that if we seek to make sense of political violence in our world we must look for what is both said and unsaid when the label “terrorism.” If we are to decrease the attraction of such violence we must seek complex understandings of the motivations of such acts. Most importantly, we must be willing to unpack the varied interests buried in the use of the term, the act of violence itself, and the reactions that occur in its wake. Such lessons are perhaps neither new, nor earth-shattering. Still the reminder is useful, I think, as we reflect on our world.

While perhaps obvious, it is still important that we remember when assessing the violence of our times that we make and remake events with each retelling and in each context in which it is told. For example, how quickly events of September 11th and its aftermath were recast as a day primarily of fear whose primary lesson was a call for revenge. Yet just as the quote I began with requires us to understand the human agency in events that appear to be only chaos, it is a grave disservice to those who lived and died in the events of that day to frame these events only in terms of tragedy. In the midst of fear, in the midst of chaos, amazing moments in many cases of human tragedy are found in the stories that reveal over and over again the beauty of human compassion and empathy. Many in power may act in horrific ways, and masses may be numbed to acquiescence, but many others also rise to more humane higher values.

If we listen carefully and work hard, a different, more complex, and more humane interpretation of these events can be unearthed, even as the mass media tries to deny its existence. After all, in a freezing February sleet at the heart of ground zero, just months after the bombings shook their city, thousands of New Yorkers—those with the greatest reason to seek revenge—stood in all their diversity to say “not in their name” a war in Iraq. They stood that day in solidarity with millions in the then largest world wide day of protest in human history, reinterpreting the lesson of that day not as a one of revenge, but one of peace and human solidarity. In this event I hear echoes of sentiments Goldman noted in her famous 1917 “Address to the Jury.” Arrested for her anti-conscription work against U.S. entry into World War I, Goldman states “Whatever your verdict, gentlemen, it cannot possibly affect the rising tide of discontent in this country against war which, despite all boasts, is a war for conquest and military power.”

Ultimately Goldman reminds us that we emerge from the flames of today and take steps that will become the future. Will we build a future defined by endless fear, endless revenge, indeed chaos? Or will we seek to understand our past in order to build a future that embraces beauty and communal harmony?

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Goldman distinguishes in her discussion of political violence between the uses of violence as coercive force by those in power (the state, capital, etc.), violence used as an act against such power, and violence used to hasten or defend revolution.

of horror at the act, this somewhat romantic assessment may hold a kernel of truth; surely it takes some goading, some desperation, and some outrage to overcome human fears of the potential life-threatening personal repercussions to engage in such acts. Still while the psychology of oppression and state power may help us understand elements of the context of political violence, surely the root causes that motivate political violence are deeper, and more complex than Goldman lays out. For example, in

The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism Robin Morgan reveals that egotism, peer pressure and thrill-seeking may also motivate violent political action. When the perpetrators of the Oklahoma bombings claim in part to have acted against perceptions of state violence and federal incursion into individual liberties, we need grounding to understand these motivations. Seen in light of a fuller range of political violence that haunt our world, Goldman’s assessment might seem simplistic. It certainly begs questions regarding the validity and merit of any purported claims to “inequities,”

“rights” and “oppression.” Attention to Marilyn Frye’s 1983 essay “Oppression,” for example, reminds us oppression is not the same as feeling put-out, not getting your way, feeling down, or having bad things happen to you. Utilizing Frye’s work could allow us to begin to

included the ability to deny entry for political beliefs, and “the Naturalization and the Denaturalization Act of 1906 followed, which required petitioners for citizenship to sign a Declaration of Intention, swearing they were not anarchists...”

As with the McKinley assassination, after September 2001 a wide variety of targeted populations were harassed, investigated, and required to report to police

regardless of any direct evidence based connection to the events themselves. The Patriot Act and Homeland Security are but great grandchildren of the anti-anarchist laws of Goldman’s day. *Mother Jones* notes that the so called “terrorist watch list” had by November 2007 expanded to include some “860,000 and counting, according to the Government Accountability Office.” Code Pink reported on their Web site that “Ann Wright, retired U.S. army colonel and former diplomat who quit in opposition to the Iraq war, and Medea Benjamin, co-founder of CODEPINK and founding director of Global Exchange” found

themselves stopped at the Canadian border and denied entry because “Their names have been added to FBI’s National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database” for previous arrests protesting the war in Washington. Indeed, in Naomi Klein’s 2007 book *The Shock*



Loretta Kensing speaking to a full house at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Women's Day event on March 8, 2008.

How quickly events of September 11th and its aftermath were recast as a day primarily of fear whose primary lesson was a call for revenge.

assess the nature of claims regarding oppression with standards developed beyond the interested parties. When seeking to understand the causes of political violence, reflecting on Goldman again reminds us to assess political agendas, motivations and methods within broader socio-historical contexts if we are to move from the surface to the root.

Whatever the cause leading to the event, those seeking progressive revolutionary change learn from Goldman that political violence is a dangerous tactic in part because the reactions to its use are beyond the control of the political agitators. Just as power is better positioned to be heard when naming what counts as “terror,” the powerful will utilize acts of violence toward their own aims. In her times and ours the response to terrorist threats the U.S. has enacted troubled and sweeping policies that threaten core democratic values. In 1901, President McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz. Since Czolgosz was an anarchist sympathizer many anarchists without any clear and direct connection to the act were arrested and investigated. Goldman herself was among the most wanted. The Congress and state legislatures rushed to “protect” America from the immigrant anarchist threat, passing numerous laws limiting immigration, requiring loyalty oaths, and restricting rights of speech and assembly, particularly aimed against anarchists, as

Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism investigates the increasing manipulation of catastrophes like the September 11, 2001 bombings, hurricane Katrina, the bombing of Iraq, and their resulting collective public disorientation, to push through unpopular economic and social policies.

Remembering that political acts that employ violence will often be turned to its own use by power, should remind those concerned with democracy to be vigilant in protecting democratic rights in times of crisis. Remembering others have been vigilant before us, acting with courage in similar times, should inspire us to continue to struggle. Even where the skirmish is not won, the longer term coalitions forged through the struggle to understand the

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Vote Absentee City Council District 2

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Why?

- Karbassi is the only candidate born in Fresno and raised in District 2.
- Karbassi's family owned business, Persian Rugs Collections, has been in our neighborhood for 29 years.
- Karbassi attended Fresno State, Bullard High and Malloch Elementary.

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Why?

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- Karbassi will work to eliminate speeding vehicles through our neighborhoods.
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- Karbassi will maintain our streets and keep our parks clean.
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Mother's Day is Sunday, May 11

This first "The Mother's Day Proclamation for Peace," was written in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe, the mother of six.

Howe had recently walked the battlefields of the Civil War with her husband and with Abraham Lincoln. She had just written "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." But now, as the Franco Prussian War was beginning, she felt that she could not bear any more violence. She called for a congress of women to gather immediately to promote "PEACE: A Mother's Day for Peace."

Here's the full text of what she wrote:

Arise, then, women of this day!

Arise all women who have hearts! Whether your baptism be that of water or of tears!

Say firmly:

We will not have questions decided by irrelevant agencies, Our husbands shall not come to us reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.

Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.

We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.

From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own.

It says, 'Disarm, Disarm!'

The sword of murder is not the balance of justice! Blood does not wipe out dishonor nor violence indicate possession.

As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after their own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.



U.S. Military Killed in Action In Iraq

Current Total as of 4/20/08: **4121**
+486 in Afghanistan (officially)

Wounded Total (to 2/29/08): **50,561** (officially)
Killed in Action, March 2008: **41** (officially)
Wounded, March 2008 Total: **293** (officially)
Iraqi Civilians Killed: **1,220,580** (unofficially)



Sun Mt Chronicles
Peace • Justice • Big Mama

sunmt.org/feb26chron08.html
Mother earth and I are one

sunmt.org/march31chron08.html
Medical Center bosses lie to us workers

sunmt.org/feb28chron08.html
We challenge Fresno secret police

sunmt.org/marchechron08.html
Looking back to move forward

sunmt.org/april12chron08.html
Celebrating our roots
Focusing our future

sunmt.org/april17chron08.html
Giving taxpayers facts on where our taxes go

Mayor Admits City's Homeless Plan is a Failure

By Mike Rhodes

Fresno mayor Alan Autry said “we have failed, government has failed on this issue. We are the status quo that has chosen through our wisdom over the last 40 or 50 years to pick the most expensive and ineffective, dis-compassionate way to address the homeless situation.” Autry was addressing the joint meeting of leadership and planning councils of the County/City of Fresno 10 year plan to end chronic homelessness.

Autry told the task force, which was meeting for the first time, that he wanted them to develop a blueprint for how to develop a Housing First model that will provide homeless people a place to live without pre conditions. The mayor said “I’m having to change my thinking because we are talking about a home in a neighborhood where a guy comes up and passes out on the front yard. That is part of the process of getting well. There is no requirement on those individuals. I’m ready to go there.”

What Autry was encouraging the task force to do is develop a Housing First program in Fresno that would take this community’s chronically homeless and provide them with decent/affordable housing. The plan was outlined by Eduardo Cabrera, HUD Region IX Homeless Agency Coordinator, who said this meeting would be “the beginning of the end of homelessness.” Cabrera gave the same one hour power point presentation that Philip Mangano executive director of the Bush administration’s Interagency Council on Homelessness, gave four months earlier.

The presentation makes a powerful argument that government policy on homelessness over the last 20 years has failed to decrease chronic homelessness. The chronically homeless, Cabrera said, are only 10% of the homeless population, but they use 50% of the resources available. Those services include emergency medical services, primary health care (multi-day hospital stays), behavioral health care (psychiatric treatment, detox facilities), and interactions with the justice system (police, the courts, etc).

Cabrera said the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program tracked 119 persons experiencing chronic homelessness for 5 years and discovered that they had more than 18,000 emergency room visits at an average cost of \$1,000 per visit. Research prepared for the Tucson Arizona 10 year plan showed that downtown Tucson police officers spent about 200 hours in 1,070 encounters with people who are homeless during April of last year, at an estimated cost to the police department of \$64,000. Tucson’s Fire Department last year spent an estimated \$2 million answering an estimated 3,000 calls - out of a total 76,000 911 calls - from people who are homeless.

In Reno, Nevada Cabrera said two frustrated police officers tracked the costs of two chronically homeless individuals, who accounted for \$100,000 and \$120,000 in hospital expenses in less than a year. The officers determined that one individual, who they named “Million Dollar Murray” had cost more than \$1 million in hospitalization, incarceration, detox treatments, and ambulance rides. Reno P.D. officer Patrick O’Bryan said “we spent \$1 million not to do anything about him.” The University of California at San Diego followed 15 chronically homeless people for 18 months, tracking their use of behavioral health acute systems, mental health and substance abuse services, law enforcement interventions on the streets, and temporary periods of incarceration. Total cost: \$3 million, \$200,000 per person.



Katherine Perez works for Forest City Enterprises, a corporation that wants to develop downtown Fresno. Perez is on the task force, along with bankers, business owners, social service providers, and two homeless people. There are 32 task force members in all.



Fresno Mayor Alan Autry admits his homeless policy has been a failure - promises to move in a new direction.

The solution, Cabrera says, is to provide chronically homeless people with housing so they can stabilize their lives and start getting the help they need. In the housing first program, people are given housing without any pre-conditions. In other words, they don’t have to end their drug or alcohol addictions before they get housing. Housing First gives them housing and offers them assistance.

According to Cabrera, Housing First is working. In Portland, Maine researchers tracked 99 chronically homeless individuals who moved to permanent supportive housing. They report a 50% reduction in service costs in ambulance and emergency room use, jail nights, and police contacts after housing placement, dropping from an average of over \$28,000 per person annually to \$14,000. Health care costs decreased 59% after housing placement and mental health care costs decreased by 41%.

In Denver, Colorado they had a 73% reduction in emergency costs or nearly \$600,000 in the 2 years after chronically homeless people were placed in housing. Over 80% of the homeless people remained in the housing after 6 months. Mayor Hickenlooper of Denver says they will re-invest \$20 million in savings in public systems to create 200 new units of housing for persons who are chronically homeless.



Big Sue, who is homeless, is on the task force.

Advocates of the Housing First model say that the old status quo of ad hoc, uncoordinated crisis intervention isn’t working, it is more expensive, and less effective at helping the homeless. A Fresno Grand Jury report released in March 2008 came to the same conclusion. They wrote “the scattered and piecemeal public services provided to the unsheltered homeless add up to a very large public expense. It has been reported that as much as 50-80% of the total money intended for homelessness is spent on the chronic unsheltered homeless.” Writing about the Tool Shed City at the Poverello House and other efforts by the city to address homelessness, the Grand Jury report says “these various efforts to provide housing for the homeless have not been effective solutions for chronic unsheltered homeless in Fresno County.”

The Grand Jury report pointed to Housing First as a solution. They wrote:

“Housing First” programs provide permanent transitional housing and support services for the unsheltered homeless. Clients receiving shelter are not usually required to be drug and alcohol free in order to be provided housing. Support services, including counseling programs to support a drug-free lifestyle, accompany the housing, rather than being a prerequisite to it.

The “Housing First” model was developed in Boston, Massachusetts after a study revealed that the community was paying an exorbitant amount to treat homeless individuals at hospital emergency rooms. The study showed that giving the homeless person clean, warm, and dry shelter reduced medical costs by as much as 70%. Boston went on to construct permanent buildings to

provide temporary or transitional housing for the homeless. Other cities including Chicago and Portland claim to have saved money and improved services by establishing a “Housing First” program.

Mayor Autry, in his talk to the task force, told them to “think outside of the box” and encouraged them to redirect public policy on homelessness. Eduardo Cabrera, the HUD Region IX Homeless Agency Coordinator, said essentially the same thing. He told the group to “move from managing the crisis to ending the disgrace.” The model they are advocating is at odds with the current social service providers like the Poverello House and Rescue Mission who seem content to maintain the status quo. Both organizations are represented on the task force and it will be interesting to see if there is resistance to changing, in a fundamental way, public policy on homelessness.

Cabrera was clear about the cost of maintaining the status quo. He quoted Albert Einstein, who once said “the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Housing First costs far less than the current public policy, is much more effective at ending chronic homelessness, and now has the support of the mayor and a majority of elected officials.

The ball is now in the task force’s court. They have 100 days to develop a plan and present it to Fresno City and County governmental bodies for approval.

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

Don’t be Fooled by Housing First or the 10 Year Plan

By Jeremy Alderson

Housing First is a great model, but I’m not aware of anyplace in the U.S. where it has been implemented adequately to house all the homeless. Instead, it provides a convenient cover for pretending that something is being done. The same is true of the “Ten Year Plan” concept, which only serves to make the public believe that, eventually, the problem will be solved when, in fact, it won’t be solved by going down that track. At the task force meeting, Eduardo Cabrera (see the story on this page) said that 50% of the money is spent on a small percentage of the homeless. So yes, they’d like to save the money, but that’s not the same thing as creating social justice (one may wonder what would have become of the Civil Rights Movement if it had acquiesced to a Ten Year Plan that, in the end, still wouldn’t guarantee equal rights). Remember, there isn’t enough money to house everybody immediately and there aren’t enough jobs to employ them either. So this is a complete fraud that serves no better purpose than to bamboozle the public. As advocates, we should resist it with all our might.

A better plan would be to:

- 1 - Create a safe shelter for ALL of Fresno’s homeless IMMEDIATELY. This could be easily done by establishing tent cities, where people are free to come and go as they choose, have basic services like water and sanitation, and do not have to fear police harassment (regular community policing, on the other hand, is perfectly reasonable).
- 2 - Change the zoning laws as need be to encourage permanent shared housing and SROs, and subsidize such housing.
- 3 - Make developers pay a percentage of their projected expenditures into a city fund earmarked for housing the homeless.
- 4 - Create a city-managed (or contracted) day labor agency that doesn’t rip off poor people the way commercial firms do. And create UNSKILLED city jobs that permit unskilled workers to live with some modicum of dignity. This could be something along the lines of the old Civilian Conservation Corps.
- 5 - Create a civic ombudsman position specifically to hear the complaints of the poor.

I’m sure I could think of a few more points, but if the city did just this much it would change everything.

###

Jeremy Alderson is the director of the Homelessness Marathon and wrote the article on page 1 in this month’s newspaper.

VIGILANTES, POVERTY PIMPS, AND BULLDOZERS

The Homeless Face New Obstacles in Fresno

By Mike Rhodes

There have been a series of renewed attacks against homeless people in Fresno over the last couple of months. These attacks have been carried out by city officials, a vigilante businessman, and gang members. In March Mayor Alan Autry held a Press Conference where he announced a crack down on crime in homeless areas. Asked if homeless people should be concerned about the increased police presence in their encampments, Mayor Autry reminded his audience that jail might be a good thing for homeless people. "In my studies of this over the last 15 or 20 years, a lot of folks made a decision to get off drugs and pursue a better life while in a jail cell," Autry said. Looking on the sunny side of the jail experience, Autry concluded that jail might be "the only place they could go to get dried out or off of it for a while."

Autry also commented on the ongoing lawsuit against the City of Fresno by homeless people who had their property taken and immediately destroyed by the city. Autry said "I still feel that when we took the encampment that we did it was a good thing. When we cleaned out all of the horrible stuff that was there, hypodermic needles, mattresses that had hepatitis all over them, that a good thing was done. But, the way it was done in terms of unfolding to the media was poorly done and I have regrets on that because if we had done this same type of process, even though the right thing was done, I do not agree with the court decision." In other words, if the city had properly spun the taking of homeless peoples property to the media, it would not have been a problem. The Press Conference focused on treating homelessness as a police problem. There were no proposals about ending homelessness, rather the approach was to put an end to the homeless through police suppression.

In a disturbing new development that happened in early March, bulldozers rolled and homeless people once again had their property destroyed in downtown Fresno. What was different about this incident is that it happened on a vacant lot owned by an individual (or corporation) and did not take place on public property owned by the City of Fresno or Caltrans. What happened is that a group of about 30 homeless people who live between the railroad tracks and H street (south of Ventura) were told on Wednesday, March 12 to move. A man, who said he owned the property, told the residents they had until Friday to move. He presented no evidence that he was the owner and several homeless people I spoke to on the following Saturday said he just rented a building next to the lot and was not the actual owner of the property. The Fresno Police Department came by on Thursday and warned the residents that a "clean up" was going to take place the next day. The police returned on Friday when a dispute developed over property rights. Guess whose side the police took? On Friday, I got a call from Dee, a homeless resident in that encampment, who said all hell was breaking loose. Dee said that a big dumpster was put in the middle of the field and as we talked, she described the scene as a bulldozer was brought onto the property. On Saturday, when I went to the site of this attack, the field

was cleared of all the tents and shelters that had been there the day before. I talked to Dee and Manuel who said that a lot of homeless people lost everything they owned as the bulldozer swept through the area. The dumpster was filled with their tents, sleeping bags, food, and anything else they did not have time to move. Geno, another homeless resident of the lot, said his cat was killed by the bulldozer.

Does the property owner have a legal right to remove homeless people from their property? They probably do. But, can they destroy homeless peoples property in the process of the removal? Probably not. This could result in another legal challenge as homeless people fight to defend their rights in this community.

In April several homeless people were forced to move from their encampment on Olive, near highway 99. The encampment was on a vacant lot and the owner did not mind that the encampment was on his property. Code enforcement contacted the owner and told him he faced a fine if he did not tell the people to move off the property. The owner, accompanied by several police officers, reluctantly told the members of the homeless encampment that they had to move on. The police gave them two days to pack their things up and go.

Bruce Tracy, featured in the Fresno Underground story in the December 2007 Community Alliance newspaper (also see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/11/11/18460272.php>) was attacked by what he described as Bulldog Gang members. Tracy said

he woke up one night as someone was beating on his roof and the entrance to his home. "I tried to scare them off, but they just kept on attacking me," Tracy told me in a phone interview. He ended up having to abandon his home and watched as they burned it into the ground. Tracy said he tried calling 911 but the police were not responsive.

Fresno City Council member Brian Calhoun is pushing hard to make it illegal for homeless people to request money while standing on median islands. He says the practice is unsafe and is seeking to pass an ordinance that would prohibit anyone from asking for money by holding a sign on a median. There is already an ordinance that prohibits "aggressive" panhandling and an ordinance was passed last year making it illegal for homeless people to push a shopping cart. These laws, we are assured, apply equally to the poor and rich alike.

Calhoun introduced this proposal on March 11 (see: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/03/21/18487784.php>), but it was not acted on because the council wanted to have a representative from the Fresno Police Department participate in the discussion. The ordinance was first introduced on "Kids Day," which is a fund raiser for Children's Hospital. On that day, there were hundreds of volunteers standing on street corners, on median islands, and even in the middle of the street. Calhoun himself is well known for setting up a table on City street corners and waving at passing drivers.

On March 25th the item returned to the Fresno City Council. In a 4/3 vote they agreed to direct staff to design an ordinance that will prevent homeless people from holding signs asking for help on the median islands of city streets. There was a lot of concern expressed at the meeting about how this ordinance would affect "legitimate" groups like the

Fire Fighters, Kids Day, and other respected groups. Council member Westerlund came up with a novel approach to address this concern - he suggested that groups or individuals could apply for a permit to use the median. That way the city can harass the homeless while allowing the more respectable organizations to use the medians to collect money. Voting against moving forward with the proposal was Sterling, Perea, and Duncan.

Almost five months have passed since the executive director of the Bush administration's Interagency Council on Homelessness, Philip Mangano was in Fresno to encourage the City and County of Fresno to develop a new and more enlightened plan on homelessness. Both the City and County enthusiastically agreed to cooperate and work to provide homeless people decent and affordable housing and to address the issues that made them homeless in the first place.

Since then, to the best of my knowledge, very little has happened. A "panel" has been appointed to look into the homeless problem and make recommendations. See the report of their first meeting on page 1 of this months newspaper. Also, the City of Fresno has authorized the funding of a job for a "Homelessness Czar." When I talk to the people who are homeless in this community, they tell me nothing has changed. They want to know how there can be millions of dollars coming into Fresno to address the homelessness issue and none of it goes to help the homeless. All I can tell them is that there are some very well funded organizations that have been set up to address the issue. The directors of these projects are well paid and know how to get money into their programs. What most of these groups do not know how to do is to help the homeless. Most homeless people nod and agree when I use the term "poverty pimp" to describe this situation.

It would be inaccurate to describe the leadership of the City of Fresno as poverty pimps. All of the homeless policies coming from the city in the last several months have one thing in common, they are all punitive. They have forced homeless people into tool sheds (with no heating, indoor plumbing, or even electricity), they have written an anti-camping ordinance, they are working on passing an ordinance to make it illegal for homeless people to ask for money, and the police are protecting property owners who are bulldozing homeless peoples property. When will the City of Fresno move from police suppression, attacking homeless people with legal clubs, and standing by while vigilantes attack the homeless (as was the case with

Bruce Tracy and the bulldozing incident on H street)?

What is stopping elected officials from putting proposals forward that would help homeless people? For example, a portable toilet should be put up on G street south of the Rescue Mission. This should be done for public health and safety reasons. A portable toilet there would benefit not only the homeless, but business owners and homeowners in the area. A further step would be for the city to acquire property where the homeless can safely put up a tent. These "free zones" would have portable toilets, trash bins, and security. These are, of course, just short term projects while the city moves in the direction of providing decent housing for the homeless through a project like Housing First.

This month's front page story (Mayor Admits City's Homeless Plan is a Failure) looks at what might be a hopeful sign for change on public policy, but until the community sees what the task force recommends, there is no way to be sure. One thing is for sure and that is that the City Council can do more, right now, to start improving the lives of this community's most vulnerable citizens. Nobody is holding a gun to our elected officials heads stopping them from taking some positive actions, right now (not 10 years from now) that will help, rather than hurt, the homeless.

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



Al Williams, a homeless man who lives in the Roeding Park area, addressed the City Council on the proposed ordinance. He asked why it was OK for volunteers on Kids Day to ask for money and Brian Calhoun (he introduced the ordinance) to distract motorists with his waving from street corners, but that it was somehow a problem when homeless people ask for money. Some people have suggested that the rich are uncomfortable with seeing such visible signs of poverty standing on medians asking for food or money.



Mayor Autry said jail might do homeless people some good.



After the story in this newspaper about Bruce's underground home, it was featured on CNN and Rippley's Believe it or Not. This is what was left of Bruce Tracy's Underground home after vigilantes destroyed it.



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

All content paid for by WILPF

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

Water Forum, May 15

WILPF is looking forward to its latest in a series of ongoing water forums. The next one, "It's Our Water", will take place on Thursday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave., in Fresno. Co-sponsors include Fresno Metro Ministry, UU Social Justice Committee, and the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. Presenters will be water experts Lloyd Carter, board member of California Save Our Streams Council and Revive the San Joaquin, and Nancy Price, member of WILPF's national Save the Water campaign. There is much new information on local, national and international water issues that will affect each of us. One of the purposes of the forum is to educate and empower us to act to preserve our precious resource. Knowledge is power and the two presenters will provide information and tools to help us maintain clean, safe, water. We will get the latest information on the Security Prosperity Partnership, current water legislation, and what is being done to clear our water of pharmaceutical pollutants. WILPF invites you to come on May 15 and be a part of this very important forum. Everybody needs water!

WILPF Annual Tax Day Action

On Tax Day, April 15, WILPF provided its annual "Where your tax dollars go" service in front of the U.S. Post Office on Griffith Way in Fresno between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Information provided on flyers included the Fresno County cost of the Iraq occupation to date (1.1 billion dollars) and what the money could have funded instead, including funds to health care for 470,102 people, 114 new elementary schools, 3,419 affordable housing units, or 2,035,062 homes with renewable electricity. Phone numbers for the various Congressional representatives were listed on the back of the flyers. Most people said they were sick of the money being spent on an endless war; however, as in last year's Tax Day comments, all reflected that they thought the government wasn't listening to the people and that they felt powerless to persuade Congressional members to change their views. Only two or three taxpayers said they agreed with the 40% of every dollar being spent on the military. A mini concert of Tax Day songs out-

side the post office by the Raging Grannies provided a needed boost of taxpayers spirits during the afternoon. Our thanks to WILPF intern, Christina Bachicha, for researching and providing flyers for the annual Tax Day event, and to Ellie Bluestein and Joan Poss for helping to schedule volunteers for the day.

WILPF Intern's Report

WILPF Intern Christina Bachicha organized an informational demonstration Friday April 4, 2008, in front of Senator Dianne Feinstein's office in downtown Fresno. Students from California State University Fresno, Social Work Graduate Program, Maria Mendez, Claudia Sanchez, Cristal Pena, Dan Khaul, Mary Cruz Lara, Sonia Arreguin, and Felicia Green, along with members of WILPF and Peace Fresno participated in the demonstration. The demonstration was held to voice our opposition to the latest billion dollar supplementary funding bill that the senate will be considering. We held signs and passed out flyers informing the people in the community of better ways to spend our money, such as on education, health care and social welfare programs. After the demonstration WILPF Intern and five Graduate Students presented a letter to Senator Feinstein's repre-

sentative urging Feinstein to vote NO on further spending on this endless occupation. As we arrived to the office for a scheduled appointment the door was locked and there was no one in the office, however the representative arrived shortly after but only to have us stand in this small office lobby. We were not invited to sit down or come in further then this small lobby. Each one of the students were given the opportunity to state why we wanted Feinstein to vote NO on this billion dollar supplementary, which is of great concern to us graduate students who will be looking for employment in areas that are on hiring freezes and experiencing cuts due to the economic crisis that our country and state are in, in part by the huge amount of monies being poured into Iraq. Feinstein's representative assured us that Feinstein would be informed of our concerns and position for more funding. The representative reported Feinstein has not taken a stance either way. Thank you WILPF and Peace Fresno members who participated. It was great to see students collaborate with such great organizations for such an important cause. Thank you Jean Hays for making the contact with Feinstein's office that provided us students with an opportunity to lobby and voice our opinions.

Coming Events:

Monday, April 28 - Next WILPF monthly meeting at Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 Van Ness. Gather at 6:30 p.m. for potluck dessert. Meeting begins promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 15 - Water Forum: It's Our Water. UU Church, 2672 E. Alluvial, Fresno. 7:00 p.m.

Women in Black - First Wednesday, noon -1 p.m., breezeway, County Courthouse. April 24. noon-1 p.m., Free Speech area, CSUF.



Potluck gathering at the home of Sandra Iyall for International Co-President Back row: Ellie Bluestein, Sandra Iyall, Melanie Ram, Janet Capella, Jan Slagter, Lyn Jacobsson, Dr. Su Kapoor, Ann Curuthers, Howard Watkins. Front row: Ingrid Carmean, Kerstin Grebek, Rose Rowe, Joan Poss, Polly Victor.



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

Every 63 Seconds By Michael Black Bull

Every 63 seconds a cat or dog is killed in a local California animal shelter. One female cat plus her offspring plus their offspring can produce 420,000 cats in a six year period. During that same time frame a single female dog plus her offspring plus their offspring can produce 67,000 dogs. To provide a home for every cat and dog currently languishing in the nation's pounds and shelters, every man, woman and child in the U.S. would have to adopt 15 dogs and 45 cats.

I'm familiar with these statistics because I'm the child of an animal lover. My family has always included cats, dogs, hamsters, guinea pigs, rats, birds, fish, rabbits, chickens and horses. In addition, the plethora of species – roadrunners, quail, owls, coyotes, bobcats, chipmunks, squirrels, skunks, opossums, snakes, tree frogs, horned toads, lizards – that lived all around us, but not with us, never failed to be pointed out with wonder and amazement.

Now supposedly retired, my mother works harder at animal rescue than she has at anything else except motherhood. She is not alone. I am awed by these people who literally spill their blood (ever been bitten by a frightened dog or scratched by a starving kitten?), sweat and, too frequently, their tears and often spend their last dime to save, nurture, and find a home for abandoned animals. I'm also angered by the irresponsibility and sheer arrogance of people who let their pets breed indiscriminately or abandon pets when they move or let pets starve or suffer from untreated illness. Create a mess and let someone else clean it up. But even the fierce dedication and no-holds-barred action of people like my mother isn't enough to stop the tragedy of pet overpopulation.

The California Healthy Pets Act (AB 1634) would help. If passed, all cat and dog owners will be required to spay or neuter their pets. The bill provides over twenty exemptions for licensed breeders, law enforcement animals, working dogs, show dogs and family pets too old or ill to be altered. Pets would be allowed one litter if the family chooses.

Reasons to control animal overpopulation are endless. Programs exist to assist low-income pet owners. Spayed or neutered animals are healthier and live longer. They are less aggressive. Unaltered animals are responsible for virtually 100% of all serious dog bites, of which 60 % of the victims are children. Studies show that over a 10-year period, every dollar spent on spaying and neutering saves taxpayers \$18.72 in future animal control costs. Most importantly, it will help insure every kitten and puppy born a reasonable expectation of a loving home and happy life.

I can't help but think of a poster on the wall of a classroom at FCC in which I've lectured many times. On it is printed a quotation from the Torah, "Whoever destroys one life, destroys the whole world. Whoever saves one life, saves the whole world." Every 63 seconds a cat or dog is killed in a local California animal shelter.

FCNV Anniversary Celebration

- Keynote Speaker David Barsamian:
"What We Say Goes: America Tries to Rule the World"
- Way of Peace Awards
- Peace by Chocolate Dessert Reception

Sunday, June 29th - 4 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Church
2672 E. Alluvial Ave. (Just west of Willow)
\$5.00 Admission

STRUT UP

Michael Black Bull and guests will be discussing
animal rights issues.
Wednesday, May 14th, at 3 –3:30PM,
KFCF 88.1 FM

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

THE WITNESS

In the award-winning documentary THE WITNESS, Eddie Lama explains how he feared and avoided animals for most of his life, until the love of a kitten opened his heart, inspiring him to rescue abandoned animals and bring his message of compassion to the streets of New York. With humor and sincerity, Eddie tells the story of his remarkable change in consciousness.

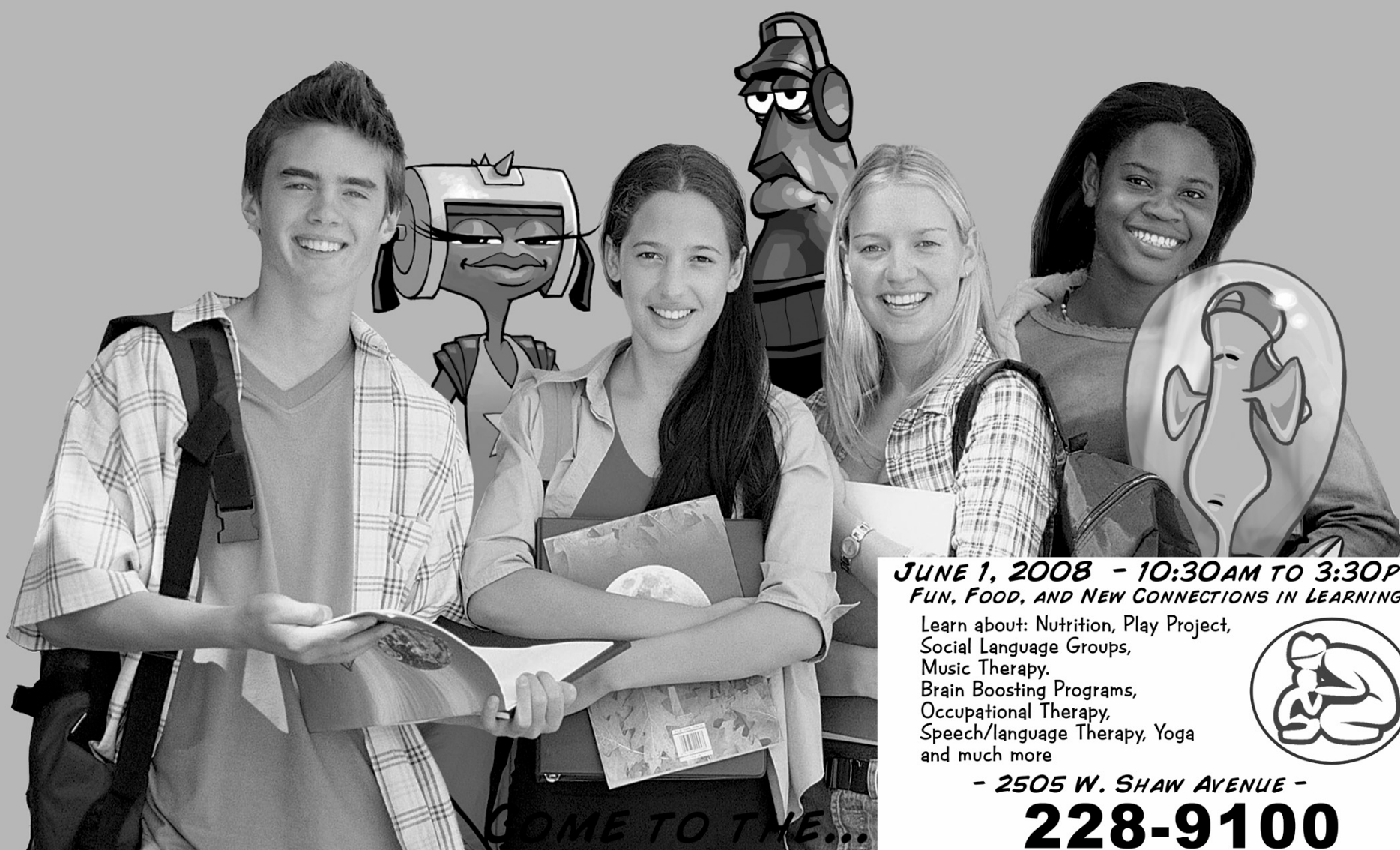
Wednesday, May 14th
Noon & 7pm (Potluck @ 6:30)@ the FCNV
(1584 N. Van Ness, SE Corner of McKinley/Van Ness)
FREE EVENT

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Learn about: Nutrition, Play Project,
Social Language Groups,
Music Therapy,
Brain Boosting Programs,
Occupational Therapy,
Speech/language Therapy, Yoga
and much more



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228-9100

COME TO THE...

CALIFORNIA LEARNING CONNECTION SERVICES FAIR

Zip Gun The New Overtime?

By: Boston Woodard

California citizens receive news about what goes on behind prison walls from routine mainstream media outlets: the *Fresno Bee*, the *Sacramento Bee*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times* and many TV and radio sources. Most prison-related stories (if not all of them) are based on watered-down press releases



prepared by prison administrators then tailored by prison public information officers for public consumption. If that were not enough to alter a story and distort the truth, mainstream newspapers “politically correct” what’s left of the story.

So, instead of getting the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the public loses out by reading or hearing an altered account of what really transpired inside a particular prison. More often than not, serious or dangerous events behind prison walls are never reported to the public.

Those incidents concealed from public knowledge are customarily suppressed by prison officials to cover up wrong-doing, illegal activity or incompetence by prison staff.

An example of a worthy news story that was silenced by the California Department of Corrections (CDCR), local prison officials, and the California Correctional Peace Officer’s Association (CCPOA) occurred on March 22, 2008 — Easter weekend — inside Solano State Prison in Vacaville, California.

A “Program Status Report Plan of Operation/Staff Inmate Notification” (official memorandum) dated 3/22/08 was distributed to the prison’s general populations. At the top of the memo are four boxes that can be checked measuring the seriousness of an incident. The box checked determines the program for prisoners throughout the institution: Box #1 indicates Normal Programming, Box #2 is a Modified Program, Box #3 is complete Lock-Down status, and Box #4 is a State of Emergency. Depending on its seriousness, an incident report will affect various programs and activities such as prisoners’ visits with their families, feeding, showers, yard activities, and phone calls.

At the bottom of the Program Status Report is a section for remarks. Written in that section was the following: “On 3/22/08, Culinary staff discovered an anonymous note indicating that there is a possibility of a ‘ZIP GUN’ being within the facility III area.” A possible gun was on prison grounds!

The prison was placed on a “Modified Program,” according to the Program Status Report. Not a Lock-Down or a State of Emergency, but a Modified Program. A Modified Program (according to the memorandum) means there is controlled feeding and some (prisoner) movement, and “critical workers” are utilized. Critical worker jobs are usually the jobs guards or other staff would have to do during a Lock-Down or a State of Emergency. When the guards do not want to pick up garbage after meals, mop floors, cook or work the prison’s laundry, that’s when the critical worker comes into play. This is routine in many prison populations in California. Many prisoners refuse to buy into the critical worker ruse, and their refusal to participate is almost always followed by prison staff retaliation. Prisoners who refuse to work are usually issued damaging disciplinary action for not following a direct order. This action could be the cause of a loss of good time credits.

During the search for a gun under the Modified Program status, many of the critical workers were ordered to the culinary (kitchen area). The culinary is where the alleged note was found regarding a zip-gun at large in a specific area inside Solano State Prison. The question is, why would prison officials approve prisoners to work in the very area from which information was received that there was a gun on prison grounds?

For more than three days prisoners were allowed to work, to go on ducats (movement passes), to have visits for two days, and more; all while an alleged gun was somewhere in the institution. Was there a gun? If prison officials thought for a minute a gun really existed, Solano State Prison would have been locked down tighter than two elephants in a footlocker.

After Facility III, one of four yards, was completely “shook down” with no trace of a gun, out came another Program Status Report announcing: “On Thursday, March 27, 2008, information was received indicating a ZIP-GUN still exists within Level II area. Specifically, the ZIP-GUN was moved from Facility III to Facility IV.”

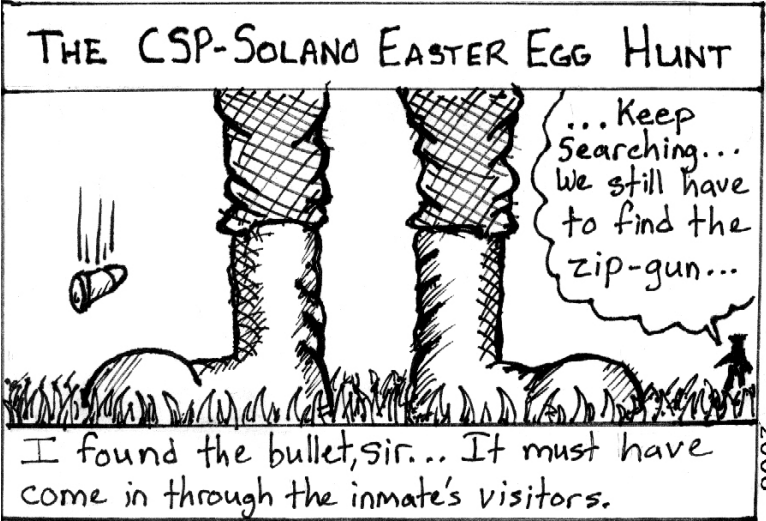
So now, on another yard separated from the area where the illusive zip-gun was supposed to have been (according to the anonymous note found in the culinary), another Program Status Report read: “On March 28, 2008, at about 0900, a .22 caliber live round was discovered, uncontrolled on the Facility IV yard, in the grass area in front of the dining hall eight exit door.”

Okay, an anonymous note claiming a gun in a particular area of the prison proved to be false after the shakedown. ABRACADABRA! Up pops another note now claiming that the zip-gun made its way onto one of the other prison yards, that very same day, probably to perpetuate an ulterior motive.

In a March 25, 2008, *Sacramento Bee* editorial, there was talk of an overtime cap for correctional staff passed by the legislature in 2003 that was never enforced. The CDCR distributed a letter informing all prisons that as of March 10, 2008, prison staff no longer will be allowed to work more than 80 hours of overtime per month. Critics say even this cap is still way too high.

Along comes an alleged zip-gun note that will automatically generate gross amounts of overtime. One staff member was heard saying, “We are working double-shifts, not overtime.” What the hell does that mean?

Cartoonist: S. Bitz



Let’s get back to the bullet briefly. Six days AFTER a bullet was discovered, that area was never shook-down. Does priority ring a bell?

On April 1, 2008, (this is not an April fool’s joke), ten days after word of a gun being on prison grounds, rumors are now being spread by the guards to the prisoner population, that we are on Lock-Down because prisoners have too much personal property and they have to come into a “six-cubic-feet” property compliance rule. WHAT? You can’t make this stuff up! ZIP-GUN, Bullet, Too Much Property; pick a problem! What a genius way to get more overtime under the guise of a made-up serious situation. Man!

Prison officials would have you, the public, believe that the bullet found in the grass, while all prisoners were locked in their dorm buildings, was put there by a prisoner.

First, not one of the nearly 6,000 prisoners behind these walls has access to bullets. All food packages entering the institution are from special security vendors, there are no furloughs (temporary leaves) in or out of this prison, and the bullet probably was not dropped by a low-flying liberal seagull. Prison officials are quick to use the worn-out explanation that the bullet (or drugs, or cell phone, or weapons, etc.) had to have been smuggled in through the prisoners’ visiting room. This is virtually impossible for the following reasons:

All visitors are searched and ordered to remove all metal objects from their persons and then are slowly walked through a very sensitive metal detector that can detect metal items including very tiny earring posts; it would definitely detect a bullet.

Also, the entire visiting room is equipped with multiple high-resolution cameras that monitor every inch of the visiting area. Then there are the guards who stalk and monitor all visitors and prisoners, making it nearly impossible for nefarious activities to occur. Finally, all prisoners returning from visits are strip-searched and subjected to cavity searches that include, yes, the guards peering into their rectums.

Prison officials’ claims that visitors bring in all contraband are unsubstantiated, baseless and without merit. When those types of contraband items are brought behind prison walls it is almost always by a prison staff member who can walk in and out of the prison routinely, untouched and never searched. When prison staff get caught, it’s kept from the public at all costs. Do the math.

To further justify their claims of how a bullet (or other

contraband) found its way into the prison, some prison staff simply make up all sorts of stories of how a prisoner had to have been responsible. Have prisoners ever introduced contraband into the prison? It’s possible. Did a prisoner have anything to do with the .22 caliber bullet conveniently found in the grass? It’s highly unlikely. Staff have been caught many times in the past bringing contraband into this and other prisons. Too bad the mainstream news people don’t use some of their energy investigating and questioning that fact to inform the public.

While Solano State Prison was searching for a gun there was a “walk away” of two prisoners from a minimum-security prison ranch a few hundred yards away at the California Medical Facility (CMF), also in Vacaville. After the two men breached the ranch’s security, all the local news stations reported on every newscast, for three full days, that the two men who walked away were not armed or dangerous and were just two drug addicts who need not be feared.

Two harmless druggies are all over the news for days while the search for a gun in a prison just yards away receives no news coverage whatsoever. Is anyone listening?

There are some numbers that can’t be quantified regarding episodes such as the zip-gun snitch note, and that is the number of times prison officials are responsible for causing an incident that was blamed on prisoners. Because the public only hears one side of the story and the free-world media is guided by the very source that needs scrutinizing, the prisoner’s side of the story (if it does get out) is the only whole account of events that the public may get. A prisoner’s account is not prepared, watered down, altered or distorted like the news reports from those with a vested interest in this multi-billion dollar cash cow, the CDCR.

In April 1996, corrections officials and Gov. Pete Wilson banned media access to specific prisoner interviews and to confidential correspondence between prisoners and news sources. This action greatly limited the ability of legitimate media to fully investigate and report their findings to the public.

As of this writing, April 3, 2008, Solano State Prison staff are now saying the prison is on Lock-Down (as opposed to a Modified Program) because prisoners may have too much personal property. Looking for a gun is less important (according to the institutional Program Status Reports) than a prisoner having too many pairs of socks. Sounds like they might stick by that story. Maybe...

###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who wrote for the *San Quentin News* and the *Soledad Star* and edited *The Communicator*. The CDCR has pulled the plug on all three publications.

Boston Woodard, B-88207
CSP—Solano, 13-F-8-L
P.O. Box 4000
Vacaville, CA. 95696-4000

WHAT PRISON OVERTIME MEANS

Out of control overtime costs for prison staff has always been a problem~ Last year tax payers were robbed of \$471 million in overtime, up from \$53 million 10 years ago. Looking at base pay” without overtime or benefits:

*16,000 correctional officers earn a base— pay of \$70000 to \$74,000; *2,700 Sergeants earn \$71,000 to \$82,000; *1,100 Lieutenants earn \$82,000 to \$93,000; *8,000 correctional officers earn less than \$70, 00 in base— pay.

A one month look at overtime costs:

In November 2007, according to the State Controller’s Office, 21,000 correctional officers cost the state \$35.8 million in overtime pay- That same month, 3,400 Sergeants and Lieutenants cost the state \$7.4 million in overtime pay. So, one month of overtime pay cost California more than \$43 million. ONE MONTH!

(source: Sac—Bee & State Controller’s Office)

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ELECTION DAY JUNE 3rd

CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR

IGNACIO C. GARIBAY I am Mexican, and I’ve been in this country since 1977, married and have two children. My family and I are active Charismatic Christians. I am an immigrant from Mexico and in 1997 became a U.S citizen. We must remember that the U.S. has a rich history of being built by immigrants. I have lived in Fresno for over 30 years. I worked in Agriculture for approximately 10 years, pruning vines, cultivating cotton, alfalfa, almonds and operating heavy equipment. I have been an independent businessman for almost 18 years and lately I’ve been working in Hispanics Realty Inc. as a REALTOR.

I have been serving the Fresno community as a civil rights activist and human rights activist during the last five years. Serving the community by defending the rights of my brothers and sisters is of the outmost importance to me. I believe that individual humans deserve respect, honesty, equal justice regardless of race, color, religion, or their personal beliefs. With my experience as an activist and independent business owner I feel I have the foundation and building blocks to serve my community as a City MAYOR of Fresno I Have the vision and the wisdom of GOD, UNITED in HIS NAME WE CAN MAKE the difference. Building a New FRESNO Foundation bringing transparency, Respect for ALL, on any Government office. Together we can make a positive change for our community as follows:

- PROPERTY TAX EXCEPTION FOR ALL SENIOR CITIZENS.
- HOMELESS NEEDS REAL HOUSING AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT. And open the road for public access.
- FRESNO POLICE DEPARTMENT NEEDS AN INDEPENDENT AUDITOR.
- Renovate and keep the Fulton Mall Open. It is a great part of our history and once was the cornerstone of Fresno. We must not erase our past and remember where we came from as wisdom teaches us.
- WE NEED LOTS OF NEW CHANGES IN DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCCION, every body deserve a faithful treatment, and community have to be informed and advance time for any mayor issue affecting or benefiting community.
- We must support small business as they are the backbone of our economy and employment base.
- Restore the Hotel Fresno to help seniors, the homeless and low income families
- JUSTICE FOR ALL, Stop Eminent Domain, 2nd. Chance, No more Impounds because you drive with no license.
- Provide musical instruments and other after school programs for our children to maximize their potential and keep them off of the street gangs and drugs.
- CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL, all individuals’ rights, human dignity and respect must be preserved and they should be protected by the law and applied equally to every individual regardless of race, color, religion or personal beliefs.
- We need free parking spaces as we are taxpayers and are entitled to free parking.

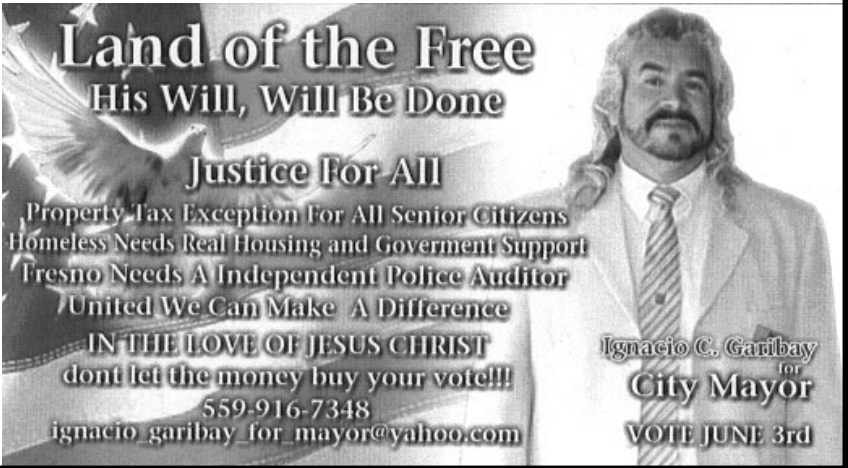
As your City Mayor, the doors to my office will always be open for everyone in our community to ensure that everyone’s concerns are heard. We can work together to find the best solution and answer to your needs and concerns. I will treat your concerns to such a degree as to make take them personally and make them my own. I will be our voice in our town that will ring out social justice in our community. I invite every individual, families and businesses in our community to become involved and participate in social justice renovation and prosperity in our community. Our community once flourished and was a beacon to businesses throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Let us become that beacon once again.

I ask you for your support and your prayers & vote on June 3 2008 to bring about these changes and social justice to our community: Respect, Civil Rights & Human Rights I invite you to become involved and join us so that together you and I can make a difference. IN THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST, everything is possible, YES WE CAN, yes we can. VOTE FOR ME, IGNACIO C. GARIBAY FOR CITY MAYOR.

Please feel free to contact me through my e-mail ignacio_garibay_for_mayor@yahoo.com or- by telephone at 559) 916-7348 by mail at 2533 N. Knoll Ave, Fresno, CA. 93722

God Bless You.
Sincerely Yours.
IGNACIO C. GARIBAY

REMEMBER, UNITED WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, VOTE JUNE 3RD 2008.



Grassroots Profile

By Richard Stone

Bill Simon always considered himself a conservative. Then a few years ago he looked around and discovered—as if in a science fiction story of the kind he liked to read—he’d been transported to a foreign country, politically speaking. He hadn’t changed, to his knowledge, but he now found himself surrounded by colleagues calling themselves liberals and progressives. He was standing on street corners holding anti-war banners, and sitting at home reading the Community Alliance. What had happened?

Even today, Bill considers himself what used to be called conservative: he calls for fiscal moderation (“Don’t spend what you don’t have”) and personal responsibility for your own well-being. He mistrusts Big Government that throws taxpayer money at problems without accountability. But unlike so many current day conservatives (and despite their self-labeling), Bill does have a conscience—and a Catholic conscience at that.

So Bill takes seriously the teachings of Jesus and (he’s discovered, somewhat to his surprise) the official doctrines of the Church that call for social justice and fundamental respect for all creation. “I found a pastoral letter issued in the ‘80’s declaring the necessity for all people to receive the minimum requirements for a decent life. It’s a wonderful document—just never put into practice.” So the philosophy he’s arrived at says, “People need to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps; but it’s society’s responsibility to make sure that everyone has bootstraps.” Not exactly the belief of a free-market, everyone-for-themselves Republican.

A major change in Bill’s consciousness occurred after 9/11, as he compared the response of President Bush with that of fellow Catholic Dennis Kucinich. Even though Bill was a child of the 50’s, with the fear of the Red Menace and nuclear destruction shaping a security-

minded mentality, it had been clear to him that Iraq was no serious threat. And the long-term suffering already imposed on the Iraqi people by our sanctions had seemed unjustified to him. But Bush’s doctrine of pre-emptive war was completely antithetical to everything Bill believed; and Kucinich’s reasoned response appealed. “Not long after, I saw a small item in The Bee about a group planning an anti-war demonstration. I thought I should go.” The group was Peace Fresno; a few years later, Bill was its president.

“Meeting people doing anti-war work was eye-opening. I began to find out about all these problems that were related and fed into each other. Stopping the war is still a high priority, but I now understand this

newly-revived Fresno chapter of the ACLU. He is deeply disturbed by governmental incursions into individual rights, and through involvement with the ACLU he’s been able to challenge the City’s attempts to limit permits for filming on the streets, the absence of police accountability, and abuses in the prison system.

He is also a key player in the Newman Center’s Peace and Social Justice Committee—an effort by a group of parishioners to educate themselves about the social justice teachings of the Church, and about what local activists are doing. “When you know, of course, the next step is to ask, ‘What are you going to do do about it?’ We’re beginning a few small projects based on personal connections.”

Standing (and speaking) up for your convictions are what remains constant for Bill amidst the changes in his political landscape. Also he has come to especially value activism that derives from direct contact with people—and hence to value meetings that increase the breadth of your acquaintanceships and your compassion. “I look at someone like my fellow Chicagoan Kathy Kelly, and what has come from her simple acts of fellowship with Iraqi’s. In contrast I see so many people isolated, in touch only with their technology. I take regular trips to Chicago on the train. It used to be I’d meet all kind of interesting people. Now no one talks—they’re on their computers or cell phones.

“High school kids at the Newman Center do a mission each summer, often in Mexico or some other exotic spot. This year they decided to work in Fresno and to live in solidarity with the poor, without TV’s or Ipods or phones. The most amazing thing they reported happening was they got to know each other.”

Bill’s example shows there still is hope if we can open ourselves to the humanizing agency of caring. We are fortunate to have him as a newly active ally in the endeavor to have democracy prevail over empire. “We may not succeed,” he says, “but at least it will be recorded that we tried.”

Bill continues to work with Peace Fresno, and with the Counter-Recruitment Coalition that educates young people about the misleading claims of military recruiters and about alternative avenues to self-discipline and education. Bill, though, recently also took on major organizational responsibility for a



IDENTITY BOX

Birthplace Detroit, but raised in Chicago area
Ethnic background German ancestry
Religious affiliation Roman Catholic
Political affiliation small d democrat
Inspirations Don Helder Camara (forerunner of Liberation Theology in South America) and Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (“their profound concern for the suffering still moves me”)
Motto Do what you need to do (and if you do it, I won’t have to)
Most frequented parts of Fresno the Tower District, the Newman Center
Non-political interests—time with the kids, driving cross-country, going into nature
Unexpected pleasures trashy novels and pickled herring

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, May 1
International Workers Day

Thursday, May 1 • 3 PM (gather on the Fulton Mall, the march starts at 5 PM)

May Day march for immigrant rights will start at the Free Speech area at the Fulton Mall and Mariposa Street. For more information, contact Leonel Flores (559) 341-4556 or Leoncio Vazquez (559) 499-1178. Go to: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/04/09/18491704.php> to see a video of the press conference announcing the march.

Friday, May 2 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Elijah Penner speaks of his voluntary service experience in Cambodia. Topic: A Grassroots Development Experience.

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, May 3 • 10 AM - 2 PM

Are you sick of living in a nation without a national health care program? A symposium towards a national health care program will be held at the Alice Peters Auditorium at CSUF. Free parking in lot J. Speakers include: Dr. Don McCanne, Dr. Jim Kahn, and Sara Rodgers (she is a representative of senator Sheila Kuehl). The Obama, Nader, Clinton and McCain campaigns have been invited.

Saturday, May 3 • 2 PM

The Pride Community (LBGT&Q) Forum for all Fresno Mayoral Candidates. Open to the public, nonpartisan and free admission. Location: The Machinists Hall, 544 W. Olive Ave., Fresno. For more information call (559) 226-3717. The event is free and open to the public. www.mangen.com/stone-wall

Saturday, May 3 • 2:30 - 4 PM

Environmental Justice Summit. FREE discussion about the community's environmental fairness concerns. Moderated by the Honorable Fred Keeley, former Speaker pro Tem of the California Assembly, SC County Treasurer, and Vice-Chair of the Environmental Caucus of the California Democratic Party. Sponsored by the Environmental Caucus of the California Democratic Party.

This event will be held at the Four Points Sheraton, 3737 Blackstone Ave in Fresno. For information: <http://www.environmentalcaucus.org/> Barbara at 831-462-4303, Caucus@dancin.biz

Thursday, May 8 • 7 - 9 PM

Public Forum - Why does Fresno need an Independent Police Auditor? See page 9 for more information.

Thursday, May 8 • 7 PM

The location for the regularly scheduled Green Party meeting for May 8, 2008 at 7:00 PM has been changed to the Congregational Church at Van Ness and Weldon in support of the Independent Police Auditor presentation. All Fresno County Green Party members are encouraged to attend and support this green issue event.

Thursday, May 8 • 7 PM

Interfaith Social Justice Collaborative will meet at the Islamic Cultural Center in the library. All are welcome. Call 346-1680 for questions.

Friday, May 9 • 5:30 and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" at the Tower Theatre. The film, which won the Palme d'Or award at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival, tells the story of two Romanian women — one of them pregnant — and their attempt to enlist the help of a black-market abortionist. Tickets cost \$10 general and \$8 for students and seniors. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre box office, 815 E. Olive Ave.; at JA Photog-

raphy, 2003 N. Van Ness; via PayPal at www.FresnoFilmworks.org; and at the door. For details, visit www.FresnoFilmworks.org or call (559) 221-0755.

Friday, May 9 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Bladimir Pizano. Topic: United States Immigration Policy from the Perspective of Mexico.

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, May 10 • 7:30 PM

Young Amelia CD Release Concert at Fresno Art Museum 2233 N. First Street. HANS YORK & Friends: Eva Scow, Dusty Brough, & Myra Joy, & Kevin Hill Hear some of the cd on his myspace: <http://www.myspace.com/hansyork>. German-born, Seattle-based, award winning singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Hans York (aka Hannsjoerg Scheid) made his debut on the West Coast music scene as an extraordinary DADGAD player, and was enticed to immigrate by the Bluestein Family of Fresno. Tickets: \$15 advance; \$20 Day of Performance. Advance tickets may be purchased online www.fresnofolkconcerts.com Patrick's Music, National Hardware or phone 431-3653

Sunday, May 11 • Mother's Day

See page 14 to read the first "Mother's Day Proclamation for Peace," which was written in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe, the mother of six.

John Minkler (johnminkler@comcast.net) or call 445-0015. See sample videos at www.cmcweb.org

Thursday, May 15 • (deadline for registration)

The Unitarian Universalist Church Of Fresno presents Out of the Stars A spiritual retreat for free thinking kids. Registration is now open for this very special summer camp. Camp is June 23-27.

Deadline for registration is May 15. If you would like more information about camp please contact Aubree Smith at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno 322-6146.

Thursday, May 15 • 7 PM

Forum: "It's Our Water" at the UU Church, 2672 E Alluvial Ave. Co-sponsors are WILPF, UU Social Justice Committee, Fresno Metro Ministry, and the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. Presenters will be local water expert, Lloyd Carter and WILPF national "Save the Water" committee member, Nancy Price. The presentation is intended to educate and empower residents to act on water issues, both local, national, and international.

Friday, May 16 • 9 AM - 4:30 PM

Transforming Communities and The Freedom From Violence Project would like to invite you to a workshop for Disability Service Providers and Domestic/Sexual Violence Prevention Advocates. California State Univ. 5241 North Maple Avenue, Psychology/Human Services Bldg, Room 114. Please contact 415-526-2553 or pvawd@transformcommunities.org for more information.

Wednesday, May 21 • 4 - 6 PM

Free California Voices Movie Premiere at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 2425 Fresno St. The Center for Multicultural Cooperation launches the first annual California Voices Premiere. High school and middle school students in the region have produced 5-minute mini-documentary videos about cultural and community leaders. Students in 13 California Voices After-school programs, from Fresno, Kings and Mariposa counties, will introduce their videos and their storyteller. For more information contact: Julie Caso juliecaso@gmail.com 246-9322

Thursday, May 29 • 7 - 9 PM

Elections Expert and Author Steven Hill will speak at the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Fresno 2672 E. Alluvial Ave. Clovis, CA [North of Alluvial; east of Chestnut]. Electoral reform is the beginning of a fair and

participatory democracy. Steven Hill is senior analyst for the Center for Voting and Democracy, a non-profit organization that educates the public about the impact of electoral systems and the legislative redistricting process on political representation, voter turnout, governance and campaign finance reform. For more information, call Larry Mullen 559 227-0293. Also see: www.CVER.org

Sunday, June 1 • 5:30 PM

Physician Dr. Marc Lasher has been chosen as the fourth recipient of California Central Valley's "Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good" for his decades-long efforts to serve the poor and powerless through health care delivery and reform, prisoner rights, and land redistribution. The award banquet is open to the public. Tickets are \$40 per person. Scholarships are available, if needed, for part or all of that amount. Reservation forms will be available on-line after April 7, 2008 at www.robinsoncommongood.org. In addition, people may call the United Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, at 559-227-2050 for reservation forms and for more information after April 7, 2008. The program starts at 5:30 p.m. Hope Lutheran is located at the NW corner of Fresno and Barstow.

Tuesday, June 3

Primary Election

Saturday, June 7

Gay Pride parade in the Tower District.



March for immigrant rights on May 1. Vote for peace, social, economic, and environmental justice on Tuesday, June 3

Wednesday, May 14 • 12 Noon & 7:00 PM

Video Presentation: "The Witness," critically acclaimed and award winning documentary on the [mis]treatment of animals. How does a construction contractor from a tough Brooklyn neighborhood become an impassioned animal advocate? How did the love of a kitten open his heart, inspiring him to rescue abandoned animals and bring his compassion to the streets of New York, thus becoming a champion for animals in need? "The Witness" answers these questions and more. This video will be shown at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness. Free.

Wednesday, May 14 • 4 - 5:15 PM

Youth Video Production Program. High school students will produce video Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and mini-documentaries on mental health topics, in Hmong, Spanish and English. The free Youth Video Production Summer Program will be Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:00-7:30pm, June 24-August 7. Participating students are eligible to attend a Tech Camp at UC Santa Cruz the week of 8/11-15.

There will be a Youth Video Production Program Information Meeting on Wednesday, May 14, 4-5:15 at the Veterans Memorial Building, 2425 Fresno St., Room 201. This program is sponsored by the Center for Multicultural Cooperation and the Kings View Youth Outreach and Engagement Program. For more information, contact

OPINION & ANALYSIS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

Thoughts on Education

By Ruth Gadebusch

The nation to the south of us honors its teachers by proclaiming the Day of the Teacher in May. It is a custom that this nation could well benefit from. Instead, we focus on complaining about the less than perfect teachers.



Yes, there are less than perfect teachers just as there are less than perfect people in every other profession; however, make no mistake, there are more good teachers than poor ones. Without those teachers, both good and less so, most of us would not be where we are.

All too often educators themselves have fretted so about their failures, they have forgotten to enjoy their successes. Accordingly, the public sees the rough spots too. Mostly, the dissatisfaction stems from the legal demands that public schools do social reform for which the citizens themselves were not ready. Although what institution could better lead us? It is just that when our children are concerned our emotions trump our intellect!

I refer to desegregation. Note, I do not say integration. We are still too far away from this latter. Though we would wish for more and better results, the various desegregation reforms have made us take notice of the vast disparities within this nation. As Dr. Phil, that TV icon, says so often, "You cannot deal with a problem until you acknowledge it."

While I believe in choice, I deplore the proliferation of so many "private" schools, that so many feel disaffected by the public institutions, that so many originate from radical right religious views, that deserting the public schools exacerbates the problem. We must never forget that the American public school system is the one institution established to develop the commonality of the diverse peoples that comprise this nation. We can ill afford the many groups off teaching their own narrow — often times extremely narrow — views of the world.

We do have difficulty creating the kinds of schools that we all want. Perhaps that is due to our diversity. It has been said that no program is so unequal as one which treats all the same since we all start at different points. Different backgrounds and conditions affect the outcome no matter what the schools do.

I am convinced that early childhood education is a necessary component. On one hand we have children with very, very limited experience. Their families have no idea of some of the developmental needs of young children. They do not know about nutrition. They do not have medical care. They do not have access to books and on and on. Just to have a roof over their heads and survival food is all that some families can provide, regardless of how hard they work. They do love their children just as much as do their richer neighbors. They simply express it differently.

On the other hand teachers receive children who have begun life with every advantage possible, the so-called silver spoon in the mouth, and all those in between. The teacher is expected to get them all to the same point in the same amount of time — particularly under the vaunted "No Child Left Behind." It can't be done under the current circumstances.

It is my belief that some of the underlying conditions must be dealt with. Every family needs certain basics. After all, those often decried illegal immigrants share the world with the rest of us! Schools must put major resources into the early years so that each and every one has a strong foundation. I put reading and language first. Reading opens doors and allows us to learn other things.

Moving to the other end of the education system I think we need different kinds of diplomas, not second class but different. We talk so much about having a diploma mean something and yet we insist that all be the same. All students are not the same and do not have the same needs. It is absurd to expect some special education

students to accomplish some of the current requirements for graduation. There are things they, as all other students, excel in and they should receive recognition for that. Society needs all manner of skills.

Our insistence that all take college preparation does not serve us well. We desperately need people to do all manner of jobs and when they do they should be respected, especially for some of the more unpleasant jobs. Vocational education is not second class. It is filling a need of the community and there are actually those who enjoy different jobs.

Enjoy is another consideration. One spends too much time at a job not to get satisfaction. One size does not fit all, either for the individual or the society. Finding the right vocation, profession, or whatever is ever so important and there should be more effort to help people find the right niche.

This could go on and on. There is no limit to speculation about what schools could, should do. Without doubt we must continue to strive for the right program for the right student. In the meantime let us respect the challenge that teachers — after the children, the most important element in the system — must face. Let us put criticism aside and assist in solutions. Let us value public education and those who put their all into serving our children, our future — corny as it may sound to say it.

Thank a teacher today.

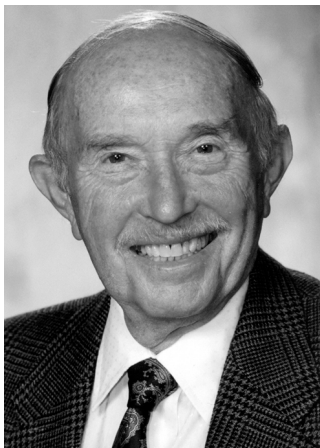
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Ruth Gadebusch is a former naval officer, 13 years as a Fresno Unified School District Trustee, Vice-President of the Center for Civic Education, Community Activist.

From The Greenhouse

by Franz Weinschenk

In my days at Fresno State, our biggest football rival was San Jose. True, nowadays, we can probably handle them on the gridiron, but when it comes to being a green city, San Jose is clearly cleaning our clock!



You see San Jose's Mayor Chuck Reed has proclaimed a "Green Vision" for his city that has got to challenge all American cities—especially Fresno. So here's the question I'd like to pose to all our Mayoral candidates—Jim Boswell, Tom Boyajian, Mike Dages, Jerry Duncan, Jeff Eben, Ignacio Garibay, Barbara Ann Hunt, Henry Monreal, Ashley Swarengin, Henry T. Perea, and Doug Vagim: "If you become our next Mayor, what are you going to do to "GREEN UP" Fresno?"

Mayor Reed proposes to reduce San Jose's per capita energy use by 50 percent. Fresno could easily do that—maybe top it. We are a community that responds to conservation and planning. With a little nudge here and there, we wouldn't mind saving money by retrofitting our homes and workplaces to become more energy efficient, using appliances that require less energy, installing low energy light bulbs, electrifying edgers, mowers and blowers, installing water meters, developing "gray water" usages, sharing rides to work, taking the bus or the bike to work.

Mayor Reed wants San Jose to purchase 100 percent of its electrical power from renewable sources. Shouldn't be a problem for Fresno. With so much sunshine everywhere, you, our future mayor, could surely get us to purchase only renewable energy produced by local solar, hydro-electric or biomass power plants. The technology has been tested and is readily available. Hey, if Mendota can do it, why not Fresno?

Mayor Reed says he'll create 25,000 clean tech jobs to make his city the world center of clean tech innovation. Fresno could probably beat that! Since there is so much sun in the Valley, since we have the potential of producing ethanol, and since our dairy industry produces mountains of biomass, there are huge opportunities for the creation of good paying Green jobs—planners,

builders, and technicians—all in renewable energy industries. These are jobs that are not easily outsourced. So Ms. or Mr. Future Mayor, during you tenure in office are you too going to sit around at Starbuck's or Gold's Gym having "visions," or come to the office once in a while and urge our schools and colleges to train workers for prime jobs in Green industries right here in the Valley?

San Jose is pledged to build or retrofit 50 million square feet of green buildings. This means that before you get a construction permit over there, you'll need to show that there'll be proper insulation in roofs, ceilings, walls, ducts, doors, and windows. There'll be efficient heating and cooling—solar panels to produce clean energy wherever possible. And how about asking every tax-supported entity that has real estate inside our city limits—federal, state, county, city, and school districts—to set aside a small part of their yearly budget to put solar panels on their buildings so that in 15 to 20 years the total energy costs for those facilities will be zippo. And here's the big one—How about putting solar panels up on Fresno's City Hall? The roof area is huge and it's facing just right. Hey, wouldn't that save future taxpayers a bundle? — And what a statement!

Mayor Reed wants to make sure that 100 percent of San Jose's fleet uses alternative energy sources. Fresno has a good start on that one, but we could use more hybrids and why not be the first city to use "plug-ins"?

San Jose wants to plant 100,000 new trees. Folks like "Tree Fresno" have already done a lot for Fresno in this area, but there is still room to plant more. After all, trees suck up carbon dioxide, the most offensive of the greenhouse gases.

It also needs to be remembered that a little over a year ago, in spite of Mayor Autry's determined foot-dragging, Fresno joined the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, an organization that now has 806 American cities as members. All these cities have pledged themselves—on a voluntary basis—to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 7% of 1990 levels by the year 2012. So far, we've heard very little from the Mayor's office about what, if anything, Fresno is doing to meet that challenge.

So let's hear it from all you potential Fresno Mayors. "What will YOU do to compete with San Jose to make Fresno California's GREENEST CITY?"

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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

Why We Do Counter-Recruitment?

By Dan Yaseen

Ruth Gadebusch's article, "Five Years and Counting" in the April 2008 issue of Community Alliance does a great job opposing the war in Iraq. I agree with her that this war is wrong and we need a political solution that serves the needs of the Middle East and our own United States of America. I disagree with her on the issue of military recruitment. As coordinator of the Central Valley Counter-Recruitment Coalition (CVCRC) for the last three years, I would like to point out some reasons why CVCRC opposes military recruitment in high schools and colleges.

The goal of CVCRC is to oppose militarization of our schools and our society, in general. Militarism is the glorification of the ideals of a professional military class, a policy in which military preparedness is of primary importance to the state and a value system that stresses the importance of some people over others. Militarized societies encourage blind obedience and discourage questioning authorities. Militarized societies are more prone to attack other countries and engage in wars. Thereby most of their financial resources are spent on the military at the expense of other civilian needs like housing, healthcare and education. Militarism is the root cause of most international and domestic problems in the world today.

Counter-Recruiters of CVCRC provide information about alternatives to military careers. Most young people don't like to be told what to do, but that's what happened when they join the military, they are under

military law 24 hours a day even when they are off duty or off base. When you join the military, you lose almost all control over how you live your life. Section C.9. of the enlistment contract states: "Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me. Such changes may affect my status, pay, allowances, benefits and responsibilities as a member of the Armed Forces; regardless of the provisions of this enlistment/reenlistment document".

Scientific studies have concluded that the brain of an 18 year old is still developing. The U.S. Military has learned that the propensity to enlist is highest among 16-18 year olds and it declines with age. Over 60% of America's active and reserve soldiers enlisted as teens. No wonder! The U.S. military is spending over \$4 billion a year to seduce and lure young impressionable and low income youth with video games, commercials, slick brochures and personal visits.

Besides being engaged in two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military has over 1000 bases and military presence in over 150 countries and territories. The military is desperate for soldiers. Their primary target are 14-17 year old high school students who lack the maturity to make intelligent decisions which may end or affect their lives physically, emotionally, or psychologically.

Section 9528 of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was designed to solve the military's recruitment problems. NCLB gives public high schools a choice; provide access to personal information about students to military recruiters or risk losing federal funding. Before NCLB, military recruiters were allowed on campus only on career days. Now they are present more frequently. The two main promises military recruiters make are about college money and job training, which are oftentimes not delivered. A new military policy signs up everyone who enlists for the GI Bill by default. This means \$100 a month is deducted from soldier's paycheck for a year to pay a deposit for future education. The problem is that 57% of the people never see any college money even though they pay into the fund. The average net payout for the other 43% is only \$2151.

The promise 'U.S. military will train you for a job does not hold true most of the time. Only 12% of the male Veterans and 6% of the female veterans report using the skills learned in the military in their current jobs. According to VA's own data, veterans earn less than non-veterans and almost one third of the homeless in the country are Veterans.

When it concerns the life and future of their children, Americans expect honest, truthful and straightforward answers from both public and private institutions. It is so sad that many U.S. military recruiters are miserably failing in that task.

###

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



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8,683,000 Scholarships for University Students OR
5,800 New Elementary Schools OR
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Fresno Free College Foundation/KFCF Executive Director

Summary: The Executive Director is responsible and accountable for overall administration, programming, personnel, financial, technical, and public relations operations of the Foundation and radio station, and other duties as determined by the Board of Directors. Details at <http://www.ffcf.net/jobs>

This is a full-time, at-will, exempt, management position. Salary depends on experience, and ranges from \$33,280 to \$38,500. Benefits include medical and dental insurance, sick leave and paid vacation.

Application deadline: Received by 5 PM May 16th, 2008

FFCF is an equal opportunity employer.

Qualifications:

Education: College degree or at least 2 years equivalent training
Experience: experience in broadcasting, and/or in a non-profit or community organization supervising employees and/or volunteers desirable

Cover letter, resumes and a list of 6 references (3 personal, 3 professional) to one of the following addresses:

(1) FFCF Job Search

P.O. Box 4364
Fresno, CA 93744-4364
(2) gerry.bill@gmail.com
(3) Fax: (559) 261-2610

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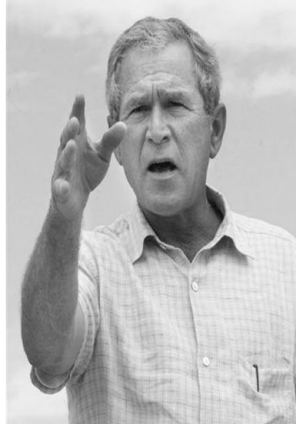


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**"See, in my line of work you got to keep
repeating things over and over and over
again for the truth to sink in, to kind of
catapult the propaganda."**

-- George W. Bush, Greece, N.Y., May 24, 2005



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Word on the Street

By Francine Ramos

Walk or drive down any residential street throughout Fresno and one is bound to see the now familiar, however unwanted, for sale/foreclosure signs. Currently California ranks second-highest in foreclosures in the country. Fresno is one of the many cities that has felt firsthand the housing crisis. Fresno falls among the top fifteen metropolitan areas for increasingly high foreclosure activity. So it is no wonder that many Fresno lawns display the stake in the grass foreclosure sign, alerting all that another dream home has succumbed to the mortgage nightmare.

Many people like Mrs. Pleitez (who refused to be photographed for the article so she'll be called solely by her last name) who came to America from El Salvador with dreams of success and stability. She married, became a US citizen, had children and three years ago embarked on what many call the American Dream, she bought a home. A lovely three bedroom home, complete with a center island and a subprime loan. She believed that in two years she could refinance at a more affordable rate and continue living the blissful life of a landowner. However that was not the case.

In early January after her husband's maintenance business didn't succeed, Mrs. Pleitez's home was forced into foreclosure. Standing in front of a local restaurant off

Kings Canyon, she describes the ordeal of packing all her belongings to move in with her parents. When asked the question below, she scans the parking lot, and says it (the mortgage crisis) has affected her entire life. And her thoughts on government help? With a slight grin she repeats, it would have been nice, it would have been nice.

Of course it would be nice if the government would help bail able homeowners out of foreclosure. They do corporate bailouts all the time, why not the consumer? But until that happens, many other random people throughout the growing city of Fresno are ready to answer this month's question. And the question is.....

How has the mortgage crisis affected you, your family, or neighborhood? Should the government bailout financial institutions or individual homeowners?

Name: Yolanda Alejandre
Occupation: Data Entry
Where: Standing in front of stereo shop off Shaw

"No. Not yet at least. I haven't felt the effect I guess because I don't own a home. And yes the government should give people money or at least help because it was the finance companies that did the people wrong."

Titus Mejia
Occupation: Fitness Sales Manager
Where: taking a break from work

"Yes, it makes me want to rent. The mortgages are outrageous. No, it is not the governments fault. They didn't

finance them. The ones accountable are the banks and financial groups. Yes and no, I feel somewhat sorry for the ones that rushed into buying. I understand that a lot of people were eager to jump into a house but at the same time you have to wait for the right time, the right moment because it's your credit. People need to ask themselves do they want to live in a nice house and just make it or wait and until they're financially stable."

Gus Cruz
Occupation: Fitness Sales
Where: Leaving work

"Humm. It really hasn't affected me badly. It has in a good way. Now I am looking to buy because it's so cheap. In some situations the government should be entitled to bail some out of debt. Maybe just the military, other people no."

John Kramer
Occupation: Construction
Where: walking downtown Fresno

"Yes, it has affected me. I watch everything now, what I buy and how I spend. I notice a lot of for sale and foreclosure signs something that I've never really seen before everywhere, even in my own neighborhood. Yes, I think the government should help out to an extent. But I am kind of leery with the government taking control over it. I think that there should be some kind of relief for the homeowners. They should help them out but not hold their hand through it. The homeowners are still responsible."



::NEWS:: MUSIC:: CULTURE::

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

**TIMELAPSE CARTOONING:
THE EXPERTS SPEAK**

1999: --AND OF COURSE, REAL ESTATE IS USUALLY A SENSIBLE LONG-TERM INVESTMENT.

YES--THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME WILL PROBABLY INCREASE OVER THE LONG HAUL, UNLESS IT DOES NOT.

2001: --THE HOUSING MARKET IS BOOMING--AND SHOWS ABSOLUTELY NO SIGN OF SLOWING DOWN!

SHELTER IS A GROWTH STOCK--AND YOU DON'T WANT TO GET LEFT OUT IN THE COLD!

2003: THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW PARADIGM! THE LESSONS OF THE PAST ARE COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT! WHAT GOES UP CAN STAY UP--FOREVER!

OWNING A HOUSE IS LIKE HAVING A LICENSE TO PRINT MONEY! YOU CAN'T LOSE IF YOU TRY!

2005: THERE'S NO LONGER ANY QUESTION WHATSOEVER--HOME OWNERSHIP IS A SUREFIRE PATH TO RICHES BEYOND DREAMS OF AVARICE! CHA-CHING, BABY!

THESE DAYS YOU DON'T EVEN NEED A DOWN PAYMENT! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GO!! BUY!! NOW!!

2007: OKAY, SO THERE SEEMS TO BE A SLIGHT, MOMENTARY DOWNTURN IN THE HOUSING MARKET.

UH--RIGHT! JUST A TINY BUMP IN THE ROAD!

2008: --AND I DON'T KNOW WHY ANYONE EVER THOUGHT THAT REAL ESTATE WAS SUCH A SUREFIRE INVESTMENT.

HOME OWNERSHIP IS OBVIOUSLY A CRASHSHOT! YOU'RE ALMOST ALWAYS BETTER OFF RENTING!

SOUNDING BOARD: RENTING IS FOR SUCKERS!

SQUAT: IT'S WHERE IT'S AT!