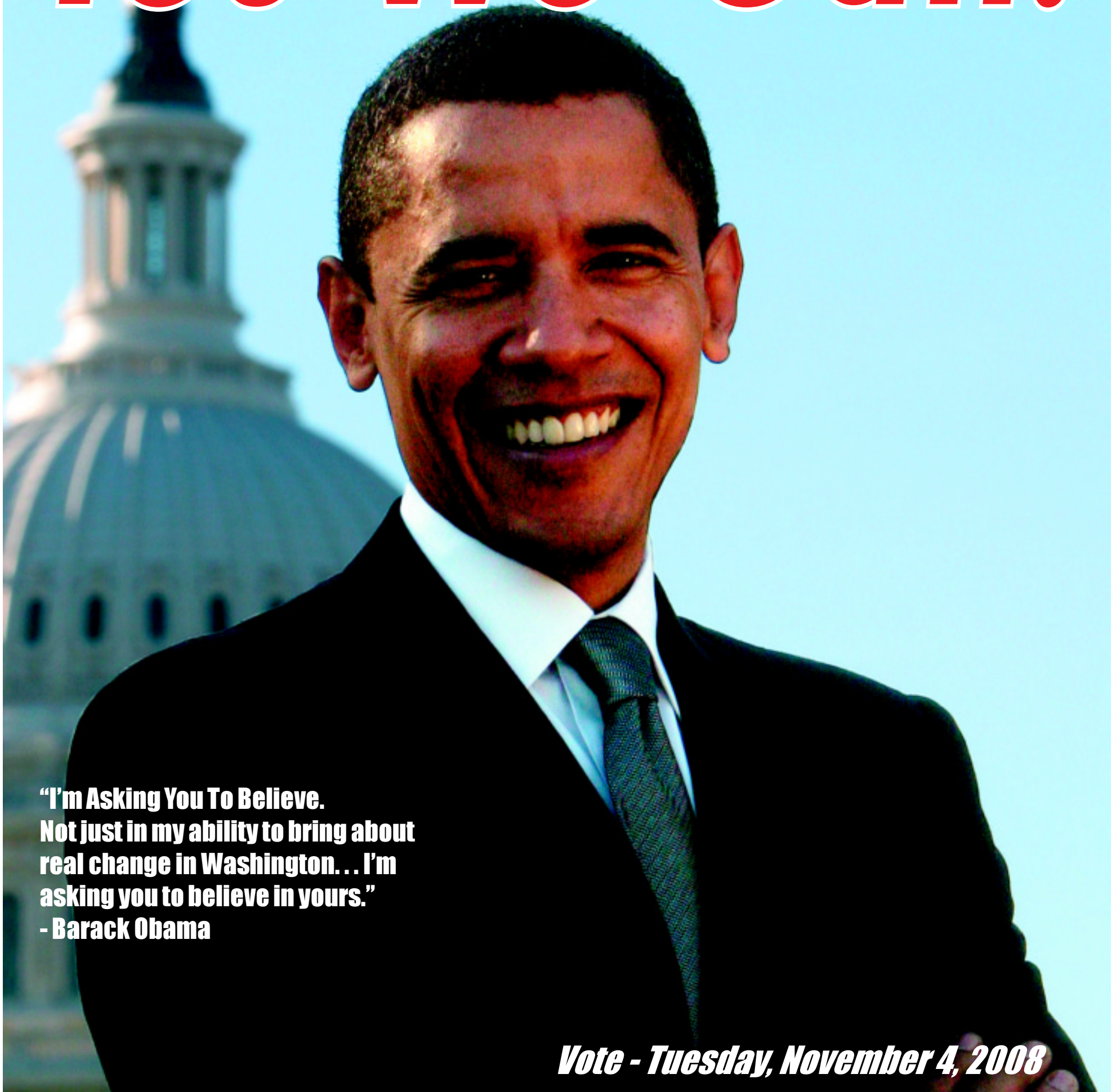


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asking you to believe in yours."  
- Barack Obama**

***Vote - Tuesday, November 4, 2008***

**NOVEMBER 2008**

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

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

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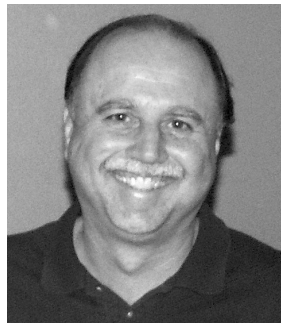
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*The Community Alliance newspaper reserves the right to edit all articles for space and clarity.*

## From the Editor

Most regular readers of this newspaper and probably all of our subscribers share many core values, including a desire for a world free of endless war, where everyone without regard to their sexual orientation or ethnicity is treated equally, and where all workers earn a living wage. We are working day in and day out to bring about changes both locally and nationally that are consistent with our core values. The general election on Tuesday, November 4 is a pivotal time when Fresno and the nation will decide whether or not we have had enough of the Republican Party, with their endless wars, the collapse of the economy, and violations of our civil liberties.



In this issue you will find several articles about the upcoming elections, a progressive voting guide on page 5, and my favorite - comments from readers and subscribers about who they are going to vote for in the presidential election (starting on page 7). Not surprisingly, the debate in this newspaper is between whether to vote for Barack Obama or a more progressive third party candidate. Nobody, who wrote to the Community Alliance about the elections, suggested that voters should even consider McCain/Palin.

My opinion is that the presidential election November 4 will result in either Obama or McCain being elected. There is not a snowballs chance in hell that a third party candidate will be elected as president. The choice is between Obama and McCain and who progressives should vote for seems obvious.

I suppose, if it is true (and I think it is) that the race will not even be close in California, then you could vote for Nader or McKinney and the world would not come to an end. Obama will still get California's electoral votes.

After years of voting for "progressive" third party candidates, this year I'm going to vote for Obama because I honestly don't think I can take another 4 or 8 years of Republican rule. If McCain/Palin won, it would be like Bush on steroids. It would not be a pretty sight and the pain and suffering that would result would be enormous. Obama offers the hope that there will be some kind of a New Deal that will start moving the pendu-

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

<b>Ashley Swearingin and Transparency .....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Fresno Police Intimidate Democratic Party Volunteers .....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Word on the Street .....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Big Brother is Watching .....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Voting Recommendations .....</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Before You Vote You Need to Know this .....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Presidential Politics - An Uproar from the Grassroots .....</b>	<b>Page 7, 8, &amp; 27</b>
<b>Taking Politics Seriously .....</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Public Access TV .....</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Homeless Regulators .....</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Without Housing, Without Rights, A Question of Accountability .....</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Champions of Justice .....</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power .....</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Carlo Parlanti .....</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>Don't Pick up the Soap .....</b>	<b>Page 17</b>
<b>Servitude, HEAT, &amp; Eminent Domain in SW Fresno .....</b>	<b>Page 20</b>
<b>The Re-call of Cynthia Sterling moves forward .....</b>	<b>Page 21</b>
<b>The Peace and Social Justice Calendar .....</b>	<b>Page 22</b>
<b>Queer Eye .....</b>	<b>Page 23</b>
<b>Two Pounds of Rice from Starvation .....</b>	<b>Page 24</b>
<b>Hurricane Relief for Haiti .....</b>	<b>Page 25</b>
<b>Opinion &amp; Analysis from the Grassroots .....</b>	<b>Page 26 &amp; 27</b>

lum back in the direction of more social programs and a safety net. If Obama wins, and I think he will, his success in moving this country to the left will depend on our ability to build a powerful grassroots movement that will hold him accountable to those of us who get him elected.

I see a strong connection between the national trend to repudiate the politics of the Republican Party and the local mayoral race in Fresno. The pro-Democratic tidal wave that elects Obama and produces an increased Democratic majority in Congress will have an effect here locally. Henry T. Perea, the Democrat in the race for mayor, will win the election because voters in Fresno want changes that the Republicans will not and can't implement. Under Republican rule, Fresno now has the highest concentration of poverty in the country, we needed a Federal Judge to stop the city from attacking the homeless, we have some of the worst air quality, an unacceptable high school drop out rate (over 50% of my daughter's classmates dropped out before graduating at Fresno High), and our best and brightest are leaving for better opportunities elsewhere. The Republicans are close to destroying the nation and our city. It is time for a change!

Ashley Swearingin says that she will bring us "Fresh Leadership" and "Real Change for Fresno." Swearingin presents herself as the "outsider" who will shake up City Hall and bring about change. I'm hoping Community Alliance readers and subscribers will not be fooled by her campaign. Swearingin is a conservative Republican (Fresno has been ruled by Republicans for the last 15 years) who would continue the policies and practices of her predecessors. She is as different from Autry as McCain is to George Bush. See the article on page 3 and ask yourself if you share her values - Swearingin is anti-choice (she is against women's reproductive rights), opposes marriage equality (she supports proposition 8), supports John McCain for president, and says she has a lot in common with Sarah Palin. She won't even tell us if she is opposed to torturing prisoners!

Henry T. Perea, on the other hand, is a Democrat, he supports Barack Obama and will tell you that he thinks torturing prisoners is wrong. Obama is going to win in a landslide on November 4 and Perea will win locally because he brings us hope and can implement the change that needs to take place at City Hall. I believe Perea will build a new culture within City Hall that is built on the foundation of shared values that we have for social, economic, and environmental justice. Perea has the support of organized labor, community groups, and the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper.

## Letter to the Editor

I want to thank author Vic Bedoian and the Community Alliance for publishing "Power Hungry," the best news story I've read so far on PG&E's plans to build a huge 500 kilovolt transmission project through the Sierra foothills of Kern, Tulare, and Fresno counties.

This project is yet one more example of how "our" government which purports to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people" is really a government "of the profit, by the profit, and for the profit" and is run now, as it has always been, by the elite investor class, the one percent of the population that controls nearly 50 percent of the wealth.

Fighting this project for the past year, I have developed a special appreciation for the Native Americans whose land was stolen by "our" government at the behest of the profiteers in the nineteenth century. Our plight pales in comparison to that of the local Yokuts and Mono who were finagled out of their land in the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra in the 1850s. But the people of the foothills are being treated in a similar manner now that PG&E and other powerful corporations see that they can use our land to increase their profits.

This plan — the so-called Central California Clean Energy Transmission Project (C3ETP) — purports to be about meeting our needs for clean energy. However, it is at least as much about profit and destruction of the environment and of ordinary people as it is about clean energy. It is the same old story we have heard so many times over the last many years of deregulation and privatization. The government, such as it is, will hardly be involved in this project.

Indeed, as you read, the California Public Utilities Commission is planning to farm out more of its responsibilities to the private sector — meaning huge corporations — so that they can look out for you and me. Fat chance of the fox looking out for the chickens' needs! Besides, the CPUC is made up mostly of appointed industry partisans who have little interest in looking after ordinary people.

No, while all the new plans like C3ETP are green-washed to look like efforts to integrate clean energy into the grid,

**Continued on page 27**

*There are about 30 scams the Republicans are deliberately using, particularly in the swing states to get Democratic voters off the rolls. These scams originate in the so-called Help America Vote Act which was passed after the Florida debacle in the year 2000. It was originally suggested by Democrats and Republicans but it was passed by a Republican congress with a Republican senate and a Republican president. And instead of reforming what happened in Florida it basically institutionalized all the problems that happened in Florida. And institutionalized a series of impediments that make it very difficult for Democrats to register, for Democrats to vote and then for Democrats to have their vote counted.*

- Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

(See page 6 for more information about how the Republicans are trying to disenfranchise your right to vote)

PROGRESSIVE THURSDAY presents

### "IRAN IS NOT THE PROBLEM"

Thursday, November 20, 2008

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

Round Table Pizza

5763 N. First Street, Fresno, CA

[SW corner of First and Bullard]

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Contact: Larry Mullen 559 227-0293 [www.fresnogreens.org](http://www.fresnogreens.org)

# Ashley Swearingin and Transparency

By Mike Rhodes

Ashley Swearingin wants to be the next mayor of Fresno. She has spoken openly and articulately about local issues. She has also discussed issues of statewide importance. In a meeting with the Central Valley Progressive PAC, Swearingin said, during a discussion about proposition 8 (regarding marriage equality) that because she was a candidate "people have a right to know anything and everything about you." The Community Alliance, following the old saying "Think Globally, Act Locally" decided to ask Swearingin about her positions on a wide variety of issues.

For example, where does she stand on the war and occupation of Iraq? To our surprise, she refused to answer. Does Swearingin think giving money to war profiteers, mercenaries, shipping pallets of \$100 bills to Iraq (which were never accounted for), and occupying Iraq is a better use of money than providing health care for the tax payers of Fresno, fixing roads, or improving education? Would Swearingin support a City Council resolution to end the war and occupation? Don't ask her, she will not answer the question.

The Community Alliance asked Swearingin if she supports reproductive rights for women. Again, she refused to answer. Her campaign manager, David

Schecter, said that he would refuse to confirm or deny any positions his candidate holds which we independently discovered. We found, on the issue of reproductive rights for women that Swearingin is anti-choice.

Billie MacDougall, the past President (2004 - 2005) of the National Women's Political Caucus, said that her group "did not know that Swearingin was anti-choice when we invited her to speak on the Regional Jobs Initiative. When we heard that she was contemplating running for mayor we asked if she wished to apply for endorsement by the NWPC. Her reply was that she could not apply because she is not pro-choice."

Swearingin's response to questions about marriage equality became an issue when she first opposed and then supported proposition 8. The Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) community have been critical of her flip/flop on this issue. But, Swearingin's position on this issue is consistent with her core values and base of support - she is opposed to equal rights for the LGBTQ community.

We asked: "Do you Support Obama or McCain for president?" Swearingin refused to answer. Swearingin, a Republican, is supporting John McCain for president. We know this because Swearingin said, at a debate at the Tower Theater, that she supports McCain and that "I'm also looking forward to meeting Governor Palin. I think we have a few things in common."

The mayoral candidates positions on local issues are well known and have been heard at numerous forums

and debates. For their answers to questions about local issues of concern to the progressive community, go to: [www.cvppac.org](http://www.cvppac.org). Swearingin's refusal to answer questions says a lot about her transparency and what the progressive community might expect if she is elected. We know that she is a conservative Republican, she supports John McCain for president, is anti-choice, and is against marriage equality. She refuses to tell us if she supports the ongoing war and occupation of Iraq. She doesn't want us to know if she supports torturing prisoners, if she wants City of Fresno employees to earn a living wage, or whether or not the US should invade Iran. So much for transparency!

Where does mayoral candidate Henry T. Perea stand on these issues? Perea proudly supports Barack Obama for president, he supports marriage equality (he is against proposition 8), he is not afraid to say that he is against torturing prisoners, is pro-choice, and does not want to see the US invade Iran.

Fresno progressives have a choice to make on Tuesday, November 4. They can vote for 4 more years of right wing, conservative, Republican rule - both locally and nationally OR they can vote for a change. Henry T. Perea and Barack Obama represent HOPE and CHANGE for a better world.

###

Mike Rhodes is editor of the Community Alliance newspaper. He can be contacted by email at [MikeRhodes@Comcast.net](mailto:MikeRhodes@Comcast.net)

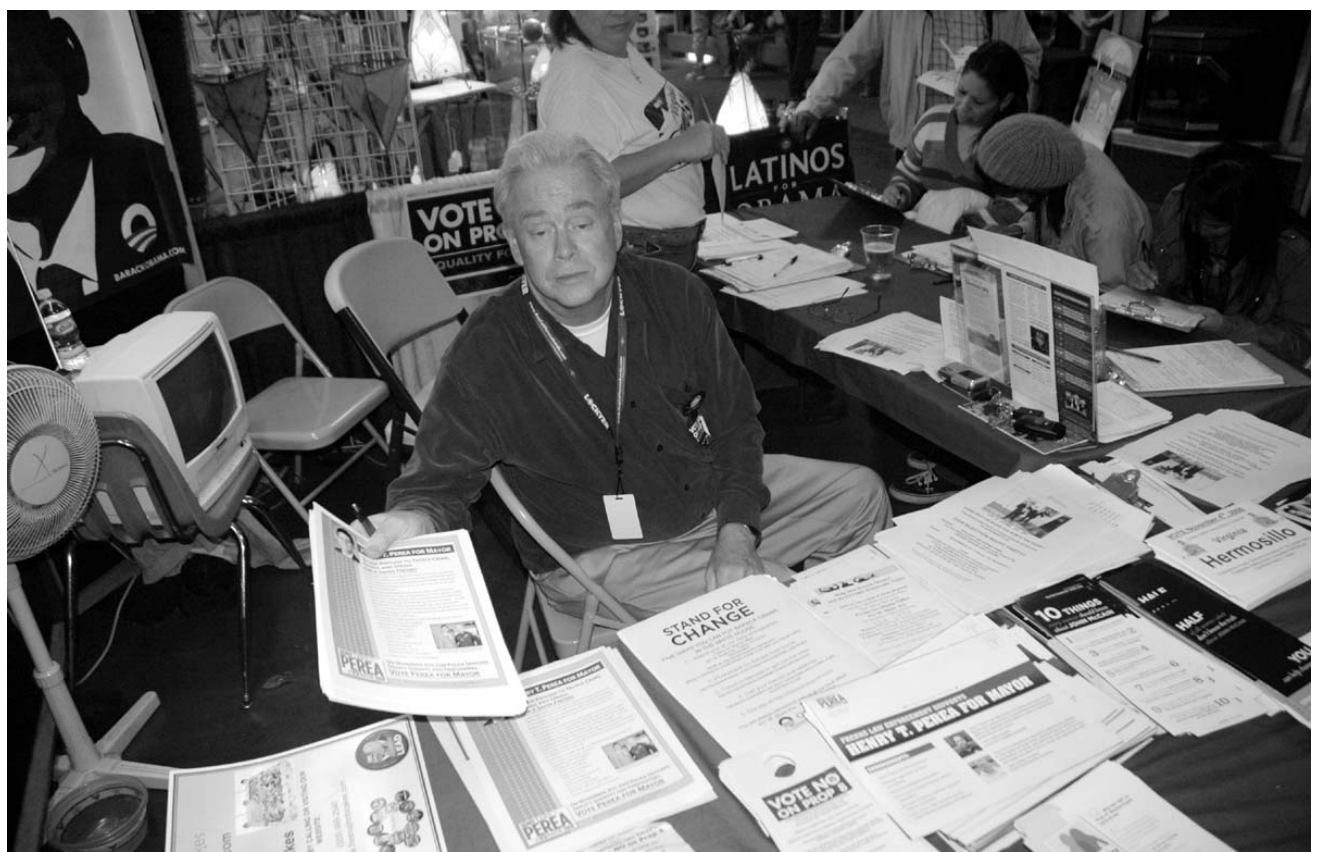
## Fresno Police Intimidate Democratic Party Volunteers

By Mike Rhodes

According to volunteers at the Democratic Party booth at the BIG Fresno District Fair, two uniformed Fresno Police Department (FPD) officers told them that the brochures they had on their table for Henry T. Perea (candidate for mayor, who is a Democrat) were illegal. The officers complained that the brochure contained a photo of FPD Chief Jerry Dyer standing with Perea. The volunteer, upon being told by the officers that the brochures were illegal, removed them from the table.

The controversy over the brochure first emerged shortly after Perea supporters started distributing the brochures in NE Fresno. An October 1 story on KFSN-TV had political analyst Tony Capozzi saying, "Clearly he's been endorsed by the Fresno Police Officers' Association and various other law enforcement agencies but right next to that is a picture of the candidate Henry Perea with the Chief." Capozzi said, "What's really, what I'm thinking, improper is a picture with the chief with his uniform on, with his badge on. That's illegal if the chief knew this was going on." The video of this story can be seen at: [http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=news/politics/local\\_elections&id=6426865](http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=news/politics/local_elections&id=6426865)

Not mentioned on the KFSN report or by Capozzi was that Fresno City Council member Jerry Duncan, in his campaign for mayor during the primary election, had a photo of himself and Jerry Dyer (in uniform) on his campaign brochure. Nobody complained about the



Democratic Party volunteer Jay Hubbell is seen putting the Henry T. Perea brochures back on the table, two days after they were removed.

Dyer/Duncan photo. Why is the Dyer/Perea photo being referred to as illegal?

During the KFSN interview, Dyer said, "I never want to use my uniform for political purposes because number one: it's against the law." Dyer said he has not endorsed anyone for mayor.

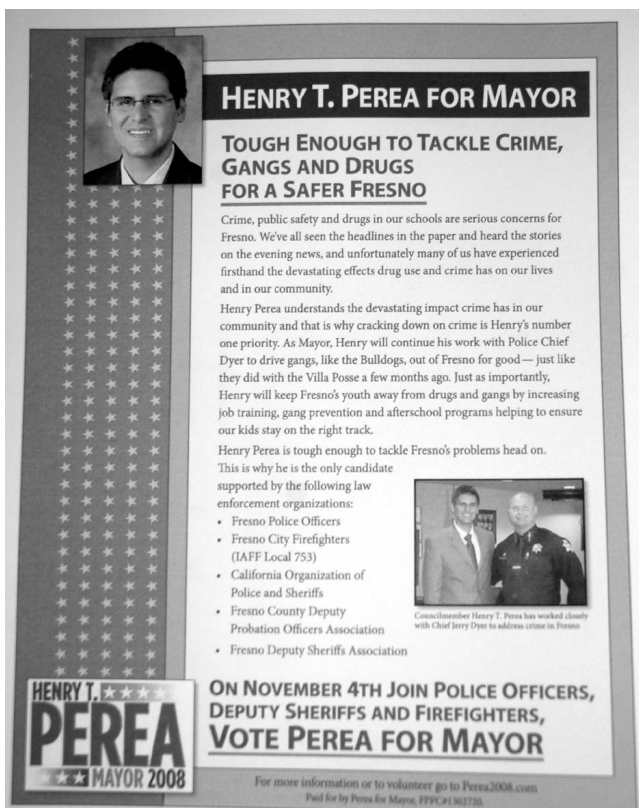
The legality of the photo in the brochure would be determined by an examination of the Hatch Act of 1939, which (according to Wikipedia) is a United States federal law whose main provision is to prohibit federal employees (civil servants) from engaging in partisan political activity. Named after Senator Carl Hatch of New Mexico, the law was officially known as An Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities. To read more, go to: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatch\\_Act\\_of\\_1939](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatch_Act_of_1939).

In this situation, the Hatch Act does not appear to apply. According to a Washington based Hatch Act Blog: "The law prohibits federal employees from engaging in political activity while on duty, wearing campaign buttons in the office and putting campaign bumper stickers on a government car. It also bans soliciting, accepting or receiving political contributions, and prohibits employees from using their official positions to influence or interfere with an election." If

Jerry Dyer, in uniform, had attended a Press Conference announcing Henry T. Perea's candidacy, that might have raised some concerns. A public official and the police chief being in a photo together is not a Hatch Act violation.

What is a concern is that FPD officers operating under the "Color of Law" intimidated Democratic Party volunteers to remove campaign brochures from their booth at the Fresno District Fair. An investigation is under way to determine which officers were involved and to make sure that this does not happen again.

While researching this story, I was told by volunteers at both the Republican and Democratic Party booths that they were not allowed to distribute Yard Signs, Buttons, or Bumper Stickers. Fresno District Fair officials had told them that they were concerned that the Yard Signs and Buttons might be used as weapons and that the Bumper Stickers might be used to vandalize Fair property. The beer, marguerites, hotdogs on a stick (which is more of a weapon than an Obama button) were available everywhere on the fairgrounds and apparently not a danger to anyone. But, the Yard Signs, Buttons, and Bumper stickers were a clear and present danger - yes, a danger that democracy might break out at any moment.



This is the Brochure the FPD officers said was illegal

# Word on the Street

By Francine Ramos

This time of year is by far my favorite. We have our national presidential election and, most importantly, our local mayoral election just days away. The outcome of both will undoubtedly change the way we live, or will it? Here in Fresno, it is all one should hope for, change. Perhaps, with a new mayor, this vast city will no longer be plagued by two Fresnos: the North and everything South of Shaw. Perhaps, with our new mayor, one could drive downtown and not have to pay over three dollars for parking to simply enjoy a cup of coffee at Café Corazon, even though in any other area of Fresno one would be charged only for the coffee ingested not the space one's car occupies. Certainly, that would be a nice change.

Hopefully, our new mayor will work to create the same vibe that balanced cities such as San Francisco have been able to maintain. Just because we are in the valley surrounded by hot air doesn't mean Fresno lacks the talent, the creativity and the structure that makes for a thriving city. Places such as the Tower District and Fig Garden have long established this. These are areas where residents live, shop, eat, and are merry, never forgetting the bigger community they live in — and that bigger community is Fresno. Wouldn't it be great if Fresno's next mayor appreciated all the diversity Fresno offers and, rather than trying to change people, he or she instead improved Fresno?

Regardless, of where one stands politically, it is pretty fair to say that what we desire is a prosperous, unified city. In preparation for this month's question, I traveled throughout Fresno to hear what issues people deem most important when voting for our next mayor. I must say, not a single person was silent. Why? Well, because regardless of where they lived, what culture, what economic status they were in, they all shared the same thought — bring the city together. So our next mayor will not be alone in shaping Fresno's future. He or she will have an entire community of folks ready to take Fresno to the next level. Now on to the question.....

Q. What issues are you looking at when voting for Fresno's next mayor?

"Education, that to me is most important. There are just too many children in classrooms. I think the mayor or future mayor should put education first and make that a priority,"

Name: Esmeralda Gamboa  
Location: North Fresno off Herndon



**Esmeralda Gamboa**

"I just watched the debate on poverty. I am interested in seeing the candidates try to actually get things done, by getting different areas of the city working together; not just in words but in action. The income divide seems to be increasing in Fresno. We are obviously not focusing on our neighborhoods with concentrated poverty. It seems those areas haven't gotten much better even though it has received national attention. I know that it is going to take a long time. We need everyone's involvement. These issues should be in the forefront. As far as nuclear power, I do think that the concept of finding new energy alternatives is a key factor. We are in a place, with all the sun, to go solar. We must find a

way to encourage that by giving incentives to help and encourage an environment for new businesses using alternative energy. This would be much more beneficial than nuclear power."

Name: Brooke Frost  
Location: Downtown Fresno



**Brooke Frost**

"As a student, I would vote for a candidate that specifically addressed student issues. The candidate must address the issue of poverty that exists here and the massive gang problem that Fresno has. We are a leading city in the nation when it comes to gang problems. The future mayor should definitely look at that. Also I would want a mayor that addresses the issue of class division and how some areas of Fresno are paid more attention to than others."

Name: Javier Alcantar-Rojas  
Location: Fresno State



**Javier Alcantar-Rojas**

"One thing is public transportation. Right now we are encouraged to use public transportation and it isn't really available to me in the area of Fresno I live in. I would have to hop in my truck and drive a couple miles just to get to the nearest bus stop. Public transportation should be made more available to everyone in Fresno. Revitalization of downtown is another issue that is important. I think they make progress, we take two steps forward, then one and a half back. I would really like to see downtown get revitalized. Also I drove by the Fresno Rescue Mission today and I saw all the homeless. I just think there really needs to be something done about that. These are important issues."

Name: Russell Pizarro  
Location: Sunnyside



**Russell Pizarro**



## Big Brother is Watching.

The camera pictured above went up last month just outside of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence (Van Ness and McKinley). There is already a camera at Shaw and Blackstone, designated "Peace Corner" because of all of the anti war demonstrations held there. The Fresno Police Department is rapidly expanding video surveillance in this city. They now have 90 cameras operating that are being actively monitored and recorded. They have another 24 cameras that they are able to use, but they are not (yet) being recorded. Of the 90 "actively monitored" cameras, 88 are south of Shaw Avenue. Not that we needed another reminder of *The Tale of Two Cities*, but doesn't it seem odd that almost all of the video surveillance cameras are in the "less affluent" part of town? For more information about community concerns regarding video surveillance, see the ACLU report *Under the Watchful Eye: The Proliferation of Video Surveillance Systems in California* at: [http://www.aclunc.org/issues/government\\_surveillance/index.shtml](http://www.aclunc.org/issues/government_surveillance/index.shtml)

# 'STATE BALLOT PROPOSITION RECOMMENDATIONS NOVEMBER 4, 2008 ELECTION

## STATE BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

ORGANIZATION	1A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ACLU-NC	*	*	*	N	Y	N	*	N	N	*	*	*
California Labor Federation	Y	*	*	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Central Labor Council	Y	*	*	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Cal Teachers Assoc.	*	*	Y	N	*	N	*	N	N	*	*	*
Central Valley Progressive PAC	Y	Y	*	N	Y	N	N	N	*	N	N	Y
Chamber of Commerce-CA	N	N	Y	N	N	*	N	*	*	N	Y	Y
Common Cause	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Y	*
Democratic Party - Ca	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	*	N	Y
Green Party	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
League of Women Voters	Y	*	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	*
P & F Party	*	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	*
Planned Parenthood MM	*	*	*	N	*	*	*	N	*	*	*	*
Republican Party	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	*	Y
Sierra Club	Y	Y	*	N	*	*	N	*	*	N	*	*

**Prop. 1A**  
Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act.

**Prop. 2**  
Standards for Confining Farm Animals. Initiative Statute.

**Prop. 3**  
Children's Hospital Bond Act. Grant Program. Initiative Statute.

**Prop. 4**  
Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.

**Prop. 5**  
Nonviolent Drug Offenses. Sentencing, Parole and Rehabilitation. Initiative Statute.

**Prop. 6**  
Police and Law Enforcement Funding. Criminal Penalties and Laws. Initiative Statute.

**Prop. 7**  
Renewable Energy Generation. Initiative Statute.

**Prop. 8**  
Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.

**Prop. 9**  
Criminal Justice System. Victims' Rights. Parole. Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.

**Prop. 10**  
Alternative Fuel Vehicles and Renewable Energy Bonds. Initiative Statute.

**Prop. 11**  
Redistricting. Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.

**Prop. 12**  
Veterans' Bond Act of 2008.

## FRESNO CITY & COUNTY

ORGANIZATION	L	JUDGE	MAYOR	FUSD #2	FUSD #5	FUSD #6
Central Labor Council	*	*	Perea	Nunez	Mills	*
CVPPAC	Y	Treisman	Perea	Moore	Mills	Hermosillo
CHAMBER-FRESNO			Perea	Nunez	Clark	Ryan
Fresno Teachers Assoc.	*	*	Perea	Moore	Mills	Hermosillo
LA RAZA LAWYERS	*	Treisman	*	*	*	*
Republican Party	*	*	Swearengin	*	*	Ryan

\* = No position/recommendation

# VOTE FOR CHANGE ON NOVEMBER 4TH

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# Before You Vote You Need to Know this

From *Ring of Fire* with Mike Papantonio and Robert Kennedy Jr. Sept. 20, 2008

Bobby: There are about 30 scams the republicans are deliberately using, particularly in the swing states to get democratic voters off the rolls. These scams originate in the so-called Help America Vote Act (HAVA) which was passed after the Florida debacle in the year 2000. It was originally suggested by democrats and republicans but it was passed by a republican congress with a republican senate and a republican president. And instead of reforming what happened in Florida it basically institutionalized all the problems that happened in Florida. And institutionalized a series of impediments that make it very difficult for democrats to register, for democrats to vote and then for democrats to have their vote counted.

One of these requirements under HAVA is called "the perfect match" and what that does is little known but it is devastating. A quarter of the voters in Colorado have just been removed from the rolls because of this—just this one scam. And what it does is they use a computer system to compare your registration application to all other government records of you in the state. So they will look at your social security records, your motor vehicle records and any time you've had any interaction with the government and if there is any information on your voter registration that is different than the information on another government record that they find they remove you from the voting rolls.

For example, if I registered as Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and yet my motor vehicle license said Robert Frances Kennedy Jr. I'd be removed from the rolls. If your initial is different, if you leave an initial out, if you leave a "Jr." out, if you leave a hyphen out in your name. And what they've done is a study in New York that said 80% of the errors are errors that were done by state clerks who are taking down this information.

Pap: Are the democrats suing to stop this?

Bobby: No, the democrats are doing nothing to stop it. In New Jersey, which is a swing state, 300,000 voters in New Jersey were just sent letters saying that they are now ineligible to vote. New Jersey is nice enough to actually notify them—most states will not even notify them. And New Jersey intends to send out 870,000 letters so that is three quarters of a million people off the

voting rolls in a state that could decide this vote by 50,000 votes. And these are democrats that are being pushed off the rolls.

Bobby: Let me tell you about one other of these scams people should know about. If you're a newly registered voter—and of course the democrats have done these gigantic registration drives—12 million people on registration—if you're a new voter you MUST include your license or some other state I.D. when you come to vote. What that means is that if you're a college kid (and college kids now—they're sending in absentee ballots—they're not going to the voting place, they do every-



Robert F. Kennedy Jr. spoke August 2008 at the United Farm Workers convention in Fresno.  
Photo by Mike Rhodes

thing online or they do everything remotely—they don't dream of going to the precinct house voting on election day and waiting in a long line) so if they send in the absentee ballot and they don't include a color copy of their license their vote is going to be thrown into a trash can. And none of these people know this because you have had to read the law in order to know it. So there is no notification for when you fill out your registration form, so all of those 12 million people that the democrats have registered: those ballots are going to be just thrown out.

Pap: And if democrats won't talk about this how the

hell is anybody gonna know about it? I'm involved with this kind of thing every day—I didn't know that until you just told me. The media is not talking about it. How in the hell is somebody gonna find this out? It's just incredible.

Bobby: Hopefully—Obama is getting 66 million dollars a month—hopefully somebody in the democratic organization is going to pay some attention to this before election day.

THIS IS FROM HAVA (HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT) 2) Requirements.— (A) In general.— An individual meets the requirements of this paragraph if the individual— (i) in the case of an individual who votes in person— (I) presents to the appropriate State or local election official a current and valid photo identification; or (II) presents to the appropriate State or local election official a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter; or (ii) in the case of an individual who votes by mail, submits with the ballot— (I) a copy of a current and valid photo identification; or (II) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. (B) Fail-safe voting.— (i) In person.— An individual who desires to vote in person, but who does not meet the requirements of subparagraph (A)(i), may cast a provisional ballot under section 302(a). (ii) By mail.— An individual who desires to vote by mail but who does not meet the requirements of subparagraph (A)(ii) may cast such a ballot by mail and the ballot shall be counted as a provisional ballot in accordance with section 302(a). [http://www.fec.gov/hava/law\\_ext.txt](http://www.fec.gov/hava/law_ext.txt)

(that means your vote will be thrown out!)

### REMEMBER:

1. VOTE
2. VOTE IN PERSON (IF POSSIBLE)
3. DON'T VOTE EARLY (IF POSSIBLE)
4. VOTE ON A PAPER BALLOT (NO MACHINE IF YOU HAVE A CHOICE)
5. BRING AN "VALID" I.D. (IF POSSIBLE)
6. IF YOU HAVE TO VOTE ABSENTEE ENCLOSE A COLOR COPY OF CURRENT LICENSE OR OTHER "VALID" (STATE?) I.D. OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION LISTED ABOVE.

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- You live with family, friends, relatives or even strangers and...
- Don't have money to pay for a doctor's visit.

Call us at 559-457-5826 or stop by at any one of our 7 health centers in and around Fresno.



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# Presidential Politics - An Uproar from the Grassroots

The Community Alliance newspaper asked readers and subscribers for their thoughts and analysis on the upcoming presidential election. We asked who they would be voting for and why. We asked if they are considering voting for a third party or voting for Obama (we assumed that very few of our readers and none of our subscribers would be voting for McCain/Palin). Here is what they had to say:

This November Barack Obama must win, and he must win by a landslide. He is a thoughtful, reflective thinker. He is a steady hand and has a sharp mind. He can grasp and respect more than one facet of an issue at a time. Although I do not agree with every way he has voted or every stand he takes, I understand the need for compromise in our government and the deal-making involved to achieve important policy goals. Especially now after 8 years of the Bush Administration: a war we should never have fought, a planet unable to sustain our current lifestyle, and the collapse of our economy that is certain to effect our country's most vulnerable. It is clearly time for a change.

The United States needs to show our government and the world that we, the citizens of the United States, want a President who cares about the planet we share and understands the internationalism of our global society. Our re-election of Bush was an international embarrassment, and letting Barack Obama slip away would ensure 4 more years of the same disastrous Bush policies.

This time the self-satisfying vote for Nader or McKinney or Kucinich must be withheld and a realistic vote for Obama taken. This year, I will be doing my part for our nation by casting my vote for Barack Obama.

Ingrid Carmean, Fresno

###

We will vote for Obama holding our noses all the way, knowing he, like McCain, is a creature of the military-industrial complex. Obama appears to have some more rational folks among his advisors, but we see no progressive economists, all Wall Street bigshots; and he advocates escalating the Afghan war, among other policy horrors. Even if Obama overcomes all the potential election fraud, our hearts tell us that the tidal wave for peace & justice must come from us - the grassroots, not from Wash D.C. So our vote is a proforma gesture to keep the spark of democracy alive. Our real challenge is how we dance together — now and in the future to create and expand peace & justice for all of us. We at the grassroots are *The Power* if enough of us embrace our responsibility to leverage it for all of us. Are we tired enough of political corruption, violence and death? Can we create the wave of will that any politician must ride, through our creative *direct* actions? Can we vote with our \$\$\$ and our bodies as well as in the voting booth? Can we unite our various important issues into *OUR* movement? Can we sidestep distracting irrelevant circuses?

Smiling Seriously,  
Maia & Elfie Ballis, SunMt

###

I'm voting for Barack Obama because I want him to win resoundingly—and I dread Old Warrior John, with Sarah Palin glittering in the wings.

I feel Barack's heart is in the right place, and he's a person of integrity. As a Chicago Ph.D. and a community organizer myself for thirty years, I deeply respect a top graduate of Harvard Law—in the era of black corporate opportunism—who goes back to the slums of his youth to work with unemployed steelworkers. That's not the high road to owning seven or eight houses; I hope it is the road to the White House.

Movements of the people change history. People are on the move, because the times are urgent. We cry out for green jobs, education, health care, an end to war follies; we say build a sane sustainable infra-structure, care for our brothers and sisters and for Mother Earth.

These next four years, we will need to organize and raise our voices like never before. I think Barack Obama will hear us and respond. His chosen man Biden even wants to build schools for Muslim girls in Afghanistan.

John Morearty, Stockton, Ca

###

I will be voting for Cynthia McKinney for president and urge every progressive to reject the corporate party candidates—putting your vote where your conscience is (Nader, Paul, or whomever). If the majority of voters continue to support the corrupt dominant parties, their electoral campaigns can only conclude that, despite the ongoing waste of life and resources, needless poverty, and massive financial swindling, ordinary citizens have no conception of reality and will continue to give tacit consent to the madness. When finally we utilize our superior numbers and unite against greed and stupidity, the rulers will have to either relent or turn their commissions of unspeakable atrocities on their constituents in order to maintain their grip on power over our lives and the life of the planet.

Don Manro, Tulare

###

I am voting for Barack Obama because he is clearly far superior to the viable alternative. His intelligence, broad and often deep understanding of the key issues, and his refusal to resort to drama are major factors. However, I was deeply unsettled by his vote to amend FISA and grant retroactive immunity to the telecoms. This is because I believe the most serious problem our nation faces is the power that the Executive Branch has accumulated in the past eight years and the way this power is and can be wielded against American citizens in secret and insidious ways. Charlie Savage has done an excellent job of detailing how this subversive power grab was accomplished and by whom in *Takeover: The Return of the Imperial Presidency and the Subversion of American Democracy*. This book and Philippe Sands *Torture Team: Rumsfeld's Memo and the Betrayal of American Values* are must reads for any serious champion of American democracy. Savage concludes his book by saying that once such power is accumulated, it is virtually never relinquished; and will be

available to all future presidents. I will only be satisfied when the so-called Patriot Act is fully discarded and the enemies list is exposed and purged. We must be vigilant and proactive . . . as well as hopeful and optimistic.

David Roy, Fresno

###

I am voting for Obama because he is the MOST qualified and MOST experienced political candidate in my opinion. He has lived in several countries and tries to understand different cultures without being judgmental. He can sit and make changes for the better. His tactics of the bottom up in Chicago was totally brilliant.

Marge Soltero, Fresno

###

I just have to say how good it feels to drive around my neighborhood and, each time, see one more yard sign for Obama. Obama rocks!

Sandra Iyall, Fresno

###

I will vote for Obama. I may not agree with him on some issues, but he is more likely to get us out of the mess the Republican's got us into. McCain/Palin will only dig us in deeper. Will Obama save us from ourselves? Hard to tell, but at least there's hope.

Maria Telesco, Fresno

###



**Cynthia McKinney is the Green Party candidate for president. Find out more at: <http://votetruth08.com/>**

After voting independent forever, I will unequivocally vote for Obama. As an African American growing up in the U.S., he has grown up with the covert and overt racism that has affected millions of Americans. It is an issue to me that fundamentally touches every citizen who is out of the "power loop"; from the hourly worker at WalMart, to the Latino "illegals" who sustain our economy at bare subsistence levels, to the ripped off and disenfranchised Americans who are losing their benefits and earning power, McCain offers nothing for these groups, who I believe now are a majority. McCain offers nothing but more of the same disastrous policies that are literally destroying this country's economic and social fabric.

I will be proud to cast my vote for someone who, for the first time in years, offers an actual alternative to business as usual.

Patrick Young, Fresno

###

I am voting for Barack Obama. He is an unknown like Truman was. Both have common sense. They are intelligent and good listeners. Barack reminds me of that president who no one thought could bring the country together. Nonetheless, he did with diplomacy and courage. He speaks clearly and with conviction which is very important at this time. Barack will listen to all sides and move toward consensus with consideration for all. He understands that the American worker is very important and his health and education will keep United States competing with other nations. He also knows that deregulation to the extreme has proven deadly to the detriment of our economy. Obama is young and in good health. He will be able to withstand the pressures and understand the complexities of the government and move toward resolution. His personal knowledge of diverse cultures makes him my choice in believing that he can restore the faith and pride we once had in our country. I believe he is the one that will carry our nation back to good health in negotiations with other countries. I know it will be difficult to clean up the mess of the previous administration, but I believe Barack Obama will bring the troops home and be responsible for their rehabilitation.

Lydia Flores, Fresno

###

Reagan, Bush, and the Republican party have been the worst enemies America has ever had. They have attacked education, presided over the death of affordable health care, run this country so far in debt our great grandchildren's grandchildren won't be able to pay it off, worked hard at the destruction of the environment, trod all over the Constitution and our civil rights in their drive to rule, not govern. They have lied to us so many times that when one hears anything coming out of Washington one assumes it is the exact opposite of the truth.

Who championed the deregulation that made the coming Depression inevitable? Who has been in the pocket of the corporations and the rich for the past 8 years? Who started and pursued the illegal, disastrous and immoral war on Iraq? Who is threatening Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and any other country of which we do not approve?

I feel the R's have done what no outside enemy could ever have done . . . brought the U.S to the brink of ruin. I pray it is not too late. Each person who cares about the future of our kids should be seriously involved in this election! Support Obama/Biden!



**Barack Obama is the Democratic Party candidate for president. For more information, see: <http://www.barackobama.com/> or you can contact the local office at 421 West Shaw (near Maroa) or call (559) 226-2976.**

Bill Warner, Porterville, Ca

###

Ralph Nader is the clear choice. Ralph has proven time and time again that he is willing to take on corporations that put us at risk. Corporations with their legal obligation to put profits before all else, must be highly regulated and be subordinate to the interests of the people. He is for universal, single-payer health care. Health care costs put a huge burden on families and leave many bankrupt. Nearly all of the leading nations of Europe can afford healthcare-for-all and they are spending less than what we currently pay for health care per person. Ralph will end the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, bringing our troops home. These wars are tremendously costly in lives and treasure with no net benefit to mankind.

Ralph is frugal and that sets a good example for the rest of us. He strongly supports sustainable living and clean, non-nuclear power. Why throw your vote away for more of the same old politics, same old results? Why settle for second best or third best? True progressives must vote for progressives and more of the same isn't progressive. That is why I will vote for Ralph Nader in 2008.

Jerome Rice, Fresno

###

This is my tenth presidential election.

In 1968 I lived in the Haight Ashbury and was part of SDS. After the Pentagon we had moved from protest to resistance. I was apathetic about Gene and had doubts about RFK. After Chicago there was no way I could support Humphrey so I voted Communist.

We rationalized that Nixon's election would heighten the contradictions and bring on the revolution. Instead we brought on the rise of the hard core right wing and basically ended the war on poverty.

It took a few years and Reagan to fully quash the progressive movement in America. But I learned my lesson. One does not build a political party from the top down by starting with a run for the presidency. One builds it from the bottom up by winning first local support then state wide and only after that national office.

Suzanne Cooke, Rowlett, Tx  
<http://womandrebel.blogspot.com>

###

I was gun-ho for Obama until he received the nomination. His vote for the FISA bill really threw me off and caused me to take a closer look. He has chosen advisors who are just... much of the same, corporate advisors. At this point, I just don't know. Hope this is helpful.

William Kaneversky

###

While candidates like Ralph Nader and Cynthia McKinney reflect my political beliefs and values more than Obama, I'm voting for Obama. The potential for damage by McCain-Palin is enormous. With a couple of Supreme Court appointees, Roe vs. Wade would be gone, corporations would get protection for whatever they want to do and criminality in the White House would be protected. This could last 30 years or so as the last two Bush appointees are 50ish. While both major candidates are influenced by corporate donations, Obama's positions are better on every issue. An Obama presidency has the potential for significant reform of the corruption that has devastated our country while a McCain presidency will continue the Bush legacy.

If McCain were elected and died in office, Palin who believes that creationism should be taught in public schools, who believes that God is on our side, who believes that women should not be allowed to have abortions for rape or incest would be our president. To me, she is the Christian equivalent of the radical Islamic fundamentalists.

We can really kiss the United States as we know it goodbye if McCain is elected.

Stephen Sacks, Fresno

###

I am voting for Obama, because I would hate to run the risk of having Palin become President.

David Weikel

###

My name is John Warner, retired teacher and hand-scale farmer living in Madera County. My faith in the political system and politicians crashed a number of years ago

after I worked for Lyndon Johnson's election for president. I enthusiastically supported Mr. Johnson as the candidate that would bring peace in Viet Nam but what I got for that effort was broad escalation. Later I observed that Richard Nixon, well known for being tough on commies, brought us detante with China when he took his seat in the Oval Office. I have therefore concluded that no major party candidate can be trusted and that dishonesty must surely be a qualification for election and subsequent "success". Observation, over the years, has borne out this conclusion but I have broadened to include all major politicians. Mr. McCain is a very well-established liar with more years in politics than Mr. Obama to get trip him up but I see them pretty much as birds of a feather. I'm leaning toward Ralph Nader.

John Warner, Madera  
<http://www.wholesystemsag.org>

###

I would not vote or consider voting for a 3rd party candidate. At this juncture, there has been such tremendous damage to the country and its citizenry by the Republicans that we cannot, under any circumstances, afford to split the vote with a 3rd party and lose to the conservative party again. We MUST win this election - the future of the entire country depends on the outcome here. At the very least, we MUST try to effect a change. It is true to a degree the world is controlled by financial wizards that wield such power that any candidate might be limited in the change they can attempt. But, as an individual who loves this country and seeks justice for all, we must fight the powers that be more than ever after this reckless, immoral war; the Katrina disaster and aftermath, degradation and politization of the justice department by Republican drones that infiltrated every level; and now the unwinding and potential economic collapse brought about by years of deregulation and failed conservative policies that allow greed to rein. Besides, if Palin winds up as commander in chief, her gaffs are on par with GWB, and once more, the US would be embarrassed by promoting her as the best we have to offer.

Caroline Jackson, Fresno

###

I will be voting for Barack Obama for President and all other Democratic candidates. I believe this is the only way that we can stop the damage that has been done by this and past Republican administrations. While it may be nice in principle to support third parties the impact of using my vote to support abstract principles will not solve our immediate problems at hand.

Charles L. Krugman, Fresno

###

I'd like to say that I'm voting for Obama because he will dismantle the growing government-imposed threats to citizen civil liberties, and because he would shred all signs of the patriot act. I can't. Similarly, I wish I could say that I'm voting for Obama because he's the peace president that will destroy the military-industrial-complex. I wish I was going to vote for Obama because he would dismantle an economic system that has produced, over the last 25 years, unprecedented economic inequality among citizens.

Still, Obama shines because he sparked electoral populism. He electrified the populace, and energized masses of new voters. Given voting district gerrymandering and systematic disenfranchisement of felons and minorities, we can't say that voting simply is about citizens democratically electing the president. Voting also induces broad public participation at the grassroots level, participation that reminds us to govern ourselves instead of relinquishing power to politicians.

Thus, its not just that I think McCain and Palin aren't fit to lead, but moreover, I'm voting for Obama because his message of popular participation poses the greatest chance to mobilize the masses into government participation. This grassroots, mass participation is probably our best hope for real, lasting change.

Tim Kubal, Fresno

###

If Obama loses this election it will be because he did not pick Hillary Clinton as his running mate. It will be one of the biggest blunders as History goes by the Democratic Party.

I have always admired Hillary as does most of the World Leaders. She has withstood attack, after attack against her Husband President Clinton. The Republican Party tried everything to bring this man down. But, he was a Rock and stood fast. His wife Hillary was the backstop when Clinton was the Target of hate.

Even Republicans have to have balls and vote for Obama. The Country must come first. They know John McCain will be more of the same. The War has to end. We need to bring back our Men and the Money that this Country needs.

Power to the people, was the cry in the Sixties. When the Seventies came on the power was back to the people. Now a CEO gets almost a billion when he leaves his job. How sick. We need to vote out the Republicans. No if's, no But's, the time has come.

George Madrid, Orosi, Ca

###

In good conscience I cannot vote for either McCain or Obama with their perpetual war on terror, their ardent bail out of Wall Street and corporations, and the shameless burdening of the American poor.

We no longer have a Democratic party in Congress, only lobbyists for the corporate world; fleecing the Treasury and ready to ram repressive laws down their constituents' throat.

Polsen says he took six months to write the six-page plan of his bailout program yet the announcement of the collapse was only announced several weeks ago. Likewise, the Military Act putting an active military unit in our streets to "put down any unrest and civil disturbance" was actually passed several weeks ago, BEFORE the announcement of the collapse. Coincidence?

Faced with these developments, I see America as the most successively repressive country in the world. The evidence is that even its people are not aware they are being repressed, and the Military Act just passed, will ensure that it stays this way.

Evil is evil and for me, unless the candidates produce something substantial, I will vote for a third party. The deciding question is, "Where does our loyalty lie? With God, humankind or party?"

Jovita Harrah, Visalia, Ca

###

I believe Obama has the vision and judgment to be president. It's been a long time since the democrats have offered us anyone with the intelligence and eloquence of Obama. You can sense his strength. Voters seem inspired like the old days of Bobby Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy. Young voters have caught fire and those of us who remember (and voted) the 60s feel like we have a choice again. Democracy should be like that. It should test our capacity to be involved and galvanize our sense of purpose as citizens.

Obama isn't as good on policy as, say, Dennis Kucinich. We should be out of Iraq immediately and health care should be truly universal. Dennis was also a powerful advocate for social justice and I think earned the respect of many in his campaign. But, amid this political (and internal) climate of fear and ignorance, I trust Obama's basic instincts, especially because of his background as a community organizer and as a person who came up the hard way, trudging through law school and the streets of Chicago, which he chose over comfortable corporate work. I think that speaks reams about his character. And I'm impressed by his wife, who is as down-to-earth as anyone. To finally have someone in office who believes in education and the value of reason will raise the consciousness of all Americans. This is the only "trickle down" effect that works. Inspiration and vision, moving away from fear and changing our values.

Although I have great respect for Nadar who is an American hero of sorts, it is too risky to vote for him. Fragmentation of the progressive vote might make a statement, but it would leave the Republicans in power. I don't want to deal with a packed Supreme Court that would overturn Roe v. Wade.

If in fact victory is within our grasp, this will be the first time in 40 years that I've ever voted for a president and had him win. Think of that! I feel at this late date the electorate owes me a win. I have a question for John McCain: If it's true that the surge has worked, then how is it a timetable would be bringing our troops home in disgrace?

Stephen D. Malm, Fresno

###

I think the upcoming election is rigged before we get our ballots. This is because third party and independent candidates, who are on enough ballots to win the Presidency, are not allowed in national debates. Candidate information is the missing part of election infrastructure. If each



# Join the growing list of Supporters of Douglas Treisman for Superior Court Judge



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# Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

cvppac.org PO Box 5845, Fresno, CA 93755 559-435-7360

## The Valley's Voice for Progressives

The results of the November 4<sup>th</sup> election will shape the future of our community for years to come. The members of the CVPPAC urge you to help elect the following candidates we have endorsed. Be sure you are registered to vote, volunteer to help these candidates, then vote and get your friends to vote, too. Together, we can change Fresno by supporting our endorsed candidates.

**SUPERIOR COURT:** Doug Treisman ..... [treisman4judge@prodigy.net](mailto:treisman4judge@prodigy.net)

**MAYOR OF FRESNO:** Henry T. Perea ..... [henryt@perea2008.com](mailto:henryt@perea2008.com)

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#2 Larry Moore ..... [larrymoore6@gmail.com](mailto:larrymoore6@gmail.com)  
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#6. Virginia Hermosillo ..... [ve4hj@yahoo.com](mailto:ve4hj@yahoo.com)

MEASURE L: YES

### STATE PROPOSITIONS:

YES on 1A, 2, 5, 12 NO on 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 NEUTRAL 3, 9

### Things you can do to help elect these outstanding candidates:

- be sure you and your friends are currently registered to vote.
- contact the candidates & volunteer to help by walking precincts, donating money, making telephone calls, hosting a coffee, putting up a yard sign, e-mail your friends to support these candidates.
- vote by absent ballot or on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Remember—your vote will make a difference for our future!

Next Meeting: Sat., Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> 3:30-5 pm 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno  
"What Do the Election Results Mean: Where Do We Go from Here?"

# HOWARD'S HOPEFULS

Here are my voting recommendations for the local races in the November 4, 2008 general election. Most are clear choices, some are close calls. I hope you find this list helpful. However you choose to vote, PLEASE VOTE! Thank you.

Howard K. Watkins

## FEDERAL

**President/VP** OBAMA/BIDEN  
**US Rep. #18** CARDOZA  
**US Rep. #19** Write-In - PETER LEINAU  
**US Rep. #20** COSTA  
**US Rep. #21** JOHNSON

## STATE

**St. Assembly #29** AVILA  
**St. Assembly #30** FLOREZ  
**St. Assembly #31** ARAMBULA

## LOCAL

**Superior Ct. #10** TREISMAN  
**Proposition L** YES  
**SCCCD #2** SMITH  
**SCCCD #5** FORHAN  
**Mayor** PEREA  
**FUSD #2** MOORE  
**FUSD #5** MILLS  
**FUSD #6** RYAN

## STATE PROPS.

1A Yes  
2 Yes  
3 Yes  
4 No  
5 No  
6 No  
7 No  
8 No  
9 No  
10 No  
11 Yes  
12 Yes

# VOTE NO

**PROP 4** would put teens at risk by restricting their access to reproductive health services. It would also create permanent barriers to counseling and care for pregnant teens.

**PROP 6** would deepen the budget crisis by diverting billions of dollars needed for schools, hospitals, and violence prevention programs into misguided efforts to incarcerate more and more people, including youth.

**PROP 8** would amend California's Constitution to exclude a single group of people—gays and lesbians—from the right to marry the person they love.

**PROP 9** would erode the due process protections that currently exist in the criminal justice system, giving broad rights to compensation to anyone who claims to be a victim, without any standards and without proof they were harmed. The measure also would increase spending on prison and jail construction.

# VOTE YES

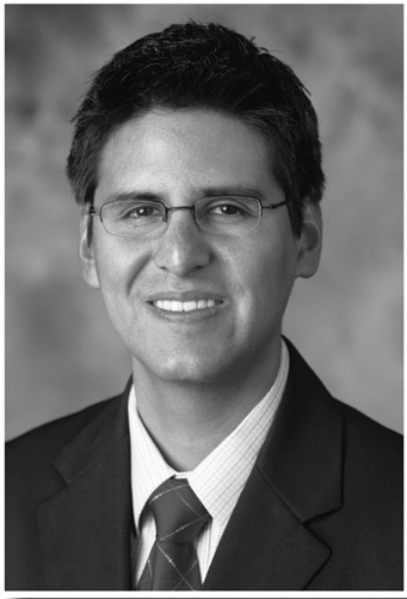
**PROP 5** would provide drug treatment as an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders, offer common sense solutions to prison overcrowding, and save taxpayers billions of dollars.



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[www.aclunc.org](http://www.aclunc.org)





# Henry T. Perea: Ready to Tackle Fresno's Tough Problems

***Our next mayor will need real solutions for the serious problems our city is facing. Poverty, crime prevention, clean air and our public schools are all serious concerns for residents of Fresno. Henry T. Perea is a leader—ready to solve these tough problems with real solutions.***

Jobs and job training are of vital importance to end poverty in our community. They are the key to keeping our young people away from crime, gangs and drugs—and in school. As mayor, Henry will enhance our partnership with the Workforce Investment Board to meet the employment needs of our community by providing greater access to job training and placement.

Henry has a plan to create a partnership with the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission to engage disadvantaged youth and teach them new skills while improving the community. He will also establish a "New Industry" corps to focus on green technology, including solar; health care; and other high-growth business sectors. This will provide practical skills in these emerging areas and provide hope for a better life to many of our young people, in addition to providing solutions to our air quality crisis.

Henry will turn this crisis into a moment of innovation, job creation and entrepreneurship. As mayor, he will do this by expanding our use of green and renewable energies and alternative fuels, enhancing green building codes and investing more in public transit.

Henry also has a plan to make Fresno a leader in the arts while revitalizing downtown. As mayor, he will partner with banks and credit unions to provide 100% financing to artists who locate to and revitalize older buildings; bring in real estate and property management leaders to develop a plan to turn older buildings



into affordable art studio, rehearsal, performance and gallery space; aggressively build mixed-use lofts and live-work spaces; and partner to build an Arts Incubator to give artists the business skills needed to be competitive. He will also bring the arts to our public schools through grant funding, the expansion of after-school programs, and collaboration between schools, arts institutions and artists.

Henry has a plan to tackle Fresno's tough problems and that's why he's earned the endorsements of:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Sen. Barbara Boxer  | Steve Westly, Former State Controller                 |
| Lt. Gov. John Garamendi   | Building and Construction Trades Council              |
| State Sen. Dean Florez  | California Nurses Association                         |
| City Council President Cynthia Sterling                                     | Central Labor Council                                 |
| Alegria De La Cruz  | Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee |
| Coke Hallowell  | Fresno Teachers Association                           |
| Patience Milrod   | SEIU  |
| Sarah Reyes, Former State Assemblymember                                    | Sierra Club   |
| Mary Stanley, Past President,<br>National Women's Political Caucus - Fresno |   |



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# Taking politics seriously: Looking beyond the election and beyond elections

by Robert Jensen

I vote. Some of my best friends are voters. I have nothing against voting, and I plan on voting in the upcoming election.

But we shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that the most important political moment in our lives comes in the voting booth. Instead, we should take politics seriously, which means asking considerably more of ourselves than the typical fixation with electoral politics.

First, I won't be coy about this election. I voted for Obama in the Texas primary and will vote for him in November. I am a leftist who is consistently disgusted by the center-right political positions of the leadership of the Democratic Party and I have no illusions that Obama is secretly more progressive than his statements in public and choice of advisers would indicate. But I think that there is slightly more than a dime's worth of policy differences between Democrat and Republican, Obama and McCain, and that those differences that are important in this election. The reckless quality of the McCain campaign and its policy proposals are scary, as is the valorizing of ignorance in the cult around Palin.

More importantly, we can't ignore that in this white-supremacist nation we have a chance to vote for a person of African descent. Four decades after the end of formal apartheid in the United States, in the context of ongoing overt and covert racism that is normalized in many sectors of society, there's a possibility that a black person might be elected president. Even though Obama doesn't root himself in the truly radical anti-apartheid struggles of recent U.S. history, the symbolic value of his election is not a trivial consideration. This isn't tokenism, but a sign of real progress.

But even though I make that argument, I will vote knowing that the outcome of the election is not all that important, for a simple reason: The multiple crises we face in this country, and the world, cannot be adequately addressed within the conventional political, economic, or social systems. Indeed, no candidate is even acknowledging the crises. The conventional political wisdom — Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative — is deeply rooted in the denial of the severity of these crises and hostility to acknowledging the need for radical change. Such a politics of delusion won't generate solutions but instead will lead us to the end of the road, the edge of the cliff, the brick wall — pick your preferred metaphor, but when the chickens of denial come home to roost, it's never pretty.

These crises are not difficult to identify; the evidence is all around us.

**Economics:** We aren't facing a temporary problem caused by this particular burst bubble but instead are seeing one phase of the permanent decline of a system that has never met the human needs of most people and never will. One need not be a Trotskyite to recognize the urgent need to start imagining and building an economics that is based on production and distribution for human needs rather than organic consumption that generates obscene profits. We can't know whether McCain or Obama recognizes these things, but it's clear that both candidates — along with their parties and the interests they represent — are not interested in facing these realities.

**Empire:** The way in which First-World nations have pursued global empires over the past 500 years to garner for themselves a disproportionate share of the world's wealth has never been morally justifiable. The recent phase of U.S. domination in that project is particularly offensive, given cynical U.S. rhetoric about democracy. But whatever one's evaluation of the U.S. attempt to run the world through violence and coercion, the project is falling apart. The invasions and occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq are not just moral failures but pragmatic disasters. While McCain and Obama have different strategies for dealing with the disaster, neither is willing to face the depravity of the imperial endeavor and neither argues for abandoning the project.

**Ecology:** It's no longer helpful to speak about "environmental problems," as if we have a series of discrete issues to deal with. We are facing the overall



collapse of the ecosystem's ability to sustain human life as we know it. Every indicator of the health of the ecosystem is terrifying — inadequate and dwindling supplies of clean water, continuing topsoil loss, toxic waste build-up, species loss and reduced biodiversity, and climate change. Unless one adopts an irrational technological fundamentalism that assumes new gadgets will magically rescue us, this means we have to downsize and scale back our lives dramatically, learning to live with less. Conventional politicians continue to promise to deliver a lifestyle that constitutes a form of collective planetary suicide.

So, we live in a predatory corporate capitalist economy in a world structured by the profound injustice produced by an imperial system that is steadily drawing down the ecological capital of the planet. The domination/subordination dynamic at the heart of this world is rooted in the ideologies of male domination and white domination. This belief in inevitability of hierarchy grows out of thousands of years of patriarchy, reinforced by hundreds of years of white supremacy. Any meaningful progressive politics also must address not just the worst behaviors that come out of these systems — the overt sexism and racism that continues to plague society — but also the underlying worldview that normalizes inequality. Obama is black, and McCain selected a female running mate, but neither candidate ever speaks of patriarchy and white supremacy.

There are two common responses to the analysis offered here. The first is to condemn it as crazy, which is the response of the majority of Americans at this point. The second, typically from people who don't find such claims crazy and share the basic analysis, is that we have to be realistic and water down our arguments, precisely because most Americans won't take seriously anyone who speaks so radically.

But if being realistic has something to do with facing reality, then arguments for radical change are the most realistic. When a problem is the predictable consequence of existing systems and no solution is plausible within the systems, then arguing for continued capitulation to those systems isn't realistic. It's literally insane.

We live in a country that is, in fact, growing increasingly insane. Fashioning a strategy for political organizing, and shaping the rhetoric to advance that organizing, in such a country is, to say the least, difficult. But it must start with a realistic description of the problems we face, a realistic evaluation of the nature of the systems that gave rise to those problems, and a realistic assessment of the degree of change necessary to imagine solutions.

Taking politics seriously means recognizing the limits of electoral politics. Voting is important but not the most important act in our political lives. Traditional grassroots political organizing to advance progressive policies on issues is more important. And even more crucial today, I believe, is the long-term project of preparing for the dramatically different world that is on the horizon — a world with less energy to deal with the ecological collapse; a world in which existing institutions likely will prove useless in helping us restructure our lives; a world in which we will need to reclaim and develop basic skills for sustaining ourselves and our communities.

These challenges are daunting but also exciting, presenting us with tasks for which the energy and creativity of every one of us will be needed. Can we find a way to talk about that excitement that could encourage others to explore these ideas? Can we de-

velop projects to put those ideas into action? When I have tried to articulate this worldview in plain language in recent political talks, I have found that a growing number of people not only will listen but are hungry for such honesty.

I won't pretend that number is large right now — it's certainly not a majority, and not anywhere near the number needed for a mass movement — but one wouldn't expect that in this affluent society in which many people are still insulated from the worst consequences of these systems. But that's changing. As more and more people, from many sectors of society, face these realities we will see a search for a community in which to confront this together. Our political work should focus on connecting with people on common ground, and then working to shape a radically new vision of justice and sustainability.

So, I'll vote. But I will spend my time before and after Election Day talking realistically, to anyone who will listen, about radical change.

###

Robert Jensen is a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin and board member of the Third Coast Activist Resource Center. His latest book, *All My Bones Shake*, will be published in 2009 by Soft Skull Press. He also is the author of *Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity* (South End Press, 2007); *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege* (City Lights, 2005); *Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity* (City Lights, 2004); and *Writing Dissent: Taking Radical Ideas from the Margins to the Mainstream* (Peter Lang, 2002). Jensen can be reached at [rjensen@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:rjensen@uts.cc.utexas.edu) and his articles can be found online at <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rjensen/index.html>

## Friday, November 7 2 - 3 PM

"Patriotism and Journalism in the Era of Globalization", Alice Peters Auditorium, University Business Center Room 191, California State University, Fresno. Robert Jensen, Professor of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin. Robert Jensen is a peace and justice activist and the author of three books. He writes in mainstream and alternative media on politics, foreign policy, gender and race issues. Contact: Susan Currie Sivek 559-278-4597 [ssivek@csufresno.edu](mailto:ssivek@csufresno.edu) Dan Yaseen 559-251-3361 [danyaseen@comcast.net](mailto:danyaseen@comcast.net)

## Saturday, November 8 10 AM -12 Noon

"Taking Politics Seriously: Looking Beyond the Election and Beyond Elections." The speaker will be Robert Jensen, Professor of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin. Jensen is a peace and justice activist and the author of three books. He writes in mainstream and alternative media on politics, foreign policy, gender and race issues. This event will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave., Clovis. For more information contact: Susan Currie Sivek 559-278-4597 [ssivek@csufresno.edu](mailto:ssivek@csufresno.edu) or Dan Yaseen 559-251-3361 [danyaseen@comcast.net](mailto:danyaseen@comcast.net)

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# Bringing Public Access Television to Fresno

By Mike Rhodes

We are closer than ever to having Public, Education, and Government (PEG) access channels in the Fresno/Clovis area. If you are not clear about what having PEG access channels would mean, see the box on this page.

If you currently have Comcast cable, you can see that we already have two Education channels (ch 96 and 98). Channel 96 also operates as the City of Fresno Government channel where you can see City Council meetings on Tuesday. Channel 95 is the County of Fresno government channel. Channel 97 will probably be where the Public access channel is located.

Perhaps the most significant development, in the last few months, is that the money from the franchise agreement (between the cities of Fresno & Clovis and Comcast) has started to roll in. The first payment to Fresno and Clovis arrived about a couple of months ago. We expect to receive about \$600,000 a year, which will be used to operate the PEG project. Before this money is used for PEG, Fresno and Clovis need to establish a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that will determine what entity will operate PEG. We expect the JPA to designate the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) as the 501 c 3 that will run PEG. For more information about CMAC, go to: [www.cmacfresno.org](http://www.cmacfresno.org)

There will be 3 JPA board members from Fresno and 2 from Clovis. If the JPA designates CMAC as the entity that will oversee PEG (which everyone expects will happen in the next month or two), they (CMAC) will begin to establish a Community Media Center (CMC), purchase needed equipment, hire staff, and get the Public access channel on cable.

CMAC is looking at several locations that will serve as Community Media Centers. All of the sites under consideration will operate through partnerships with existing organizations and serve the community by providing a location where programing can be produced. Right now, while no CMC sites have been finalized, there are three locations that look promising. There is an existing studio at the Kreman Education building at CSUF that could serve as the Public access CMC. One advantage of the Kreman location is that the studio is already built and partnering with CSUF would mean a faster start up time for the Public access channel. Also, there is staff on site that could potentially train community members in the use of the equipment. They are also connected with Comcast through high speed fiber that would allow programing to originate from that location. The negative aspect of the CSUF site is that parking is difficult and it is not centrally located.

The second site that CMAC is looking at is the Dickey Community Center on Divisadero near Blackstone. The Parks and Recreation department runs the facility and has already built a video production facility on the second floor. They have invited CMAC to partner with them to make the facility operational. The advantage at Dickey is that it is centrally located, there is good parking, and Parks and Recreation intends to attract disadvantaged youth to produce community media. The disadvantage to that location is that it is too small to serve as a primary CMC and it doesn't currently have connectivity (through high speed fiber) with Comcast.

The third location being considered is the Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE) building in downtown Fresno (Van Ness and Fresno Street). At this time, however, that facility would only be for Government and Education production.

It is starting to look like there will probably be more than one CMC as PEG gets off the ground in Fresno/Clovis. Probably, within a couple of years though, a central CMC site will be established where everyone will work from. There may still be satellite centers that will benefit particular constituencies and allow PEG to serve people who are geographically distant. But, the concept of one central CMC has a strong appeal, because it will limit duplication of services and allow CMAC to leverage limited resources. Why build and fully supply two or three CMC's with equipment, studios, and staff when you can have one central CMC and portable equipment available at a couple of satellite locations?

One of CMAC's biggest challenges is how to run PEG operations on \$600,000 a year, given the current interpretation of the franchise agreement is that the money can only be used for capital expenses. How do you pay for staff if you can only spend money on capital expenses, like cameras, computers, etc? That challenge is one reason why we have Educational and Government channels currently on cable but are still waiting for a Public access channel. Both E & G have staff that can produce the programs and get them on the air. Without funding to hire staff, the Public access channel is at a serious disadvantage. Fortunately, CMAC is committed to making a Public access channel a part of PEG operations in Fresno/Clovis. This will be accomplished by exploring a variety of approaches including in-kind partnerships with public and educational agencies, production service agreements, user fees, grants, memberships and community-based fundraising activities.

The County of Fresno signed an agreement with Comcast before the new state franchise agreement went into effect. At this time, the County of Fresno is not a part of the Joint Power Authority with the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, but they might join at sometime in the future. It is also possible that other communities like Selma, Reedley, and Fowler will join the JPA.

## What is Public, Education, and Government (PEG) Access Television?

The Public channel will provide programming produced by, nonprofit organizations, community groups and individuals. A program on the public channel could be about tenant rights produced by Central California Legal Services, it could be a cultural presentation of Hmong dancers, or an individual could produce a show about local politics. In short, locally produced, independent, and alternative video will have a home on the cable network.

The Education channels will be used primarily by the schools for education and distance-learning purposes. If you tune in to channel 96 or 98 you will see the beginning of the local education/government channel. Channel 96 & 98 are the forerunners to PEG. In an agreement reached a couple of years ago between Comcast, the schools, and the City of Fresno, it was agreed to set up these channels. Right now, you can see coverage of Fresno Unified School Board meetings, electronic field trips, University of California programming (UCTV), the NASA Channel, the Annenberg channel, and the entire Fresno City Council session each Tuesday. It is expected that more local education and government programming will be on this channel soon.

The Government channels (ch 95 & 96) are broadcasting city council meetings and board of supervisors meetings. Soon, it is expected, they will broadcast planning commission meetings, produce special programming about government affairs, and more. The government channels are the community's window into what is happening in government.

There would be an advantage to these smaller communities to join CMAC so they can provide PEG in their community. The money generated from the franchise fee in Fowler, for example, might not be enough for them to establish a CMC and run PEG. But, joining together with CMAC would make it possible to produce programing and provide PEG services in a small community.

Sources on the CMAC board of directors say they are hopeful that PEG equipment will be purchased in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008 and that a Public access channel will be on cable by the end of the year. If you want to be a part of the effort to bring PEG access to this area, visit the CMAC website at [www.cmacfresno.org](http://www.cmacfresno.org) and become a member and see how you can be more involved.

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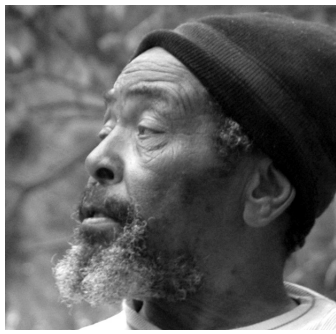
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# Homeless Regulators

By Al Williams

I am Al Williams, and as of the 2nd. of October, 2008, I am homeless no more, thanks to the following individuals who made this possible. They are Mike Rhodes, editor of the Community Alliance; Paul Alexander, (formerly with Heller Erhman LLP); Alan Schlosser & Michael Risher with the ACLU Northern California; Oren Sellstrom with the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights SF; and Elisa Della-Piana (also formerly with the Committee on Civil Rights SF) and two very special people, Eric Trostad, paralegal, formally with Heller Erhman, LLP. and Simone Whalen-Rhodes, now a student at UCSC. Let us not forget Pam Kincaid, our lead plaintiff, and also our eight Named Plaintiff's. It just goes to show you readers that we can be and we are a group of responsible human beings who can get-er-done, if only local government, and their "CHOSEN POVERTY PIMPS", would quit using our federal funds for their personal gain, and profit. We are still sick and tired of being sick and tired of hearing from our local government, and their "POVERTY PIMPS", that we the homeless want to be homeless. Bull, and that's just what it is, a bunch of BULL, YOU KNOW WHAT. This should be simple for every one to understand. I DON'T LIVE IN A DITCH NO MORE. I now live in a very nice two bedroom apartment. One bedroom, I have converted into a office, computer, printer, etc. etc. to regulate, and make certain that local government, and their POVERTY PIMPS, do not use federal funding and private funding for their gain and profit. The party is over.



Since City Hall, City Council, County Board of Supervisors, and service providers, can not account for millions of Federal money given to Fresno, California, we the HOMELESS REGULATORS, will keep a very watchful eye on you, and we encourage private donors to notify us when you donate, especially your donations to service providers, such as the RESCUE MISSION, THE POVERELLO HOUSE, ETC. ETC. Certain service providers are truly, in our opinion, suspect, in miss-handling donations. We challenge all service providers to the books.

So lets get-er-done service providers. Make the donations you have received this year open to the public. I want to know, the public wants to know, now inquiring minds want to know. are you able to stand up to the challenge? And we mean all your records such as your second hand stores, your car lots, etc. etc. We

mean all of your donation records Mr./Mrs. non-profit, service providers. Can you handle that? Don't tell me, show me.

We have several highly committed individuals among us who have come together in an attempt to remove several hundred homeless people off the streets into affordable housing in three years. We intend to get them employed, some self-employed, and those who qualify, help them get SSI We have people who can help them with benefits such as SSI etc. etc. Some homeless people will qualify to go to some type of school, and receive funding. We now have access to grant writers who are willing to help up make this happen. It doesn't take a miracle, just a few good people who have their hearts and morals in the right place. If you have any thing that you can afford to contribute, maybe a office, or a building that can be turned into a second hand store, where some homeless people can repair Items donated and begin to earn some money. Maybe a old pick-up, a lawnmower, a rake or two, a weed eater etc. etc. so some homeless people can start a lawn service. Maybe you have a idea that we can use to help a homeless person. I not saying, by any means that we will end homelessness, ever, I mean Never in our life time. When I do the math, my numbers look like this. There are approximately 10,000 homeless people in Fresno County, which is a average count by most homeless people, homeless advocates, and general, in the know, average population of Fresno County. Homeless people, and homeless advocates in general, agree that there are approximately 16,000 or more homeless people in Fresno County. Fresno County and City dis-agree, at least for now so they say.

On the 7<sup>th</sup>. Of December, 2007, Philip Mangano gave a presentation here in Fresno, California before Mayor Allen Autry, some members of the City Council, some members of the board of supervisors, County, Chief Dyer, and a number of other people. I was there also. His goal was to convince the city to implement a plan to end homelessness in ten years. Fresno agreed to create a plan to end homelessness in ten years. This plan was to be presented before the city council and the county board of supervisors for approval in 100 days. The Mayor, Alan Autry, several city council members, several county board of supervisor members, the chief of police, Jerry Dyer, and several key players in the city,(key players,- people with cash). Calling themselves the Leadership Council, selected 32 people to form the Planning Council. People from all walks of life were selected to be on the Planning Council. Of the 32 Planning Council members, 2 were homeless, Big Sue, and myself, 3 for sure homeless advocates, 3 maybe 4 more council members seem to lean toward homeless advocates. The remainder of the planning council was a stacked deck for you know who. Then came the Ramsey Group to advise the planning council, at a cost to the city, and or county of \$40,000 for 100 days to advise us, the planning council. Personally, I thank the Ramsey

Group are very good people trying to make a living, But, (yes the almighty But bridge), no one on the Ramsey Group has ever been homeless, and they knew very little about homeless people's right not needs, except, that they need a affordable house, and a income of some kind. So I made a successful attempt to educate them. I took them on a real live tour to the ditch, so they could talk with the homeless, stand in their tent door way, mingle with them, etc. etc. We did two tours. First tour was Roeding park, with FOOD NOT BOMBS, and the homeless we feed every Saturday. January will be 14 years feeding the homeless, just come and eat, no conditions. The second tour was the H st. encampment, very good tour for un-educated people to learn the way of the homeless. Then we went to the Poverello House. It was show time at its best. Red carpet and all. Tom Richards, the chair of the planning council, got a real taste of how the Poverello House really is, when we got separated from the group inside the iron gates and fence of the Poverello House. Since we were dressed casual, the Poverello House Disciples assumed that the two of us, Tom Richards, and I, were just homeless people, we got the real treatment that homeless people get. It wasn't pretty. When I told them we were part of the tour, the Red Carpet came back out. Amazing, don't you think. My question is. Why is the City, and County of Fresno handing out thousands and thousands of dollars to people, Czars, and groups who know very little, or near nothing about homeless people, except that they are homeless?

I dis-approve of the ten year plan that the City Council, and the County Board of Supervisors approved. As a homeless person at the time, I insisted that my dis-approval be made a matter of record before both City Council, and Board of Supervisors chambers. Why? The City Council, and the County Board of Supervisors accepted a 10 year plan that says there are only 4,247 homeless people in Fresno, which we all know, including the City Council, and County Board of Supervisors, is wrong. Why did they approve a lie? They accepted and approved a lie because, so they say, H.U.D. would not approve a grant in excess of 4,247 homeless people. I spoke personally with the Supervisor of H.U.D. and when I complained about the numbers, his reply was he knew nothing of the 4,247 number, and that he agreed with the 10,000 or more homeless. There is something wrong with that picture. Fresno's 10 year plan to end homelessness will never work. It's a total joke. Even the Board of Education reports that there are 3,000 homeless children in Fresno Co. It appears that our public officials can't do the math. No wonder our budget sucks.

I would like your input on this homeless issue, your ideas are most welcome, and we are seeking several people who would like to help put together a solution that will work for the homeless, and people in need, and replace the Poverty Pimps for good. I can be reached at any time at (559) 978-6585.

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# Without Housing, Without Rights A Question of Accountability

By Paul Boden

In 1933, when more than a million Americans were homeless, President Roosevelt's New Deal made their economic and social well-being a federal responsibility. In 2008, an estimated 3.5 million Americans will live without housing; homeless children in school number more than 900,000 according to the Department of Education. Ironically, in this election year – which marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New Deal – neither major party nor presidential candidate has acknowledged a federal responsibility. It is time that they do so.

The federal government created the contemporary crisis of mass homelessness by cutting and refusing to restore billions and billions of dollars in funding for affordable housing programs. Since 1982, every federal plan to address homelessness has failed because every plan has been based on the assumption that something was wrong with the people who were finding themselves without housing. Every plan has focused on individuals; FEMA emergency shelter plans, HUD Continuum of Care plans and 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness as spearheaded by the Bush administration's Interagency Council on Homelessness all identify homeless people as "the problem" that needs fixing.

The reemergence of massive homelessness is unrelated to any lack of outreach or case management. The simple fact is that homelessness reappeared because funding for federal affordable housing programs has been cut by \$54 billion a year (in 2004 constant dollars) since 1978. The number of people without housing has increased steadily since then.

As local governments have become more and more hard-pressed to shelter – much less house – this ever-increasing homeless population, many have turned to draconian measures to solve their "homeless problems," and poor people Without Housing are becoming poor people Without Rights.

## From "Quality of Life" to Economic Cleansing

Local efforts often start with innocuous-sounding language about the "quality of life" of the housed and business sectors of the community, or perhaps are billed as an effort to ensure that communities don't become "magnets for the homeless." But over time, more laws and ordinances get passed, and as these are implemented it is only under very stringent "time, place and manner" restrictions that are enforced by private security and local



**The Fresno skyline is seen behind a homeless encampment on H street (just south of Ventura). Why has the City of Fresno refused to provide drinking water to the residents of this encampment? Is the petroleum stored underground, but visible by looking at a hole in the ground, toxic and hazardous to the homeless people living nearby? Why does the city pay \$13,000 a month for 3 portable toilets at this encampment? Why has the city's much touted 10 year plan to end homelessness done nothing to help the homeless at this encampment?**

and state police departments that homeless people are tolerated – if at all.

The most common public space and activity restrictions are those aimed at camping, sitting, lying or trespassing on either public or private land, panhandling, sleeping, blocking the sidewalk, jaywalking and possessing "stolen property" (shopping carts and milk crates) – to name just a few. All have one primary common goal: to remove from local communities people

in a community. In fact, however, enforcement is very much impacted by skin color, disability or appearance.

## Infractions and Due Process Rights

Anti-homeless laws and ordinances and their application have created a loophole that allows for the circumvention of a homeless person's right to due process under law. The process by which homeless people face repeated incarceration generally follows this scenario:



**Jeannell Pitts was homeless and living in the downtown area when this photo was taken. By the time this issue of the Community Alliance newspaper is printed, Jeannell should be off the street, benefitting from the settlement won by the homeless against the City of Fresno. Because of the settlement, many homeless people have received vouchers for housing and are now, no longer homeless.**

A homeless man is sleeping outdoors. A local ordinance makes it illegal to do so. The man gets a ticket for the infraction. Because it's not a jailable offense, he is not entitled to legal representation. Because he doesn't appear in court or simply can't pay the fine, a misdemeanor warrant is issued. When he is cited a second time for a similar violation, the outstanding warrant results in arrest. He spends a couple of days in jail, and when brought before the judge he is sentenced to time served, or his case gets dismissed. Now back on the street, he is just as homeless as he was before, but now he has a criminal record, which denies him access to the services needed to exit homelessness.

Local governments know that these infractions will ultimately lead to unpleasant interactions with police – and incarceration – and therefore feel confident that a strong enough police and private security presence will get homeless people to leave areas where they are not wanted.

whose mere presence they deem objectionable.

This nationwide practice has escaped civil rights protections because, on their face, these programs are not clearly discriminatory. Local laws are often drafted in such a way as to appear to apply equally to all people

## The Real Crime

Just like anti-Okie and Jim Crow laws of the past, local government programs designed to remove "undesirable" people from their communities violate civil and human rights.

**Fact:** Compared to 1978, the U.S. government is now spending nearly 65 percent less on developing and maintaining affordable housing for poor people. (\$83 billion was appropriated in 1978, while only \$29 billion was allocated in 2005.)

**Fact:** The number of "mental health courts" has grown from two in 1997 to more than 100 today. Meanwhile, the top three residential mental health care facilities in the nation are: Los Angeles County Jail, Cook County Jail (Chicago), and Rikers Island (New York City).

2008 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New Deal. FDR used the power of his office to marshal the resources of the federal government to address the housing, health care, educational and economic security needs of poor and homeless people. He lobbied for "decent homes for which there is a distressing need among [those] of our population [who are] ill-housed." **Our current presidential candidates must be urged to do no less.**

###

Paul Boden is executive director of Western Regional Advocacy Project, a coalition of social justice based homelessness organizations throughout the West Coast. He can be reached at [pboden@wraphome.org](mailto:pboden@wraphome.org)



**This City of Fresno clean up crew on Santa Clara street, just west of G on September 26, 2008. Since the lawsuit, the city is supposed to remove and put into storage any homeless person's property they find in a "Clean up." Why then was this doghouse, owned by a homeless person, destroyed in this city "clean up?"**

# Champions of Justice

By Mike Rhodes

On Thursday, October 2 Central California Legal Services (CCLS) held their *Champions of Justice* event. Their annual awards recognize individuals and/or organizations who demonstrate faithful dedication and remarkable achievement in ensuring that all persons have equal and meaningful access to justice. This year's event honored the attorneys, homeless plaintiffs, and the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper who successfully defended homeless peoples rights in this community. The lawsuit against the City of Fresno and Caltrans resulted in a \$2.3 million settlement that is now benefitting Fresno's homeless. The homeless, who were class action members in the lawsuit, have now received money in the settlement and are starting a new life. Many of them have used their money for housing, in some cases pre-paying one year's rent. The courage of the homeless people and their allies to stand up for their rights has been an inspiration not just in Fresno, but throughout this country. The case showed that city's do NOT have the right to take and immediately destroy homeless peoples' property. 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>



**Champions of Justice, from left to right: Mike Rhodes (this newspaper's editor), Paul Alexander (lead attorney), Al Williams (named plaintiff), Joanna Garcia (named plaintiff), Charlene Clay (named plaintiff), Cynthia Greene (named plaintiff), Randy Johnson (named plaintiff), Jeannine Nelson (named plaintiff), Eric Trostad (legal team), Elisa Della-Piana (attorney), and Michael Risher (attorney).**



**Paul Alexander, a partner with the HOWREY LLP law group in the Bay Area, led the work in defending homeless peoples' rights in Fresno. When the case started, Paul was with the HellerEhrman law firm.**



**Above: Eric Trostad started working on the homeless case when he was with HellerEhrman (he is now with HOWREY LLP), Elisa Della-Piana was with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, and Michael Risher is with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Together they worked thousands of hours and stopped the City of Fresno from violating homeless peoples' civil rights.**



**Left: Mike Rhodes, Paul Alexander, and Al Williams stand together as they received this year's Champions of Justice award from Central California Legal Services.**



**Cynthia Greene with her award. Charlene Clay is in the background. All photos for this article by Bob Higgins.**

## The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power

Tariq Ali, novelist, historian, political campaigner, and editor of "New Left Review" spoke at the Islamic Cultural Center in Fresno on September 28, 2008. Ali said that Pakistan is in the throes of a new crisis: daily battles on the Afghan border, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the farcical and grotesque succession ceremony. Tariq Ali sold copies of his latest book at the event. "The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power" was also the title of his talk at this event. You can hear his speech in Fresno by going to: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/10/12/18544200.php>



**There was an overflow crowd at the Islamic Cultural Center to hear Tariq Ali speak.**



**Tariq Ali, speaking at the Islamic Cultural Center in Fresno on September 28, 2008.**



**Tariq Ali signed his new book "The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power" after the event. All photos by Mike Rhodes**

# Carlo Parlanti The Silence is a Barrier that Divides more than Barbed Wire and Hurts more than Torture.

By Valentina Cervelli

[Editor's note: The case of Carlo Parlanti has attracted world-wide attention, particularly in Europe. How interesting that so few of us living in the Central Valley (where he is incarcerated) know nothing about him, his case, or the extraordinary efforts being made to hold a new hearing. Supporters say that new evidence will prove his innocence. The following article, a Community Alliance exclusive, comes to us from Italy.]

He has been locked up for four years in the Avenal State Prison. In Italy, he is the symbol of the innocent unjustly detained. His story is so well known that even a group of European parliamentarians have decided to take part to clear his name and demand his freedom. His name is Carlo Parlanti. He was born in Montecatini Terme, Tuscany, and he has become one the most blatant examples of unjust detention at an international level.

When entering his name in any search engine you will get thousands of sites, blogs and videos telling his sad story. Even in China and Taiwan there are videos dedicated to him. Carlo Parlanti was accused of rape and kidnapping. His arrest took place in July 2004, while he was in Düsseldorf, Germany, waiting to board a flight to Italy, where he was employed.

In the period between 2002 and 2004, the time when he was (allegedly) a fugitive, Carlo Parlanti travelled to work in different countries such as Canada, England, Ireland, and Gibraltar, without anyone notifying him that an international arrest warrant had been issued against him.

Carlo Parlanti remained in German detention for months despite the lack of evidence against him. Germany made a request for evidence to justify detention beyond the mere complaint of his alleged victim and, even though German authorities received only a generic report, they decided to extradite Mr. Parlanti to the United States.

In December 2005 the trial began in Ventura County, which had jurisdiction over the case. Mr. Parlanti's Italian criminal record was counterfeited, stating that he was accused of armed robbery and rape in Italy. But the Italian criminal record that was acquired when Parlanti had already been in custody in Germany for months was spotless.

Despite all of this, Carlo Parlanti was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment. His case became internationally known largely because the trial transcripts, which are posted online, show a total lack of evidence against Parlanti. Many believe that Parlanti's right to a fair trial was violated.

By looking at the online records you will notice the absence of a medical certificate attesting to the violence suffered by the alleged victim (during a medical examination, the doctor couldn't find signs of the alleged violence) and the total contradictions of the accusations with the evidence found at the crime scene. The unreliability of the accuser during the hearings, already sanctioned by the court of another state, also calls into question that the crime took place.

Because of these contradicting stories, dozens of people met in spontaneous committees in order to help Mr. Parlanti. Even some politicians have decided to take part in order to put a spotlight on all the inconsistencies of the trial.



**How many Californian's have ever even heard of Carlo Parlanti? Yet, there are protests in Europe to Free this prisoner being held at the state prison in Avenal, Ca (60 miles southwest of Fresno). Find out why.**

The first to take part and give his political and personal contribution was Umberto Guidoni, well-known astronaut and now Italian Parliamentarian at the European Union. As first petitioner, through a bipartisan appeal to the Italian and European government, he asked to clear Mr. Parlanti's name. Other Italian politicians have helped, among them Marco Zacchera, who personally went to the USA to see the conditions at the Avenal prison, and Gino Bucchino, who has given his personal and economic contribution to help the Parlanti's family. Thanks to these politicians, Parlanti's case has attracted international attention, thus focusing wider public attention on the conditions of Parlanti's detention.

As previously mentioned, Carlo Parlanti is currently held in Avenal State Prison, 60 miles southwest of Fresno.

Avenal is the most populated prison of the state: it was designed for about 3,000 people; it currently houses more than 7,000. The life of Carlo Parlanti is marked by counting and by the typical experiences of each prison: food delivery, mail delivery, the ability to enter and exit the yard, and working within the prison.

Carlo Parlanti is in a protected yard, together with other people accused of sexual offenses. This is to protect him from possible attacks from the general prison population, which often attacks people charged with similar offenses.

Parlanti has suffered both psychologically and physically under detention. He has developed a lung infection of unknown origin that has cut in half his lung capacity. While in prison he also contracted hepatitis C, which has further undermined his health. The prison bunk has exacerbated the bad case of sciatica he suffers because of the crushing of two vertebrae.

Carlo Parlanti, unlike the other detainees, has the chance to see his loved ones only if they manage to find the necessary means to fly half way around the world. The only contact he has with his friends, family, and the people who support him is through phone calls, which are restricted because of his status as a prisoner. Through these few minutes of conversation he can feel the affection of his loved ones, discuss his case, and continue to fight in order to prove his innocence.

What strengthens Carlo each day is the ability to continue to fight for his innocence. In his suffering, he manages to help his companions too: he created the Avenal Voice blog, (<http://avenalvoice.blogspot.com>) where one can find poems and art works of the prisoners of Avenal.

Through this blog a prisoner of the same yard where Parlanti lives was able to get back in touch with his family when his family read an article in which Carlo named this particular inmate.

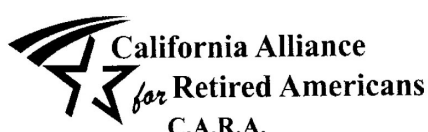
The person who is writing this article is one of the people who read the story of Carlo Parlanti on the Web, read the transcripts and pleadings and documents related to his case, and was struck by the innocence of this man and his strength of mind. A woman, like dozens of other women who have formed a spontaneous committee to assist Parlanti in order to put an end to this miscarriage of justice! There is no need to list the reasons for which we (the above politicians and I) believe that Carlo Parlanti is innocent. We can more easily show the reasons to you.

The published transcripts of proceedings on <http://www.thepeoplevscarloparlanti.com> prove the many inconsistencies that have characterized the stories of the alleged victim through the different hearings. You can see that witnesses, including policemen, have pointed out that the alleged victim, who declared under oath that she had been savagely beaten, showed no evidence on her body; they also pointed out that the home, which should have been a "war camp" according to the victim's statements, seemed perfectly in order and also the bed, described as "a pool of blood," mattress included, appeared clean and that no stain of blood or signs of a brawl have been discovered by criminal scientific investigators. We can also show to you, the readers, Carlo Parlanti's Italian criminal record at <http://www.carloparlanti.it/Public/fedinapenale.jpg> (it is clean and he was never charged with any offense).

You can see with your own eyes at <http://www.carloparlanti.com/leaflets.htm> the pictures of the alleged victim. Those pictures show how they were taken in different time periods; we can also bring to your attention the many inconsistencies of a process in which justice has not won. That's because an innocent man, Carlo Parlanti, continues to have crimes perpetrated against him, denying him the basic human rights that everyone deserves — the right to health and to a fair trial.

###

Valentina Cervelli is an Italian journalist who is interested in human rights. She is the secretary of an Italian Association which advocates for the rights of Italians detained abroad. Her email is [valentina.cervelli@gmail.com](mailto:valentina.cervelli@gmail.com)



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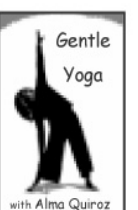
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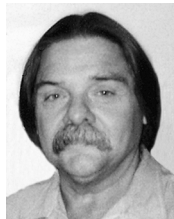




# Don't Pick up the Soap!

By Boston Woodard

The California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 15, Division 3 (rules governing California's prison system) explains in Section 3007 under "Sexual Behavior" that:



"Inmates may not participate in illegal sexual acts. Inmates are specifically excluded in laws, which remove restraints from acts between consenting adults. Inmates must avoid deliberately placing themselves in situations and behaving in a manner, which is designed to encourage illegal sexual acts."

A July 18, 2008, memorandum signed by R.K. Wong (Chief Deputy Warden Solano State Prison) for Warden D.K. Sisto, explains that a "Warden's Forum" will be held on 7/22/08 and 7/24/08. One of the topics to be discussed was "The Sexual Barrier Device Pilot Project" (TSBDPP). What the memorandum did not reveal was that the TSBDPP is a program that will begin handing out condoms to a group of prisoners in Solano State Prison. This gives a whole new meaning to the old aphorism, "Don't pick up the soap!"

OK, let's talk about this for a minute. As you read above, the rules clearly dictate that it is a crime to indulge in any sort of sexual contact with other prisoners. The rule reads, "...avoid... situations... designed to encourage illegal sexual acts."

The California Department of Corrections and Reha-

bilitation (CDCR) will be telling the public that issuing rubbers to prisoners is to help prevent the spread of the HIV and the hepatitis C viruses. There is no doubt these enfeebling viruses are a huge problem behind prison walls; no one disputes that. There are other more virulent activities in prison, in comparison to the occasional occurrence of prisoners having sex, that eclipse the number of those being infected with viruses.

Shooting dope! Why doesn't the CDCR stop this method of spreading deadly infections by passing out clean needles? Drugs are illegal just like sex is behind prison walls. What is the legal difference between passing out needles and passing out condoms? There is no legal difference! Providing a source of protection (condoms) to one activity that spreads a virus and not to another, more predominant cause of infection (like dirty needles) is profoundly equivocal and takes attention away from the real problem. It is well known that as many as a dozen people will use the same needle in prison. New, clean needles would help stop the spread of these deadly infections.

Tattooing is another immense problem in the spreading of infections and diseases in prison. Every other person in prison has a tattoo or ten. Why not set up a controlled program where a prisoner can obtain a tattoo in a germ-free environment, replete with approved and sanitized tattooing equipment? The system will pay for itself as prisoners would be required to purchase the artwork with their own funds. Where is the logic in not promoting this disease prevention program?

Another scenario to consider, and it's not as farfetched as it may sound, is the occurrence of a prisoner being raped: sodomized or forced into oral sex. The offender will now have access to a cover up with the assistance

of the new prisoner condom program, provided by the CDCR and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. The offender can obtain a free condom, perpetrate the crime, and then flush the DNA evidence into oblivion. Then it's one prisoner's word against another. Won't that be interesting in a courtroom trial? Should the prison staff member who issued the condom be an accomplice to the sex crime? How about the warden? Should he or she be implicated vicariously for assisting and providing the means to destroy evidence?

Will it take this type of situation to make prison officials, the federal medical receiver, and the governor understand that a prison condom program is an asinine one? Have they ever heard of prioritizing? Passing out condoms will not ameliorate an effort to slow down or stop the spreading of potentially deadly diseases. There are more negatives than positives to this new condom scheme.

Spending taxpayers' money on a free condom program, promoting and condoning illegal sex among prisoners, is just plain bizarre and way off beat, even for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who wrote for The San Quentin News, The Soledad Star and edited the Communicator.

Boston Woodard, B-88207  
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P.O. Box 4000  
Vacaville, CA. 95696-4000

## New Fresno ACLU Board

By Bill Simon, Fresno Area ACLU, Chair

About forty people attended the Fresno Area Chapter's Annual Membership Meeting on September 15 when we reviewed our activities during the last year, discussed the Propositions in the upcoming election, and held a workshop on prison issues presented by CURB/PMP.

We also elected Board Members for the coming year. On October 7, the new Board met to elect officers. The Board Members for the 2008-2009 year are: Chair: Bill Simon, Vice Chair: Chuck Krugman, Secretary: Teresa Hernandez, Treasurer: Georgia Williams, Field Rep: Heidi Saunier, Alternate Field Rep: Russ Barker. At Large Board Members include: Lloyd Carter, Daljit Dhami, Donna Hardina, Rev Floyd Harris, Jean Hays, Devoya Mayo, Abbas Mehdi MD, Yolanda Moreno, Summer Vue, Jamie Xiong-Vang and Dan Yaseen. Thanks to all of them for volunteering. This is a great Board!

It's also a Board of very busy people. We need area ACLU members to volunteer to help with everything from tabling, to giving workshops, to attending City Council Meetings. We need volunteers for our various committees such as Prison Issues, Video Surveillance Issues, and Tabling at community events.

The Fresno Chapter is dedicated to preserve the civil liberties of citizens in Fresno, Madera, Tulare, and Kings Counties. But we're still having trouble reaching out to those beyond the immediate Fresno area. We particularly need to hear from those who live outside the immediate Fresno area and would like to be involved in the vital work of the ACLU.

For a summary of recent Chapter activities or for more information, contact [simonaclu@sbcglobal.net](mailto:simonaclu@sbcglobal.net)

## Holiday "Goodie Bag" Items Needed

It's that time of year again - time to collect "goodies" for the Christmas Goodie Bags for the 4,400 women in Chowchilla prison. Needed:

Small sample/travel sizes of soap, bath gel, lotion, shampoo, conditioner and tooth paste

Good quality, adult size tooth brushes.

Tea bags, individual packets hot chocolate mix, small, individually wrapped chocolate bars, individual size packets of soup mix (Lipton Soup Secrets), individual "six packs" of cookies/crackers.

Greeting cards: All kinds - Christmas, birthday, get well etc. English & Spanish

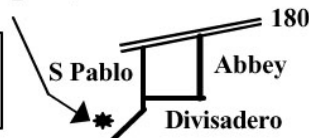
Monetary donations also needed. Make checks to FCNV Prison Ministry, mail or bring donations to Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, 93728 during open hours, M - F 11 AM to 3 PM. All donations must be received no later than Monday, December first. Donations are tax deductible.

Contact Maria Telesco for additional information or to pick up donations: 255-9492 or [maria.telesco@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maria.telesco@sbcglobal.net)

## QUAKERS

FRESNO FRIENDS MEETING  
Silent Worship Sunday 10-11 AM  
2219 San Joaquin, Fresno  
559-237-4102

ALL  
WELCOME



## How to experience God in every moment.

Worship Service, Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.  
Rodeway Inn  
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# Fresno Center for Nonviolence



1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 - www.centerfornonviolence.org - email: info@centerfornonviolence.org

**dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through  
SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY  
WHO WE ARE – WHAT WE DO:**

**WE ARE A CENTER**

- We maintain an inviting facility where people work against violence in all its forms.
- We engage in dialogue amongst ourselves to explore the root causes of, and best antidotes to, violence in the world.
- We have books, videos and periodicals- and also live humans- to introduce the ideas of nonviolence and provide occasion for discussion to the curious.
- We provide resources- meeting spaces, office machines, financial support- to other groups whose work is compatible with ours.

**WE ARE ADVOCATES**

- We speak and act in the public arena to promote the way of peace and love, to oppose the way of violence and hate.
- Our members are visible in the community as writers and radio journalist, as guest speakers, as street demonstrators.
- We create projects in which we act to inculcate the values of thoughtfulness, respect, reconciliation, fierce but nonviolent defense of human rights, the pursuit of justice.
- We bring special speakers and educational programs to Fresno with express intent of propagating the way of peace.
- We act in coalition to support programs, projects and movement initiated by others that speak to the major issue of violence reduction.

**WE ARE COMMUNITY BUILDERS**

- We bring people from different backgrounds together, to learn from each other, to argue respectfully, to find common cause.
- We assist community members in finding their public voice and power.
- We act as incubator providing on one hand financial and logistical support, and on the other encouragement and legitimacy, to individuals and new groups just setting out to address issue of injustice and violence.

This document has been written by those friendly, Board members, folks of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. If anyone is interested in knowing more or becoming part of this organization please call, M-F from 11 AM to 3PM, (559)237-3223. That's (559) 23-PEACE.

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence would like to thank all those who donated and bought books at our annual Book Sale. Hope to see you at the CRAFT FAIRE.

**The FCNV is a  
Host Organization**  
too 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
- Community Alliance
- Project: Male
- CVPPAC
- Peace Fresno
- WILPF
- CCCIC
- CVAAS



*Women's International League of  
Peace & Freedom*

*COMMUNITY PEACE & CRAFT FAIRE*

*SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>  
starting at 10 am until 4pm.*

*Look for us at our table,  
The Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
we will make available  
FAIR TRADE & ORGANIC  
coffee, chocolate, cocoa  
and more.*



**Stir It Up!** at 3-3:30pm  
November 12th  
**KFCF 88.1 FM**

Michael Black Bull will drool over globe trotting Fran Saunders, Richard Stone and Angela Price about their trip to China. Call-ins are encouraged at (559) 266-8888.



**Second Wednesday  
Video Series:**  
*TAXI*  
*to the Dark Side.*  
**November 12, 2008**

Taxi to the Dark Side is a horrifying documentary about an Afghani cabbie, Dilawar, who was detained in Afghanistan in 2002 and died in American custody at the prison in Bagram a few months later. Though Dilawar was never charged with any crime — and was never shown to have any connection with Al Qaeda or the Taliban — he was subjected to horrifically harsh treatment: deprived of sleep; suspended from a grated ceiling by his wrists; kicked and kneed in the legs until he could no longer stand. Taxi raises disturbing questions about interrogation techniques and U.S. wartime policies. There is an evident temptation, among many journalists as well as politicians seeking to replace Mr. Bush, to close the book and move ahead, an impulse that makes the existence of documentaries like Alex Gibney's "Taxi to the Dark Side" all the more vital. If recent American history is ever going to be discussed with the necessary clarity and ethical rigor, this film will be essential. The film includes remarkably frank interviews with American servicemen, some of whom faced courts-martial in connection with Dilawar's death; with a fellow prisoner at Bagram; and with Carlotta Gall and Tim Golden, who reported on Dilawar's story for The New York Times.— A. O. Scott, The New York Times

**Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
1584 N. VAN NESS  
(south of McKinley)  
FREE  
Noon & 7:00 p.m. – FCNV  
potluck at 6:30 p.m.**



## 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

### Big WILPF Community Peace and Crafts Fair coming up Saturday, December 6, 10a.m. - 4p.m.

It is our biggest effort of the year, our only fund raiser, and takes the total effort of all our members plus much more. This year Earlene Fiori and Nora DeWitt are handling vendors and set up. Please call them if you need vendor contracts, have any questions, and most important, if you can help with set-up and take-down, Earlene Fiori @ 264-0968 and Nora DeWitt @ 225-1894. Linda Dryden has once again agreed to be in charge of the wonderful music and Julie Young is in charge of our food service. Everything else is up for grabs. Volunteers needed to organize raffle, silent auction, white elephant, children's corner, and WILPF table.

There is a need for donations of food items to sell at the WILPF table such as plants, jams, baked goods, garden produce, soup, bread, desert, hand made items, etc. There is also a need for strong and energetic people to help with set up, take down and help in the kitchen.

Call Joan @ 227-6134, Ellie @ 229-9807, Lynn Graham @ 495-0264, and Ann Carruthers @ 229-3255 if you can help out with any of these jobs or if you can be on our Fair Committee.

Ellie Bluestein

**WILPF Northern California Branches Fall Cluster Meeting,** November 15, 2008, Saint James Church, Corner of Franklin Avenue and High Street, Monterey, Ca. Cost is \$15.00, which covers food and venue.

#### Proposed Agenda:

9am - 10am: Continental Breakfast  
10am - 12PM: Branch Report Highlights  
12PM: Lunch provided by Monterey Branch  
1PM: National Treasurer's and YWILPF Reports  
3PM: Good of the Union: Where do we go from here? What do we need from National? International?

Contact Jean if you would like to attend or have any questions @ (559) 439-0280. If you plan on staying overnight contact Nancy McClintock @ nmclintock@igc.org.



**The Raging Grannies performed at the Intermountain Nursery for the Harvest Peace Festival and received a great response from attendees.**

Please note: Overnight accommodations are available both Friday and Saturday nights.

#### November Cineculture lineup:

**Nov. 7:** Testify: Stephen Gamboa & Michael Becker. 2005. 52 min. Rated PG. Through documentary footage and interviews with activist and academics, this film explores the actions of radical environmentalists and the ideas behind them.

**Jesse Morrow Mountain:** Documents the proposal to mine Jesse Morrow Mountain (located near Visalia) and the reaction of ranchers, business owners, homeowners, and the Native Americans who consider the mountain sacred.

Post screening discussants: Dr. Michael Becker, Dr. Mark Somma and Dr. Jana Leiran

**Nov. 12:** I Served the King of England/Fresno Filmworks. for further information: <http://www.fresnofilmworks.org/>

**Nov. 21** (Luna Fest 7-9 @ Satellite Student Union).



**Fresno State MSW Interns Jamie Blair and Christina Bachicha were present at a WILPF table.**

## CREDO—profiles of Fresno's progressive elders

By Richard Stone

After 90 minutes in conversation with Venancio Gaona, the descriptive phrase that comes to mind is "a gentleman". Not that he comes from the gentry—quite the opposite is true. But despite financial insecurity and a disrupted family, Venancio was raised to the gentlemanly values of humility, dedication, courtesy and family loyalty. Bred to excellence and service, he has—for the most part unobtrusively—been a major contributor to the civic life of Fresno, in the manner of true nobility.

Venancio attributes much of his character to the influence of family, and in particular his paternal grandfather, whose challenge remains the heart of Venancio's credo: "Haz tu vida con calma, paciencia, entusiasmo, y sobre toda disciplina. Haz las cosas con ganas" ["Make your way in life calmly, patiently, joyfully and above all with discipline. Whatever you do, do it with gusto."]

Venancio goes on to say that his grandfather's stock response to complaints that something was too hard or too time-consuming was, "When you die, you can rest." And, he adds, "to this day I rarely sleep more than four hours a night." Venancio's native abilities were tested early by frequent moves (he was raised by his father, but in several different family households) including a 2 1/2 year stay in Mexico that left him well behind grade-level in his studies. But those early hard experiences led also to understandings that have endured and guided his life: Family is your refuge, but self-reliance is your necessity. The world is full of inequity and it is a responsibility to oppose it; adherence to the faith of the Church and respect for others are essential.

Given this early tutoring, it was not surprising that, upon returning to the States, Venancio was able to leap forward

with his studies and gain the notice of a doctor who took care of him during an illness. "This man, Dr. Carr, sponsored me through several years at a private parochial school until by my junior year, I could work enough to pay my own way."

In college, he was guided by counselors to prepare for a teaching career...which he in fact pursued first as a high school instructor, then as a professor at Fresno City College. While a student at Fresno State, he encountered several teachers who encouraged and aided his studies. Two of these he singles out as "joyas"—jewels—not only for himself but for many others, especially Hispanic students. One was Dr. Jose Canales, a history professor. "He made history applicable to our lives, especially in teaching us to view Latin American countries as a rich heritage for us to take pride in. He also allowed me to take tests in Spanish until I gained confidence in my English." The other was Dr. Jose Elgorriaga, who shepherded Venancio through a Masters program and was the model of a mentor that Venancio strove to replicate in his own professional life.

Venancio's involvement in community affairs was gradual and circumstantial. "I never saw myself as a leader or organizer; but when I became aware of injustices in my surroundings, I'd seek out others opposing them or building alternatives. And I guess because I had ideas and wasn't afraid to speak out, I'd often be asked to be a spokesperson or mediator."

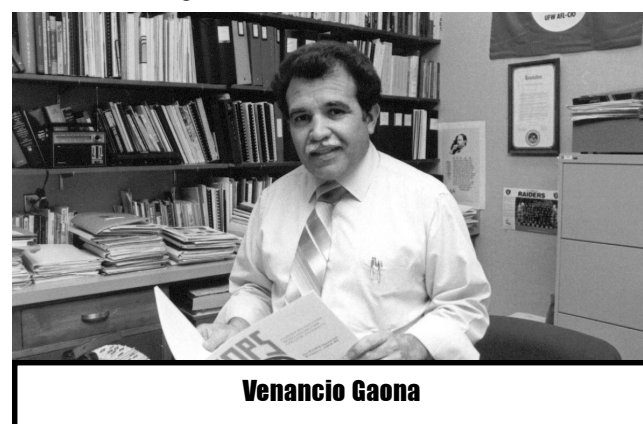
Much of Venancio's work as a change agent has been directed at educational opportunities for Latino youth. He and his associates worked for bi-lingual education, for services and support programs for children of migrant workers, for the establishment of Chicano/Latino studies programs, for scholarships specifically for Hispanic college students. Groups he has helped found or been strongly identified with (e.g. El Concilio de Fresno, and Concerned Citizens for Representative Government) have effectuated changes in hiring and promotion at Fresno Unified, the police and fire departments, City Hall and the County. "We were able to support successful Hispanic candidates, often for the first time, for several positions. For instance we backed the first Latino

school resource officer, the first Latino motorcycle policeman, the first Latino firemen. We had to overcome all kinds of artificial barriers and prejudices...and even to coach candidates how to interview effectively. At the time these things happened, they were real break-throughs."

Today Venancio still serves on several committees directed at civic improvement and the resolution of community problems e.g. Latino Educational Issues Roundtable, Cesar E. Chavez Adult School Advisory Committee, Fresno County Library Building Committee, Fresno County Latino Rotary, Fresno County Democratic Central Committee.

I think it would be fair to say that Venancio has successfully met his grandfather's challenge, and adhered to his principles with admirable consistency and persistence. But when I chided him that perhaps acting with gentlemanly restraint may not always be all that's needed, he replied, "Yes, that's something I've learned. When people continue to treat you with disdain and disrespect, another response is called for. I am not predisposed that way, but we must act knowledgeably according to where we are and who we're dealing with."

This is an answer worthy of one whose taste in music ranges from Beethoven and Mozart ("their music brings peace of mind") to 50's doo-wop; and whose favorite books include Don Quixote, Plato's Republic, and the works of Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz. It is an answer indicative of one who lives "con ganas."



**Venancio Gaona**

# Servitude, H.E.A.T., & Eminent Domain in Southwest Fresno

By Brunette Harris and Diane Smith

The H.E.A.T. for Southwest Fresno Community has been active since 2004 questioning the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money designated for Southwest Fresno by the City of Fresno. The H.E.A.T. for Southwest Fresno primary goals are to educate the community about the City's master plan, the 2025 plan, planned mergers, the misuse of CDBG funds and ultimately stop the flow of CDBG funds to the City of Fresno until it complies with the Federal Guidelines.

In the City's master plan, Southwest Fresno community has been designated as "BLIGHTED". This has been done in order for the City of Fresno to acquire CDBG funds designated for Southwest Fresno, but is ultimately used by the City in other areas of Fresno. The City of Fresno has siphoned off CDBG funds designated for Southwest Fresno for years by recapturing money designated for projects in Southwest Fresno that failed to materialize.

The Federal guidelines require: 1) that a community meeting must be held in regards to what projects are to be funded with CDBG funds and community input **must** be considered in the decision making, and 2) there **must** be a community group separate and apart from the City of Fresno involved in the decision making in regards to CDBG funds.

The CDBG funds are federal dollars given to a community that is in need of funds for home improvements, youth centers, educational assistance and to assist in bringing new businesses to the area. This has **not happened** and is **not currently** happening in Southwest Fresno, as evidenced by the City's master plan, although

CDBG funds have been received for this purpose.

Southwest Fresno is slowly being torn apart by a city that has no concerns, nor regards, for the elderly, people of color, or homeless of this community. The City of Fresno has not recognized Southwest Fresno as a part

field. It seems that the City of Fresno is catering to individuals moving to the Fresno area from northern and southern California and are placing their concerns before the concerns of the long time residents of Fresno.

The H.E.A.T. for Southwest Fresno Community has taken on the challenge of educating, not only members of Southwest Fresno, but Fresno as a whole, of the plans the City of Fresno has for changing our city. The H.E.A.T. for Southwest Fresno Community has put the City of Fresno, as well as our local, state and federal representatives, on notice that we will continue to question the use of CDBG funds by the City of Fresno and call for the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to account for the money that has and is currently being allocated to Fresno for the 'most needy in the community'. In order to stop the City's plans, the flow of CDBG funds from HUD must be stopped until the City of Fresno complies with the federal guidelines requiring community input and representation in the decision of how and

where CDBG funds are to be spent. The H.E.A.T. for Southwest Fresno Community can be reached by mail @ 2339 Kern St, #352, Fresno, CA 93721 or email :HEATSWFC@aol.com.

###

Brunette Harris and Diane Smith are both long time residents of SW Fresno and members of The H.E.A.T. for SW Fresno Community. They can be contacted by mail at 2339 Kern St., #352, Fresno, CA 93721 or by email at HEATSWFC@aol.com.



Brunette Harris spoke out at this meeting (July 2008) in the Frank Ball Community Center in West Fresno about how Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money is being misused.

of the city of Fresno for many years. Our area, Southwest Fresno community is viewed as a "servitude community". "SERVITUDE" meaning that we are not capable of making our own decisions in regards to our community.

The City's master plan calls for the use of eminent domain to recapture Southwest Fresno for its planned use. We have 'no representation at the city, state or federal level'. What is planned for Southwest Fresno is only the beginning of the City's plan to make Fresno a metropolitan city that will be merged with Stockton and all the communities up to and including Bakers-

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I'm sticking with the union**

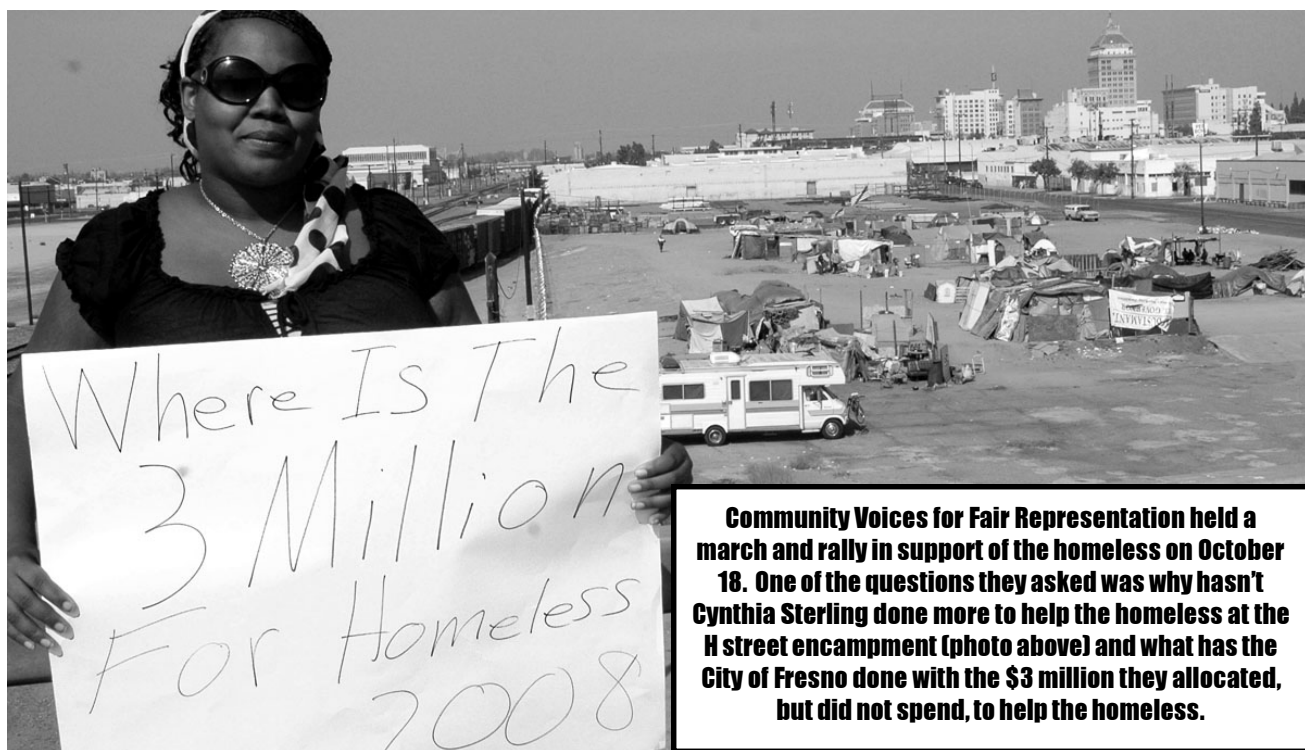
**Saturday,  
Nov. 15, 2008**

At the Fresno Metropolitan Museum  
1555 Van Ness Ave.  
Special screening time: 10 p.m.

Presented by  
**FRESNO FILMWORKS**  
Fresno's Alternative Film Source

**BEAUTIFUL LOSERS**

Details: FresnoFilmworks.org or FresnoMet.org  
This special FREE screening will honor the grand reopening of the Fresno Metropolitan Museum. The film, which will screen on the fourth floor, will be shown as part of The Met's 55 straight hours of grand reopening activities on Nov. 14-16.



**Community Voices for Fair Representation held a march and rally in support of the homeless on October 18. One of the questions they asked was why hasn't Cynthia Sterling done more to help the homeless at the H street encampment (photo above) and what has the City of Fresno done with the \$3 million they allocated, but did not spend, to help the homeless.**

## Cynthia Sterling Time is up! Re-Call On!

By Rev. Floyd Harris

The time has come to tell it like it is. Community for Fair Representation is a group of residents who live in Fresno, California. This diverse group has taken the responsibility to take control of their community by recalling Ms. Sterling from office. On 9-23-08 on the steps of Fresno City Hall, the Community for Fair Representation called a press conference to expose the interference of the Fresno City Clerk's office. The Fresno City Attorney office demanded all the recall documents from the Fresno county election office. This was the first time in history that the city of Fresno has ever taken the lead in a recall process. This interference is unprecedented in the election process and has caused much delay. The delay has caused a waste of taxpayer money and frustration on the part of the community. The city of Fresno doesn't have the experience to handle a recall process; this is not their day-to-day job task. The Fresno County Election office has the experience, manpower, and doesn't have a special interest in sabotaging the recall process. Through this experience we see why poor people don't feel part of the political process, by having to go through all these changes. Mrs. Robison a retired schoolteacher who is the spokesperson for the group feels that the city of Fresno has a special interest in protecting Fresno City Councilwoman Cynthia Sterling. Mrs. Robison states this is like the fox watching the hen house. The group feels that this interference is a case of the politically well-connected attempting to deny the common man and woman their right to recall Ms. Sterling. It's very clear

that the people living in District #3 are suffering in pain and dying. Mr. Cecil C. Hinton, who was the Executive Director of the B street community center, worked side by side with Mr. Feltus Sterling. They both had a vision to bring hope and opportunity to those who were under-privileged. Ms. Sterling, it's time to account for your actions. You were the author of the illegal take-over of the Cecil C. Hinton Community Center causing our senior citizens and children to lose their community center. Ms. Cynthia Sterling has been the biggest disappointment, and we are ashamed to have such a black woman in the highest political position in the San Joaquin valley. Cynthia Sterling's parents were pioneers & business owners who stood for civil rights, unlike Cynthia Sterling who failed to keep the legacy of her mother and father, which was to bring hope and opportunity to underprivileged people.

The community has cried out time in and time out. The Fresno Police Department and other law agencies raided the Fresno homeless community by throwing away their personal belongings. The community leaders contacted Cynthia Sterling pleading with her to tell the Fresno Police Department to stop abusing the homeless only to find out her office was in support of these illegal raids. For two plus years Fresno City Councilwoman Cynthia Sterling sat idly by just going along with Mayor Alan Autry and the Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer and other law agencies. Under Councilwoman Cynthia Sterling administration a class action lawsuit was filed and \$2.3 million was awarded to the homeless community for the Constitution and human rights violations.

P.S. The Recall paper has been 100% approved. [www.westfresno.org](http://www.westfresno.org)

## POETRY CORNER

Edited by Richard Stone

We are happy to publish another piece by a dedicated "inside" poet, Bernard Henderson, of Pleasant Valley State Prison. Bernard would welcome responses. His address is: Bernard Henderson J80874, FC3-111L, PVSP, P.O. Box 8503, Coalinga, CA 93210

### WISHING

I wished long ago to be playing in a Norman Rockwell cover-scene, nostalgic even than as inside the magazine chronicled a war in progress.

I wished the cost of civil rights hadn't been so high for that little girl who dared to learn, who opened locked doors of a defiant School Board in the face of bulldogs and hating eyes.

I wished mama didn't cry and drop a pot of hot soup on her foot that fateful Friday in 1963, her wishful hope entombed in a one-word tragedy, "Dallas".

I wished a dreamer didn't visit Memphis, the one whose ideas engendered spiritual light, illuminating every face they shone upon with hope and purpose.

I wished people I never knew weren't burned by napalm, devoured by war's insatiable hunger, disfigured by gaping wounds of sorrow and sacrifice, tallied in the dirt of an unwon war.

I wished the deserts of the Middle East weren't used to extract oil and deposit blood, and that prisons weren't needlessly full; I wished that every mouth had food and every face could smile.

I wished we'd all have one common dream, the same that patriots of old dreamed, a dream which liberates people and opens the heart of a country to generosity.

But then...

It's wishing.

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# PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Friday, October 31 12 Midnight

Fresno Filmworks presents a special Halloween screening of "Shaun of the Dead" at the Tower Theatre. The horror-comedy tells the story of Shaun, a hapless appliance store clerk in London who tries to evade a zombie strike by holing up in his neighborhood pub. The screening follows a haunted house event at the theater. Tickets cost \$5 general and \$3 with haunted house stub, and can be purchased by check or cash only at the Tower Theatre box office, 815 E. Olive Ave. Visit [www.FresnoFilmworks.org](http://www.FresnoFilmworks.org) for details.

## Sunday, November 2 2 PM

The Fresno Folklore Society presents Traditional Nordic Music by the Swedish musicians Erik Ask-Upmark and Anna Rynefors - known as Dram. This event will be held at John Alden's photo studio on the NW corner of Weldon and Van Ness. For more information contact Pat Wolk at 431-3653 or [patwolk@yahoo.com](mailto:patwolk@yahoo.com)

## Tuesday, November 4

Election Day. See [www.cvppac.org](http://www.cvppac.org) for progressive voting recommendations.

## Wednesday, November 5 2 - 3 PM

Women in Black - For Justice. Against War. Please join us for a silent vigil protesting all forms of militarism! This event will be held in the Free Speech Area at CSU-Fresno (Speakers Platform). Please wear black, bring a sign, women only. Co-sponsored by: POWER, Campus Peace & Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. Please call 278-4593 or see [www.womeninblack.org](http://www.womeninblack.org) for more information about Women in Black worldwide.

## Wednesday, November 5 5 PM

The movie The Bridge will be shown at the Cedar/Clinton branch library, 4150 E Clinton in Fresno. This film is about the Golden Gate Bridge. Filmed in 2004, the camera captures about two dozen suicides and several attempts. Warning, content may be disturbing. For more information, call 442-1770.

## Thursday, November 6 5 - 8 PM

Juliana Harris opens a solo exhibit of new paintings at Fig Tree Gallery, 644 Van Ness Ave, Fresno, on Art Hop Thursday, November 6th. This new body of work titled DUSK On Lucy's Pond consists of 20 paintings portraying a particular spot along Finegold Creek in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

The exhibit runs through Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. Gallery hours: Friday - Sunday, 12 noon to 4 p.m., or by appointment. Fig Tree Gallery is located in downtown Fresno near the intersection of Van Ness and Mono. Contact the artist at 559-999-7929, for further information.

## Friday, November 7 2 - 3 PM

"Patriotism and Journalism in the Era of Globalization", Alice Peters Auditorium, University Business Center Room 191, California State University, Fresno. Robert Jensen, Professor of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin. Robert Jensen is a peace and justice activist and the author of three books. He writes in mainstream and alternative media on politics, foreign policy, gender and race issues. Contact: Susan Currie Sivek 559-278-4597 [ssivek@csufresno.edu](mailto:ssivek@csufresno.edu) Dan Yaseen 559-251-3361 [danyaseen@comcast.net](mailto:danyaseen@comcast.net)

## Friday, November 7 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Speaker: Mike Boehm, a veteran of the Viet Nam War. Mike has led reconstructive efforts in Viet Nam for hte last 12 years, raising funds for peace parks as well as elementary school and revolving loan programs for women established small businesses. Hope Rises from the Ashes of My Lai

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

## Saturday, November 8 10 AM -12 Noon

"Taking Politics Seriously: Looking Beyond the Election and Beyond Elections." The speaker will be Robert Jensen, Professor of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin. Jensen is a peace and justice activist and the author of three books. He writes in mainstream and alternative media on politics, foreign policy, gender and race issues. This event will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave., Clovis. For more information contact: Susan Currie Sivek 559-278-4597 [ssivek@csufresno.edu](mailto:ssivek@csufresno.edu) or Dan Yaseen 559-251-3361 [danyaseen@comcast.net](mailto:danyaseen@comcast.net)

## Saturday, November 8 3:30 to 5:00 PM

Central Valley Progressive PAC meeting. "The Election Results: What Do They Mean, What Do We Do Now?" Meeting at Fresno Center for Non-Violence (1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno) and open to the public. More information at [www.cvppac.org](http://www.cvppac.org) or call (559) 435-7360

## Sunday, November 9 3 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry's 25<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving Festival of Choirs will be held at Hope Lutheran Church (NW corner, Fresno and Barstow). The goal of this event is to bring together many of the cultural and religious traditions represented in our community for this special musical event. For more information or questions, please contact Tamara Pullen-Sanders or Devoya Mayo at the Metro Ministry offices, ph (559)485-1416. [Tamara@fresnometmin.org](mailto:Tamara@fresnometmin.org) or [evoya@fresnometmin.org](mailto:evoya@fresnometmin.org)

San Joaquin River at Temperance Flat and the drainage problems of western San Joaquin Valley agribusiness.

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

## Saturday, November 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the December 2008 Community Alliance newspaper. Send information to [AllianceEditor@Comcast.net](mailto:AllianceEditor@Comcast.net)

## Saturday, November 15

Central California Environmental Justice Network proudly invites you to "Building Common Ground," 2008 CCEJN Conference at the College of the Sequoias, Main Campus, 915 S. Mooney Blvd. in Visalia. For more information contact 559-266-5901. Details of Conference, workshops, speakers coming soon.....so save the date

## Saturday, November 15 8:30 AM - 5 PM

Green Hope Veterans present: Beat the high cost of Fuel!! Blend diesel with waste oil, homemade ethanol, & biodiesel. \*Electric Cars\* This is the Green Hope Veterans alternative fuel workshop, which will be held at Piccadilly Inn University (Cedar and Shaw, near CSUF). For more information, contact Eugene Brazil at 559 496-0794 or go online at [www.greenhopeveterans.org](http://www.greenhopeveterans.org)

## Saturday, November 15 10 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents a special FREE screening of "Beautiful Losers" at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1555 Van Ness, in downtown Fresno. The documentary chronicles the do-it-yourself subculture of 1990s artists in New York City. The screening, on the newly renovated museum's fourth floor, is part of the Met's 55 straight hours of grand reopening activities, planned for Nov. 14-16. Visit [www.FresnoFilmworks.org](http://www.FresnoFilmworks.org) or [www.FresnoMet.org](http://www.FresnoMet.org) for details.

## Thursday, November 20 Open 6:30 PM, Video 7 PM, Discussion 9 PM

*Iran is Not the Problem* will be shown at Round Table Pizza, 5763 N First Street (SW corner of First and Bullard). This event is hosted by the Fresno County Green Party and is free, wheelchair accessible and open to anyone interested in progressive topics. For more information, contact Larry Mullen at (559) 227-0293

## Thursday, November 20 7:30 - 9:00 AM

Fresno Metro Ministry HealthCare Roundtable at Trinity Lutheran Church, 3973 N. Cedar. Call 485-1416 for more information.

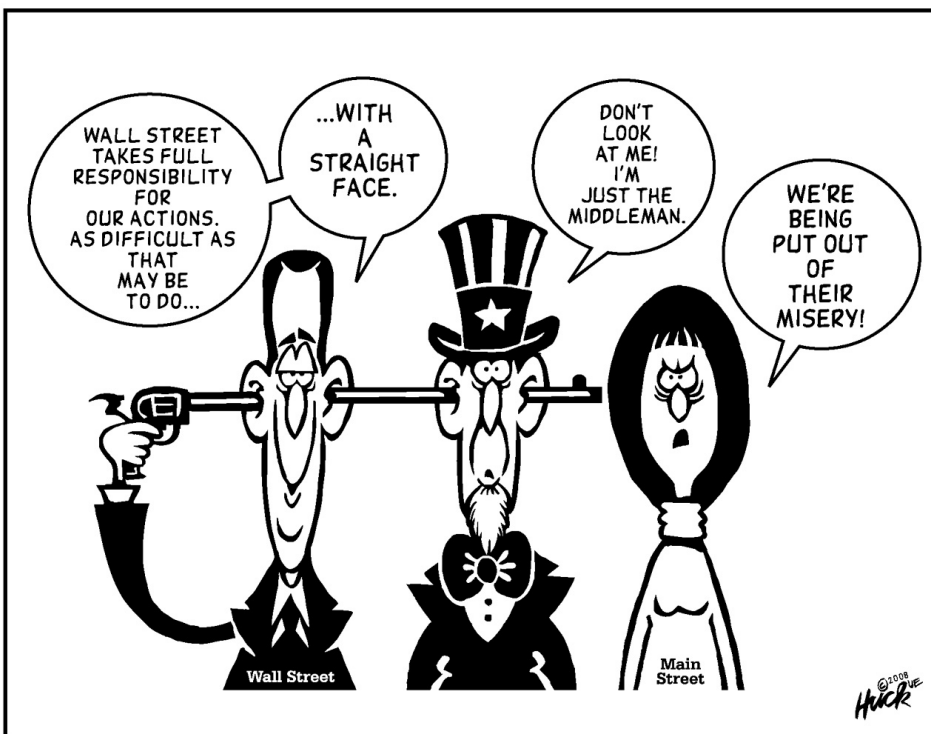
## Wednesday, December 3 5 PM

The movie Why We Fight will be shown at the Cedar/Clinton branch library, 4150 E Clinton in Fresno. This film examines US foreign policy and the interests corporate America has in the business of war. For more information, call 442-1770.

## Thursday, December 4 Social Hour: 5:30 PM, Dinner and Program: 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry's 38th Anniversary Dinner and Awards will be held at Hope Lutheran Church, 364 E. Barstow in Fresno. Please join us as we honor:  
Senator Dean Florez  
LUCA (Latinos Untied for Clean Air)  
Coke Hollowell  
George "Elfie" Ballis  
Howard K. Watkins  
Holy Family Episcopal Church

\$40.00 per person • \$400 for a table of ten. Call the Metro Office for Sponsorship Details or more info at (559) 485-1416.



## Wednesday, November 12 12:00 - 1:30 PM

The Fresno Metro Ministry Hunger and Nutrition Forum Trinity Lutheran Church will be held at 3973 N. Cedar in Fresno. Call 485-1416 for more information.

## Wednesday, November 12 12 Noon & 7:00 PM. (Potluck at 6:30)

Monthly Every Second Wednesday Video Presentation at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93728, across from Fresno City College \* SE Corner Van Ness & McKinley \* Entrance on Van Ness. This month's film will be "Taxi to the Dark Side."

## Friday, November 14 5:30 and 8:15 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents "I Served the King of England" at the Tower Theatre. The Czech comedy, an adaptation of the Bohumil Hrabal novel, tells the story of Jan Dite, a plucky waiter with colossal ambitions who bounces around central Europe. Tickets cost \$10 general and \$8 for students and seniors, and can be purchased by check or cash at the Tower Theatre box office, 815 E. Olive Ave., and at JA Photography, 2003 N. Van Ness. Tickets via PayPal at [www.FresnoFilmworks.org](http://www.FresnoFilmworks.org). For details, visit [www.FresnoFilmworks.org](http://www.FresnoFilmworks.org) or call (559) 221-0755.

## Friday, November 14 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents Speaker: Lloyd Carter. He will speak about California water issues, focusing particularly on San Joaquin Valley water issues. He will discuss the future of the Delta, the proposed dam on the



# QUEER EYE

## Who Really Owns Fulton Street?

by Dan Waterhouse

As the City of Fresno prepares to hold public hearings on the nomination of the Fulton Mall to the National Register of Historic Places, a fundamental question has surfaced: who really owns the dirt the mall sits on? There's no question that the city owns the art, the fountains, and the tot lots. But, the city owns no street or alley outright. The Historic Preservation Commission hearing was delayed a week while the city commissioned a title search. It's entirely possible the Fulton Street right of way is still owned by the Central Pacific Railroad (which established the original township in 1872) or by the individual property owners along the mall.

The nomination of the mall to the National Register was prepared and submitted by the Downtown Fresno Coalition, a private group of citizens concerned for the mall's future. Because the Mall is a public property, unlike properties that are owned by private parties, under the process by which properties are added to the National Register, the City cannot successfully keep the Mall from being listed on the Register merely by objecting to its inclusion.

The mall was nominated for inclusion on the National Register because the mall is "the finest example of pedestrian mall design resulting from the federal government's Urban Renewal Programs," as well as being a "major achievement" of its designer, the late "master" landscape architect, Garrett Eckbo. Lastly, the nomination also cites the mall as "an excellent example of the influence of Modernist design ideas on landscape architecture." In addition, one part of the application claims that the mall "deserves listing . . . for regional significance for its recreational and social history" but it is not formally cited in another part of the copy of the application as it was provided to the City by the State Historic Preservation Officer in May 2008. Since the mall was completed less than 50 years ago (having opened in 1964) it must also qualify for listing on the Historic Register under criterion G, "properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years." The practitioners I've spoken with all agree the mall definitely will be eligible for listing once it reaches the 50 year mark.

The city commissioned an economic impact analysis of the proposal. The consultant (Market Profiles) explained that while listing on the Register is primarily an honorary designation, and being placed on the National Register does not provide absolute protection from actions

that may affect the property. Ultimately it is the judicial system that ensures and/or determines that public agencies are fulfilling their obligations under CEQA. This gives any individual or organization the right to pursue litigation against a public agency that is perceived to have violated its CEQA obligations. As a result, projects that may be perceived to impact a historic resource can become very difficult and costly to realize. CEQA lawsuits can be extremely lengthy, costly and very subjective, and the outcome of a case is not always easy to determine at the outset of the legal process. The consultant concluded that in the case of the Fulton Mall the risk of litigation is high because of the conflicting nature of the mall's numerous stakeholder interests.

The nomination of the Mall impacts only the public roadway (and various elements affixed to it) that currently is used as a pedestrian mall. Buildings along the Mall, one of which is already included on the National Register, are not incorporated within the areas that are being requested for registration in the National Register. In essence, any action that has potential impact on the integrity of the "contributing elements" of a listed resource is subject to the CEQA process, and thus might be prohibited as a result of the CEQA process. It is unlikely that minor activity related to buildings lining the mall (including, but not limited to awnings or building facades that may encroach slightly into the airspace of the Mall and/or non-permanent seating for alfresco dining at restaurants), as well as non-obtrusive vending carts located on the Mall, would be excluded from CEQA review. The consultant concluded "however, any activity that permanently alters or damages the elements of the mall (including the concrete pavement, which is noted to be a design element in the nomination application) most likely would not be possible under the designated status."

"Further, given the likelihood that any proposed revisions to the Mall area would be controversial and subject to litigation under the CEQA process, according to experts in CEQA matters it is unlikely that any significant alterations or modifications of design or circulation features of the Mall could take place following registration on the National Register. "This, in turn, would limit the potential alternatives available to the City to improve the Mall's economic performance and thus its ability to generate increased revenues in the form of property taxes or retail sales taxes."



The bottom line for the city, according to the consultant: "in terms of annual revenue to the City of Fresno, in addition to fees and other benefits associated with a revitalized Downtown, the full build out and utilization of the Mall would provide annual sales tax revenue of \$1,748,760 and annual property tax revenue of \$4,702,500 for the City's coffers, or a combined total of approximately \$6,451,260 million per year. Assuming that development potential would be limited to about 50 percent of its long term potential, that would mean that the combined revenue from real estate and sales taxes would be reduced by approximately \$3,225,630. Thus, the potential economic impact from listing Fulton Mall on the National Register of Historic Places would be a loss in potential sales and property taxes of \$2,859,661 per year (in 2008 dollars)."

The clock is ticking for Fulton Mall. The city council recently voted in favor of reexamining a report prepared several years ago that recommended reopening the mall to vehicles. The Market Profiles report suggested some sort of reopening, in order to make the businesses on the mall more viable.



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David Roy's column on *Progressive Religion* will be back next month with an in-depth report on an historic, groundbreaking conference on Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices that featured progressive religious leaders and practitioners from Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as theologians, psychologists, psychiatrists, neuroscientists and neurologists. A common concern among conference leaders was the need to work together across disciplines for new understandings and approaches in order to foster an increase in compassion within human beings for each other and for all life on this planet.



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Serving Our Community

# Two Pounds of Rice from Starvation

By Alvin Valeriano

On the main thoroughfare of Puerto Princesa, Philippines, September 21, 2008, Sunday, 7:00 PM:

"Sir, bigyan niyo po sana ako ng siete pesos para mabuo ko ang beinte na pambili ng isang kilong bigas (sir, please give me twenty-five cents so I can complete half a dollar to buy two pounds of rice)," pleaded a scrawny boy, who looked about ten years old.

"Why are you on the streets begging?"

"We have no food at home. My mother is sick, so she cannot work. I'm the eldest and..." he politely replied, as I struggled to hear his voice amidst the roar of passing motorcycles.

"Where do you live in Puerto?"

"Sir, our place is at the community of San Jose," he replied. My scant knowledge of the city vaguely placed the location beyond the range of the lowest fare when riding the motorcycle cabs, which makes it about an hour walk. I dug for change in my pants pockets and counted six one-peso coins, exactly one peso (two US cents) short of what he needed. A check of my wallet revealed that the smallest denomination bill I had was fifty pesos. Unsure if the right thing to do was to part with the equivalent of one dollar and six cents, I decided that I'd go to the store with him to buy the rice he claimed his family needed, thinking that giving him the rice was a better assurance that my donation wouldn't be used for something else, like candy. Conflicted with empathy and suspicion, I erred towards the give-goods-not-cash basis, although he didn't strike me as a drug user or boozier. A boy of ten? There have been reports of syndicates exploiting children who are forced to beg in the streets of Manila, capital city of the Philippines. But I'm in Puerto Princesa, a prime destination for eco-tourism in the country.



Alvin Valeriano, at the Calandagan Island's small harbor which provides a safe place to "hide" his boat from the rough seas.

On our way to the store, our conversation revealed that his father abandoned the family some time ago. He had four other siblings. This day being Sunday, he said he wanted to find or beg for enough money to buy rice, since he wouldn't be able to go around early morning the following day, because he'd be in school. He answered fourth grade when I asked him what level he was in elementary school.

Interestingly he said that his mother didn't have the money to buy bananas, which they can then sprinkle with sugar, deep fry in oil, skewer on bamboo sticks, and sell on the streets, so that they don't have to beg. Banana-que, we call them in the Philippines. In opening this line of conversation, he might have been hus-

ting for more money. But I didn't think so. More than likely, he was aware of the city's campaign to put a stop to begging, mostly by children.

At some point I asked him if he was just fooling me. He answered, "Masama po gawin iyun (that is a bad thing to do)." The Philippine word "po" is a signifier of respect for people older than oneself, and this is uttered quite often by the youth of Puerto Princesa.

Before parting company, I handed him one-hundred forty pesos (three dollars) to bankroll his family's banana-que business. His faint smile spoke tons of gratitude. As I walked away, he asked "Kuya, ano po and pangalan mo (older brother, what is your name)?" I said, "Alvin, and what is yours?" "Miguel, po," answered my young comrade, whose politeness seemed to mask the urgency of the quest for his family's sustenance.

Clutching a plastic bag with the two video movies I rented (*Gladiator* with Russell Crowe and a mega-hit Philippine movie about love and marriage), I walked toward my well-furnished apartment. I glanced back and saw Miguel's thin frame, his bony hand holding a plastic bag with two kilos of rice, which was twice his goal. On coming home, my three cats, two kittens and their mom I named Gloria, will have to be fed. Miguel is bringing home rice for his four siblings and sick mom.

I cried a little, adding more to the deluge of rain, which had been going on all day. And I thought, "My little comrade Miguel, what sort of revolution should we do together when the time is ripe? Tell me and I'll join you. I hope I will be brave, noble, and gentle as you are."

###

Note: Alvin Valeriano of Fresno's Food Not Bombs left for home three months ago and is currently in the Philippines financing the economic activities of impoverished fisherfolk in Palawan province, Philippines. On the most recent expedition with his friends, they brought home 590 kilos of fish, hand caught by hooks and lines, over a 10-day period, while battered by two storms in the Sulu Sea area of the southern Philippines.



After a harrowing day of fighting the waves and winds whipped up by a storm, we celebrated with shots of brandy. Our crew members are muslim Badjaos, aka the sea gypsies of the Philippines.



These fish were caught around corrals, located about 250 feet deep. Our fishing method is considered "passive," as opposed to "active" methods that damaged these corrals.

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# Hurricane Relief for Haiti, and Keeping a Wonderful School Afloat

By Patrick Young

Few nations in the world have suffered worse than Haiti from US control and domination. From the installation and support of the brutal Duvalier regimes, to US support for military coups against the elected president(s), even the kidnaping of President Aristide in 2004 to re-establish a more "compliant" regime.

In 2000, the Fresno Wheelchair Project was asked for help, and since that time, has sent several diesel generators, an entire school bus full of aid, approximately \$14,000 in donations, and a variety of tools and video equipment to sustain and strengthen the activists still struggling for a free and democratic system in their nation.

It was Haiti's misfortune to get hit by all 3 of the recent Caribbean hurricanes and a difficult situation has gotten more so. Over 20,000 homes were destroyed, leaving an estimated 150,000 people in dire circumstances, rebuilding with whatever resources they can muster.

Besides medical and material relief, The Wheelchair Project is now also sponsoring and supporting a school with nearly 500 students in Port Au Prince, a school where credentialed teachers get paid between 80 to 150 dollars a month, and where at least half the students attend for free, while others pay as they can, when they can.

The Wheelchair Project has collected medical supplies, literally thousands of pounds of school supplies and material aid. The Project now needs help to defray ex-

penses to ship a flatbed truck loaded with aid to Haiti A.S.A.P.

Further plans are underway to help the school set up a small business in construction supplies, thus providing both employment and a steady income for the school to survive.

Founder Patrick Young is presently making an appeal to the citizens of Fresno to help with the transport of this aid, to pay the various fees with customs, and, of course, travel to Haiti to ensure things get to their proper destination.

Volunteers with mechanical skills are also needed to help prepare the truck as well as some small motorbikes that will make a part of the shipment.

With our help progressive Haitians will be able to maintain in the struggle for dignity and progress in this nation in transition. If anyone can open their hearts and their purse strings for this vital work it would be greatly appreciated. Contributions can be sent directly to:

Wheelchair Project  
5205 E. Washington Ave  
Fresno, CA 93727

###

Patrick Young is a retired teacher who now does his Wheelchair Project as a full time vocation, along with helping other similar groups. Questions, concerns or offers of help should be sent to Patrick Young, who can be reached at (559) 251-3814, or at [WheelchairBusProject@yahoo.com](mailto:WheelchairBusProject@yahoo.com)

To see more of the project and its history, you may visit the web site at [www.fresnoalliance.com/wheelchairproject](http://www.fresnoalliance.com/wheelchairproject).



Patrick and volunteers loading school supplies for first bus sent to Haiti.



Wheelchair Project unloading donations for hospital in Chiapas, Mexico.



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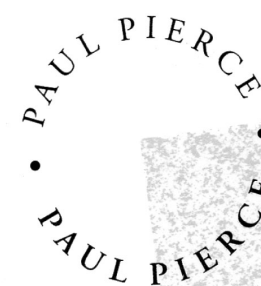
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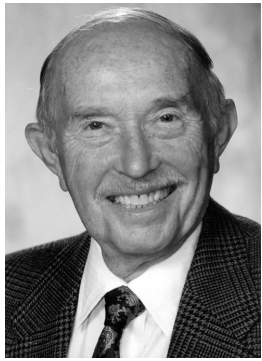
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**From the Greenhouse—  
A Blunt Reality**  
by Franz Weinschenk



Okay, let's get real. The US consumes one-fourth of the world's oil but possesses only 3% of its oil reserves. All the off-shore and arctic oil drilling—even if it were successful—can not possibly make up for such an overwhelming deficit. That leaves only two ways to confront and solve our critical energy crisis. FIRST: get serious about making the most of the energy we have—which

means conserving by using only energy efficient appliances and machines, insulating our homes and factories, and squeezing as many miles per gallon out of our cars and trucks as possible; and SECOND: realize that even with the infusion of off-shore and arctic oil, the supply of fossil fuel is finite and that we must start transitioning our economy and life-style from oil and coal to renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro, geo-thermal, bio-mass and ocean wave power.

Dr. King Hubbard, the renowned geophysicist predicted that the world's oil production would peak around the year 2000, and that is exactly what has happened. Of the 98 oil producing countries world wide, 60 are now "in terminal decline." Get used to it folks, the amount of oil available in the world is declining, is limited, and ultimately is finite. Sure, we can probably suck out a little more from the Continental Shelf and from the arctic and limp along for a decade or two, but we simply have to realize that the only real long term solution to our energy crisis is to quit relying on fossil fuels altogether. There are plenty of other renewable power sources available. Anything short of transitioning into clean alternative energy sources now invites an unprecedented energy meltdown a couple of decades from now. And we do not need any more pseudo-scientists hired by the oil companies to tell us that our oil crisis is not "real," or "really not so bad," or mocking the overwhelming majority of conscientious scientists who are telling us otherwise. What we need is the courage to face reality straight on, slowly put our fossil fuel economy into the barn along with the horse and buggy and start changing over to renewable energy sources. THERE ARE PLENTY OF THEM OUT THERE—more than enough to run our homes, factories and transportation systems!

In an op/ed piece in *The Fresno Bee*, Congressman Jim Costa, outlined what could have been a great beginning to get our country started in the right direction. First of all, Costa wants politicians to stop their unrelenting "I'm totally right—and you're totally wrong" bickering. It is this kind of adolescent squabbling that makes it almost impossible to achieve any kind of beneficial solution. Both sides agree that our country needs to stop guzzling foreign oil. Both sides agree that there is no silver bullet and that whatever solution we come up with must be comprehensive and include all aspects of energy production, distribution and usage. Mature legislators need to be able to set aside their egos once in a while and really negotiate—not just try to "win" all the time. National ENERGY INDEPENDENCE is more important than pleasing lobbyists.

But despite Costa's efforts, and even though the Democrats won on an intermediate bill that would have allowed drilling beyond 50 miles from the coast, sadly the latest news is that the Democrats conceded that since they did not have the votes to over-ride a threatened Presidential veto, they are going to allow drilling off shore. They seem to think that since gas prices are so high now and the voters are currently in a "drill, drill, drill" mentality fighting that trend would seriously hurt them in the election.

"I think it is awful," said Senator Dianne Feinstein. "But this battle is not over. We will come back and fight another day—that's for sure."

Representative Lois Capps, a Democrat from Santa Barbara, where a 1969 oil spill devastated the coastline, said, "I hope that when Congress revisits this issue next year with a new President, we can negotiate a compromise that respects the need to protect coastal states and puts our country on a path to a clean-energy future."

"The next election will decide what our drilling policy will be," said Rep. David Obey, chairman of the House appropriations Committee.

So it becomes even more important that we elect Barack

Obama as our next President. Remember, that while Congressional Democrats might be able to garner enough votes to come up with a bill that would transition our country away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy, they must either be able to over-ride a presidential veto, or have a President who agrees with them.

I prefer the latter. So, don't forget to vote—for BARACK OBAMA!

###

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](mailto:franzie@SCCCD.org)

**Elusive Economic Justice**  
By Ruth Gadebusch

There is no joy in Mudville today. Our mighty economy has struck out. And nowhere is it more evident than in Fresno and environs. Sad to say our valley is Appalachia West, even in good times.



The fallout effect on Fresno from our national financial boondoggle remains to be seen. What we do know is that our unemployment was already above the national average — this, in the summer which is normally our highest employment time in our agricultural world.

Nor does it take a rocket scientist to see the sad housing market. All one need do is drive a few blocks, if not right next door, and see a for sale sign on nearly every block. Perhaps, worse yet are the obvious empty houses. Even without an empty uncared for house in mine or your block all of our property values have gone down. Ultimately this will affect the tax base exacerbating our government budget problems.

Those fortunate enough to have investments of various sorts most assuredly have less than a few short months ago. Even worse are those dependent on government assistance which at best was delayed but now threatened by California's budget fiasco while the "no tax increase" voices prevail. The various charities which provide food assistance are pushed to the breaking point with the increase in clients.

Who knows where all those forced out by foreclosure are living. The sheds provided by the city hardly seem the answer; most certainly not for a family. Restrictions by many of the housing providers for the homeless make them distasteful at best and impossible at worst. The difficulty of the down and outers in hanging on to their meager personal goods, despite the legal decision against the city of Fresno for a previous destructive sweep, is extreme.

The lack of common sense seems to be a major barrier for solving these problems. At this writing a Madera woman caring for her totally disabled husband, a U.S. citizen, is fighting deportation. After some years as a working, tax-paying person married to a citizen she dared to apply for a green card. Alas, it was found that she was once caught attempting to sneak into the country. If humanitarian relief — extremely difficult to get — is not given the husband will be hospitalized at great government expense. The human cost is immeasurable. Where is our humanity? Not just for this husband and wife but for so many others caught up in this repudiation of immigrants.

It is time for the citizens of this community and this state to step up to the plate. If we care at all about the future we are leaving to our children/our grandchildren we must assume responsibility. Without doubt this means sacrifice, yes SACRIFICE. It is not pleasant to contemplate but it is necessary.

All of those needing help are not in their predicament because they are lazy. Just as all of the more fortunate did not get there by pure hard work. At the least, it involved some luck and even in these hard times have more margin for a comfortable lifestyle than those who were already at the poverty level. All the foreclosures are not due to the greed of the former owners but the loss of jobs or medical insurance.

Charity giving is required by most, if not all, religions. Taxes are a mark of civilization, necessary to maintain order on this crowded planet. If not for humanity's sake, then for pure self-preservation we must be a part of the solution. It is most certainly not enough to say, "I believe in limited government and if all 'those people' worked as

I did they too would have the good life." Or, "Why don't they stay in their own country?"

One thing we can do with no sacrifice on our part is to study very closely the propositions on our ballot for this election. Look beyond the title for the real meaning. All too often there are implications demeaning to people of color who frequently find themselves through no fault of their own in less than full acceptance in this society.

All the less fortunate want is what you and I want, what we have. Admittedly, some have a better way than others of seeking the goal, or is it gold? However, that does not absolve us of responsibility. There will always be differences but let it be in fairness. We share this endangered planet.

###

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.

**US Policy on Iran is not about  
Democracy or Justice**  
By Eric Parsons



Last month I wrote that America was following a wrong course, even an evil one, whether Democrat or Republican was president and by fortuitous circumstance the October Smithsonian magazine carries a marvelously supportive article, *Inside Iran Fury*. I encourage you to read it but knowing that most won't I'm going to summarize it.

Iran was a center of power long ago but fell on hard times and in the 18th and 19th centuries was a whipping boy for Russia and England until Russia kind of fell on hard times and in 1872 England is sole pilferer. After WWI England tightens the screws that squeeze out oil until the people revolt and a stable boy ousts the English toady king. He begins to wrest the country from British control and sides with Germany in WWII which further tightens English screws until it squeezes out another revolution in 1951, Peaceful and done by parliament, the king, the son of the stable boy, is ousted and a man named Mossadegh is empowered. With popular support, he moves immediately to take control of the country's oil but England strenuously objects. Mosadegh, believing what we broadcast about being for justice and democracy, took his case to the United Nations expecting to win with our support. He was very wrong about American support but it looked like he might have his way with the country's oil. Churchill, worried that England would lose cheap oil, began to plot the overthrow of Mosadegh. Mosadegh found out and booted the British out in 1952. Churchill, frustrated, tried to enlist the USA as his bully boy for a piece of the pie and asked Truman to have the CIA do the Brit's dirty work. Truman refused, pointing out that the CIA was to gather information but not for overt operations.

Before continuing with the article summary I want to note that the National Security Council, established by congress in 1948 along with, and in control of, the CIA, had issued policy statement NSC64 in 1952 that said that, for the highest ideals of justice and democracy, and because the soviets were so bad, operatives might go beyond information gathering to commit any act with no legal or moral restraint. This was a secret policy statement at the time and maybe Truman didn't know about it or maybe he was just the last honorable president. For what ever reason, that was the last time we stood for justice and democracy.

When Eisenhower took power in 1953 he appointed Dulles, a corporate lawyer with a deep prejudice against nationalization and Russia, as Secretary of State. Dulles was a sucker for Churchill's plot and immediately sicced the CIA on the popular government of Iran and on August 19, 1953, Mossadegh was imprisoned for the rest of his life and the son of the stable boy, Reza Shah, was re-enthroned. We continued to split the oil with England while our man, the king, suppressed any of his countryman's objections with torture and murder so vile that, even though we supplied him with the most modern weapons of war and torture and as many as he wanted, the country rose en masse and kicked him, and America, out in 1979 after only 26 years.

## US Policy continued from page 26

The article continues to detail the hostage crisis of 1979-80 and our arming and training of Saddam for an attack against Iran and etc, etc, etc, but for my purpose there is no need for more. I'm not making it up. The NSC abandoned justice and democracy as policy within a year of being written but not the right to violate any law or code of morality and honor with no compunction. This is true whether a Republican like Ike in Iran or Dick in the killing fields of South East Asia or Kennedy in Cuba or Johnson in Viet Nam or Clinton in Somalia.

Here is a telling quote from the article. During the 1979-80 Iranian US embassy hostage crisis a reporter asked Pres. Carter, "Mr. President, do you think it was proper for the US to restore the shah to the throne in 1953 against the popular will of Iran?" and Carter replied, "That 's ancient history" It's as current as Bush/Cheney saber rattling today and unless the NSC is disbanded or abjures the right to violate the law at will we will continue to rape justice and violate democracy be it Obama or McCain or Palm in charge.

###

Eric Parsons' was born and raised in the San Joaquin Valley and is now retired. He can be contacted by email at [parsons\\_eric@sbcglobal.net](mailto:parsons_eric@sbcglobal.net)

## Letter continued from page 2

they are in fact business as usual, with huge for-profit entities buying up vast amounts of acreage in places like the Mojave Desert to build solar and wind projects taking up tens of square miles each. The electricity from these huge remote genera-

tors will then be sent to market through long transmission projects, built on easements acquired through eminent domain that impact sensitive ecosystems and the lives of thousands of small property owners.

There will be much more of this as energy investors build perhaps 40-50 gigawatts of generation (enough to run all of California and then some) in the Mojave Desert and build more and more huge transmission lines along increasingly ugly transmission corridors.

Perhaps "we the people" will learn something from the present economic crisis—that it is not practical to let Big Money and Big Corporations have their way with us and run the whole show. Their interests are not our interests, and if we are naïve enough to believe we share common interests with the corporations, we will pay and we will suffer.

Our nation is at a crossroads. We can choose our future or let the corporations choose it for us. In the case of the electrical grid, we can choose to develop local generation projects — many small generators distributed widely so as not to have large environmental footprints and not to require long transmission corridors. Rooftop solar is the most obvious example. Why has "our" government not moved to make rooftop solar mandatory on all new construction and to partner with owners of existing buildings to add solar? Moreover, battery and other storage technologies are rapidly developing and soon will render the electrical grid obsolete.

It is time to take charge of the government and force "our" representatives to plan an electrical system that meets the needs of the people. We need to learn to make our own electricity locally — to empower ourselves — and not let the corporations like Edison and PG&E have power over us. Community groups like the Community Alliance are leading the way to provide an alternative to corporate owned "news media" that put us to sleep with corporate propaganda. With the help of the Alliance, let us heed the words of Shelley, who admonishes us,

Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you —  
Ye are many — they are few.

Charles M. Ashley  
[www.savethefoothills.org](http://www.savethefoothills.org)  
855-6376

The article "Buba and the farmworkers" by Lloyd G. Carter was one of the best articles that I have seen in a long time. Very well written and the facts and info are too the point and on target. More of this kind of Journalism and congratulations Lloyd Carter for a job well done! Keep this kind of news reporting coming fast and furious!

This is a breath of fresh air even for us in the San Luis Obispo area. Thank you.

Peter Risley  
San Luis Obispo

## Uproar continued from page 8

candidate was allowed a free ballot statement, then each voter could be equally informed with basic information about each candidate.

The current practice is to let "soft money" ads and media be the voters' education mechanism. National debates are a way to rectify this inequity, but the major parties have corrupted the debates too. As a result of discriminating against third parties in debates, we are ensured a corporate Democrat or Republican president.

Obama should carry California. For the sake of the Supreme Court and our futures I hope that's true. The progressive alternative candidates would not have allowed us to go to war, not have deregulated banking and energy, and would not have permitted our loss of rights and jobs. I have listened to Mckinney, Nader and Barr - all three voices should be heard. Given Instant Runoff voting I would vote for Mckinney, Nader, Obama, Barr, and No Other Candidate in that order.

Larry Mullen, Fresno

###

I'm a firm believer in the notion that the government that governs least governs best, but when our government is run by a lot of homogenous neocons, I must become flexible. The demographics of those in power don't add up to a more perfect union: Congress, itself, consists of 200 millionaires, 86 women, 41 African Americans, 36 Hispanics, 8 Asian/Pacific Islander, and only 1 American Indian. This nation is built on equality and preservation of an independent spirit and longing for all. It is time for those in power to come from humble origins and having been raised to be citizens and not politicians. It is time for Obama to be president. Let's test his dreams and see where he will lead America.

Graham Haught, Fresno

###

We need significant changes in our electoral process in this country. But, absent those changes, I will vote for Barack Obama in the coming election. I have never felt so much like I was voting for the lesser evil as I do this year. Until recently, Obama is just not saying what I think we need to hear. I had considered voting third party. But, given the shortcomings of our electoral process, a third party candidate can't win; and I don't want to contribute to the election of the greater evil.

Positively, my son lived in Chicago for four years during Obama's time in the Illinois legislature. He is extremely

positive about Obama's Illinois record. And, as I review that record, I am encouraged about Obama's candidacy.

If you would like to review that record yourself, here are some relevant links:

[http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2007/07/29/us/politics/20070730\\_OBAMA\\_GRAPHIC.html](http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2007/07/29/us/politics/20070730_OBAMA_GRAPHIC.html)  
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/legisnet91/status/910SB0680.html>  
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/legisnet91/summary/910SB0883.html>  
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/legisnet91/summary/910SB1711.html>  
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/legisnet91/summary/910SB0166.html>  
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/legisnet91/status/910SB1713.html>

Bill Simon, Fresno

###

Change is the buzzword of the current presidential campaign. Beyond the rhetoric, however, what is the best way for Californians to affect the future direction of our nation when they vote on November 4th?

California has a winner-take-all system for the electoral college. California is not in play. Any vote for a third party candidate in our state is highly unlikely to produce a "spoiler" effect.

This is the moment for Californians to consider the impact third parties can have on policy formation. A third party candidate does not have to win to be effective. Historically, third party support has been viewed by major parties as a gauge of the attitudes of disaffected voters—voters they would like to capture for themselves. To do that they eventually adopt as their own the most popular of the policies advocated by third parties.

Social Security, abolition, women's suffrage and the income tax became realities partly because third party support for those issues had been draining away votes from the major parties.

Neither Obama nor McCain is talking about single-payer health care; neither is willing to abandon the US imperial project. If I want to promote change on either of those vital issues I have no choice but to vote for a third party candidate. The luxury of living in California affords me that option.

Gerry Bill, Fresno

###

I'm voting for Cynthia McKinney, the Green Party candidate for President. Why? Because its time to declare our independence from the corporations. The Green Party program speaks to the needs of the majority. They take an uncompromising stand for peace; for civil rights of all workers; for health care and housing for all. Their program defends our rights and living standards against corporate power. The Democratic and Republican Party programs speak for corporate America. That's why both parties voted for the largest corporate bailout in American history. Where's our bailout? The truth is that regardless of who is president, fundamental changes are taking place in the economy that cannot be fixed under the existing system. Computers and robots are eliminating jobs permanently. The market economy is being destroyed. During such periods of economic transition, history shows that rulers attempt to establish fascist dictatorships to maintain their control. So, it is no accident that, today, new laws that curtail our civil liberties are being passed alongside of preparations for bigger wars and more cuts in social services. Our only solution is to fight for a new, truly democratic, peaceful society where corporate property becomes public property so that everyone's needs are met. The first step is to take a stand by voting for program - not personalities.

Sandy Reid, Chicago  
[info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org)

###

If you live, work and vote in the Central Valley of California, then you have only two choices for President: Cynthia McKinney or Ralph Nader.

Unless you believe the major party candidates have been pre-ordained by the deities to wash your underwear and save the world, then move on to the next article because the truth is that a vote for McCain or Obama will be nothing but a wasted vote.

California is a "safe states" which means Senator Obama will win. His strength comes from the northern and southern parts of California. Senator McCain's strength is in the Central Valley. But don't cry for McCain who will win in Texas; both candidates will win in other "safe states."

Candidates will spend the most money, effort and time in the final two months to win the battle ground states like Ohio and Florida. This means that California's Central Valley voters will have no impact in this election. To make a difference; vote for Green Party candidate Cynthia McKinney or independent candidate Ralph Nader. That's your best bet for a better nation.

Richard Gomez, Fresno

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If reelected, Carol Mills is committed to ensuring the district stays on course and completes the high school athletic projects and a west Fresno middle school; increases vocational education; and provides a quality education for all our students.

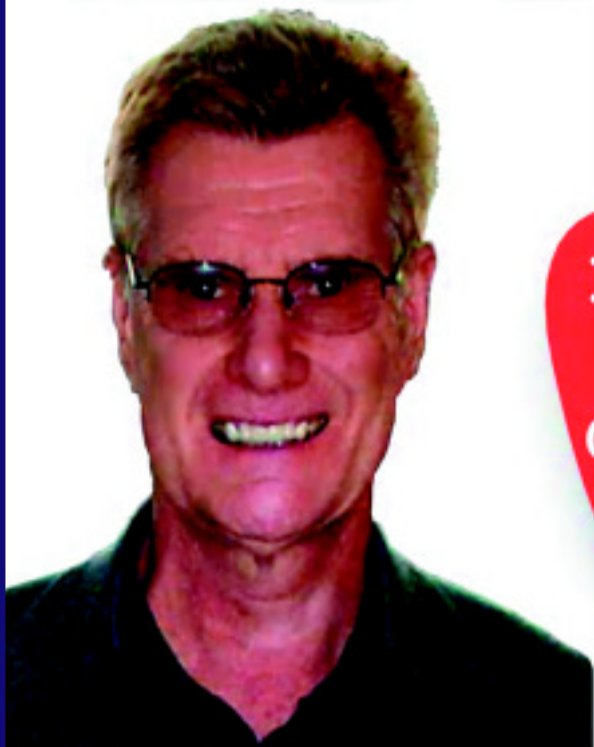
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