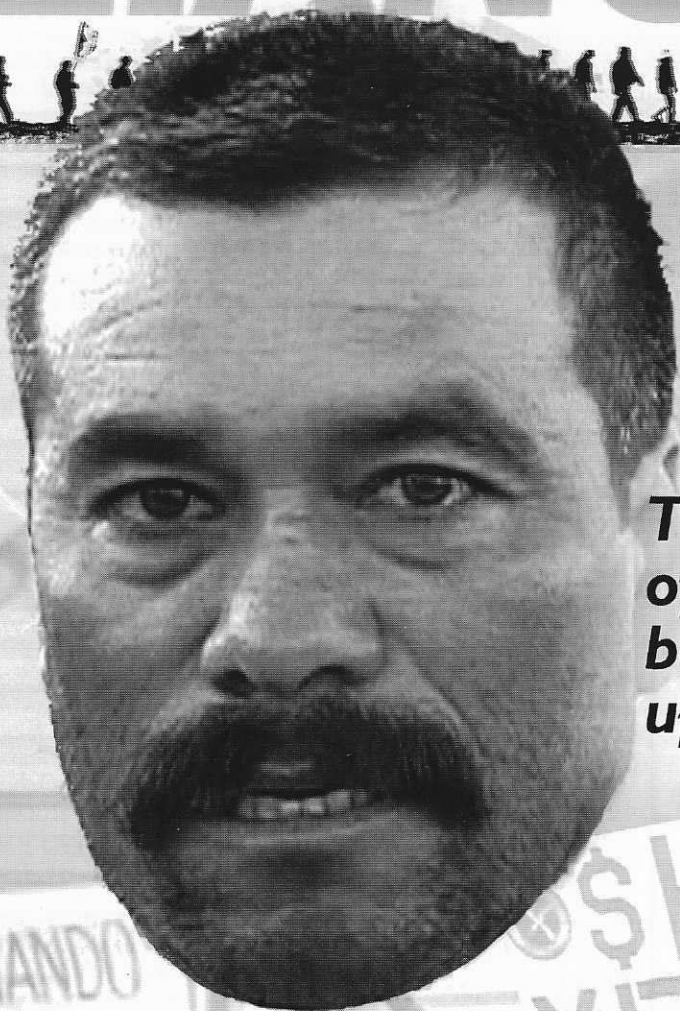


September 2001

# Labor/Community **ALLIANCE**



*The face  
of anguish  
behind Fresno's  
up\$cale housing*

*see page 8*

CAMINANDO  
PARA EL  
FUTURO

"Si Se Puede"

SHOW  
ME THE  
MONEY

**Sat. • Sept. 22 • Alliance 5th Anniversary Party** *see page 16*





## GREEN PARTY goes national

By Jeffrey W. Eisinger

As the recently elected Central Valley Representative for the Green Party of California, I was privileged to attend the national conference of the Association of State Green Parties in Santa Barbara in July. The primary achievement of the conference was a decision to file the necessary documents with the Federal Election Commission to become a national political party. This party will be known as The Green Party of the United States. I was excited to witness this momentous step forward for the Greens.

While the party will continue to emphasize grassroots democracy, building from the bottom up, the existence of a formal party structure will undoubtedly be a valuable tool in making more Americans aware of what the party has to offer.

At the conference, I was also able to meet the new mayor of Santa Monica who also represents the Southern California area for the state Green party. This drove home to me the fact that putting Greens into local elective offices is achievable and something we need to work towards in the valley.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Green alternative to traditional politics can begin with the website for the Fresno County Green Party ([www.greens.org/cal/fresno](http://www.greens.org/cal/fresno)) or call us at 265-3647. Also, the public is invited to our monthly business meeting at the Center for Nonviolence at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.



'The Right Stuff From The Left', is not trying to sing to the choir. This is an attempt to get the word Liberal out to the people who still think it is a bad word. Also, an attempt to help people who don't know how much the Liberal community should appeal to their need/plight.



This monthly magazine is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. We support the struggle for social and economic justice and believe all workers should be paid a living wage. We are affiliated nationally with Jobs with Justice. Our monthly meetings on are the last Monday, 6:30 pm, at Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness.

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Why Unions are to their benefit in spite of all the anti-union information put out by employers. Even government

Also, "Globalization" this is a corporate word to reduce all working people world wide back to serfdom.

Most of the Liberal community doesn't seem to realize that Vince Lavery has spent much time, without any pay, getting this TV show off the ground.

If you as part of the Liberal community have something you want to see emphasized on 'The Right Stuff From The Left' why not call Vince at 439-0821 and volunteer to set it up. He invites you to every show.

Julius Rasmussen, of Clovis has searched out and found a business who is willing to spend \$600 to advertise on Channel 10 to keep 'The Right Stuff From The Left' on TV.

Valtia Pointer

Our flower  
blooms in  
cracks for  
five years

**!Let's Celebrate!**

**Mike's Message**



The Labor/Community Alliance is considered an "alternative media" publication. But, we are not alone.

There are several examples of the alternative media in Fresno, which provide information outside the control of the corporate media giants. It is significant that these independent voices are alive and well, not only in locations like the Bay Area, but right here in the Central Valley. **It reminds me of a flower growing in a crack of the pavement on a parking lot.** Soulless corporations own all of the major media outlets and dominate the spin on the events in our community, country, and world. However, the very fact that alternatives exist is encouraging and gives me hope for the future.

Radio station KFCF 88.1 FM has for decades been an oasis in the desert on the local radio dial. We can hear an interview with Noam Chomsky, get a progressive spin on the news, and now even listen to groups talking about issues of local interest. KFCF defines itself as Free Speech Radio.

In addition to KFCF, there are dozens of "alternative" voices reaching out to be heard. The ethnic media in this area is perhaps the largest challenge to the corporate media giants like The Fresno Bee, TV stations affiliated with the networks, and the many radio stations that all sound alike. For example, The California Advocate newspaper is printed weekly and presents news and information of interest to African Americans throughout the Central Valley.

There are numerous Spanish language publications and even some printed in Hmong and other languages spoken in this area. Radio stations, like Radio Bilingue, Radio Campesino, and KFCF give a voice to the voiceless.

To get an idea of the significance of the ethnic media in the Central Valley, get a copy of the New California media directory, which has just been printed. It is available by calling NCM at (415) 438 4755 or you can find them on the Internet at <http://www.ncmonline.com/>

The one thing that sets the Labor/Community Alliance newsletter apart from all of the other alternative media in the area, and certainly the corporate media, is that we are consciously trying to build a movement for social and economic change.

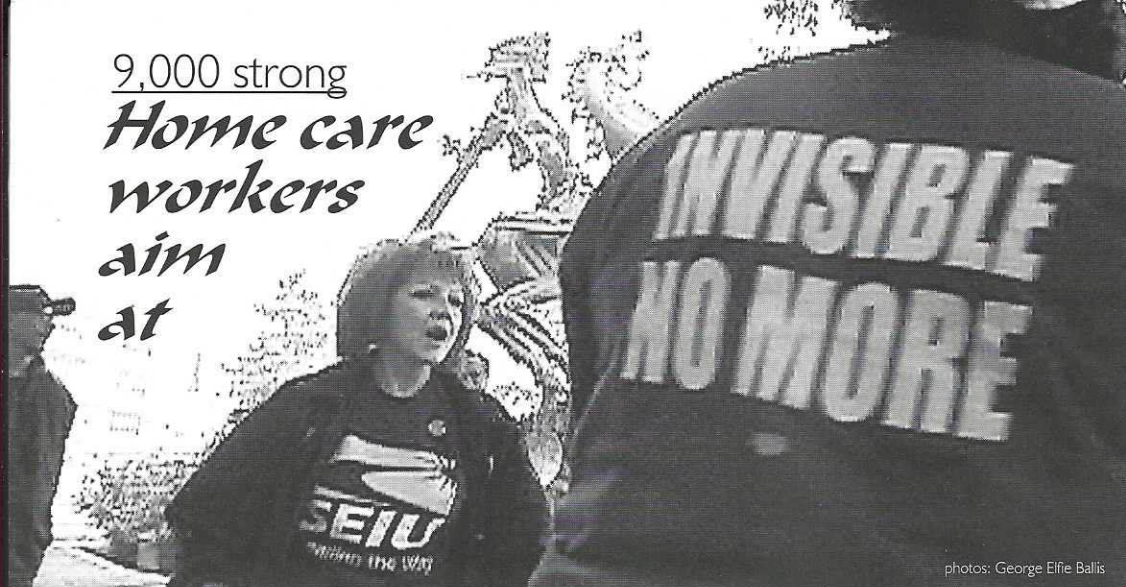
We are working hard to build a progressive movement by linking groups struggling to make this a better world. We not only provide these groups the opportunity to say, in their own words, what they are doing but work to mobilize support for their cause.

**It is this publication's goal to unify the left, link the many groups in this area organizing for progressive change, and show that we are stronger when we work together and support each other.**

The Labor/Community Alliance has reached, with this issue, a milestone. We have been publishing for 5 years. In celebration we will be having a party, and you are invited! The event will feature live music, plenty of food and entertainment & will be held on Saturday, September 22. We look forward to seeing you there. Details are on page 16.



9,000 strong  
**Home care  
workers  
aim  
at**



photos: George Elfie Ballis

## historic union election

by Pam Whalen

Over two years after the passage of the law that requires each county in California to grant collective bargaining rights to homecare workers, those in Fresno County are still waiting.

**The implementation of this law will pave the way for the biggest union election in the history of Fresno County.**

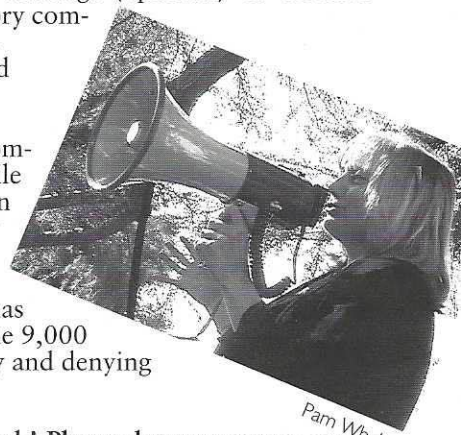
Many workers in other counties are already receiving substantial raises and benefits and the Governor has put more money in the budget for homecare workers. But unfortunately it is still going to take many months before workers in Fresno County will get any of these dollars. Why?

The answer is that Fresno County must implement the law AB1682 declaring some entity an employer of record for homecare workers before these funds can flow to Fresno County. Historically homecare workers were not considered "workers" but independent contractors.

ties can wait until January 1, 2003 to implement it. The law requires a rather complicated and cumbersome process and Fresno County has been very slow to begin.

Some of the major steps in this process are: 1. Name an advisory committee 2. Hold public hearings (optional) 3. Receive recommendation from advisory committee or employer of record 4. Choose employer of record 5. Draft ordinance

All of these steps must be completed before the Union can file for recognition and an election can be held. Fresno County has consistently chosen to move very slowly at each step of the way. This has had the effect of keeping some 9,000 homecare workers in poverty and denying them healthcare benefits.



Pam Whalen

**They have waited long enough! Please show your support by contacting the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and tell them to do their job and implement the law AB1682.**

### CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR NOW:

Deran Koligian	488-3541
Susan Anderson	488-3542
Juan Arambula	488-3663
Judy Case	488-3664
Bob Waterston	488-3665 *swing vote needs pressure

To find out what else you can do to help call Pam Whalen at 271-7005. Also, if you are a homecare worker call the SEIU Local 250 office at the above number to join the Union.

**If each of us sign up one new subscriber,  
this mag will fly in this high style**



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# Honoring the *Unshackled Spirit* of a Prison Reformer

by Catherine Campbell

Charisse Shumate died of Sickle Cell Anemia on August 4th shackled to her bed at the Madera Community Hospital. She surprised us all by surviving into her 40's - a feat for one so terribly ill. Her will to live arose from her role as a leader of women prisoners fighting for community standards of medical care within the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), one of the two women's prisons on the edge of Chowchilla which together constitute the largest women's prison in the world.

Health care for women in prison has become a national issue since Charisse took on the work of being lead plaintiff in *Shumate v. Wilson*, the lawsuit which has changed medical care for women in California prisons for the better, and which set the standard for change in all of California's prisons. The Shumate case, as it came to be known, was filed in 1995 and settled in 1999 when it

entered into a monitoring period. The prisons were found in compliance with the settlement agreement in 2001 and the case was, at last, dismissed.



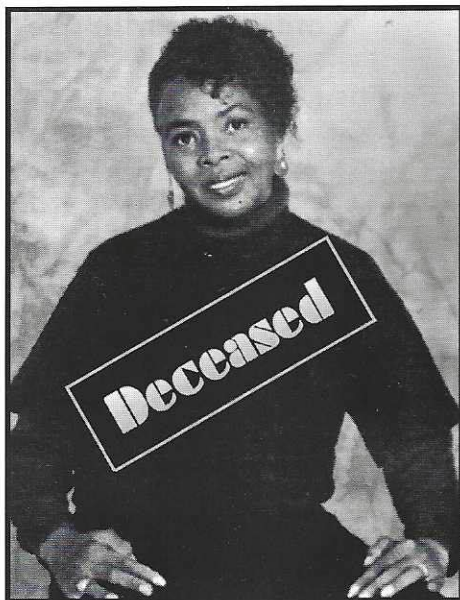
Catherine Campbell

Before the case was filed, we knew that women in prison are often sick when they arrive: most have histories of drug abuse, multiple births, and violence at the hands of male partners.

We knew that the medical staff was taught to doubt what the women said about their symptoms in a general way, and to assume an inmate is a liar. And we knew the medical care in the women's prisons was lamentably inadequate.

In the early 90's, women were given insulin hours before breakfast, and many suffered insulin overdoses. Women who were HIV positive were placed in isolation 24 hours a day and went untouched by medical staff. It took weeks to see a physician regardless of your medical problem. Medical Technical Assistants were often abusive and more often nowhere to be found.

Women with chronic illnesses went unmonitored. And the women died as a consequence, in droves, their lives marked by none of us - only their friends inside and their families knew they would be alive today if they had not been in prison.



Charisse Shumate

We could pity ourselves, for we have lost a friend and co-worker. But we are not alone in our loss, and we pity you more, for Charisse's isolation in prison meant you never knew her, and have no idea what beauty and strength a woman in prison can bring to the battle for justice. Her prison family - almost everyone who knew her - called her "Happy" because it was true: she was happy, busily happy.

As a member of the Women's Advisory Committee she could walk the yards talking with prisoners and staff about their problems and had reliable access to administrators, who listened to her because she could be trusted.

She monitored health care and regularly reported to the lawyers and legal workers who worked for her the problems that continued to plague the prison even after her legal challenge was settled and in the monitoring stage.

She mourned for the women who died of cancers, heart attacks that toppled them on the yards, and of every imaginable chronic illness.

Charisse volunteered to be the lead plaintiff in the Shumate case knowing she would suffer retaliation and resentment. But she was the unanimous choice of all the women who had worked for two years getting the case ready because she fairly represented all races, brought intelligence and insight to the work, and never compromised her standards. She could be relied upon to play a professional role - in the best sense - in the litigation, and to make all

of the prisoners proud of their willingness to stand up and fight for better treatment.

She set an example of courage that led other women prisoners to testify before the State Legislative Hearings on Medical Care just last year. The Shumate lawsuit did not make for great medical care, or even medical care that meets community standards, but it made a difference.

CCWF now has:

- a chronic care program,
- a quicker response period to medical emergencies,
- better follow-up on outside physicians' recommendations,
- improved monitoring of the quality of care,
- a vastly improved medical staff

Many of these improved medical staff members are devoted to providing good medical care to women prisoners, and many of them also loved Charisse and mourn her loss.

Although she spoke of it rarely, Charisse said she committed a terrible crime and deserved to go to prison. After decades of incarceration, however, she was not the young woman who killed. She was mature, smart, educated and active. She was a force for good, and for change. In her last months, as we all knew she was finally dying, several of her friends, including lawyers and legal workers, fought for months to obtain a compassionate release for Charisse so she could die at home with her family.

Governor Davis has vowed never to authorize the release of anyone convicted of murder in California, undoubtedly because he fears the political repercussions that may attend such a decision. His blanket cruelty extends even to prisoners like Charisse whose work for good mitigates the harm done, and whose life is at an end.

The compassionate release process for Charisse stopped on our Governor's desk and it stayed there - and Charisse died alone at Madera Community Hospital in the inmate wing with two guards sitting outside her door. Charisse Shumate saved lives. She won the respect and the love of the women inside, and those of us who followed her lead. Thank you, Charisse. You are missed by those who knew you, and by those who know of you. ☺

Catherine Campbell and Jack Daniel are Fresno lawyers who worked on *Shumate v. Wilson*.

Campbell photo: George Elfie Ballis



# Demonstrations against The Gap's use of sweatshop

labor take place at least once  
every month in Fresno

by Mike Rhodes

The next demo will be held on September 1 from 12 Noon to 2 PM. Meet at the corner of Shaw and Angus. These monthly demonstrations have been going on for almost two years now.

On May 6, 2000, nineteen nonviolent activists were arrested at the Fashion Fair mall by a force of over 100 Fresno City police officers, with a police helicopter hovering overhead and a squad of riot clad officers blocking the mall's entrance. The criminal proceedings are still winding their way through court, with no end in sight. Why has Fresno become a focal point of anti-sweatshop activity and what have we learned from this experience?

The Fresno Police not only wildly over reacted to the peaceful protest in May 2000 but they conspired to violate the civil rights of the activists when they planted a spy in the group. The informant attended group meetings, monitored the groups email messages, and led the police to believe that there was a good chance that hundreds of protestors would engage in a violent protest.

I am one of the anti-sweatshop protest organizers who got arrested at the May 2000 demo. I was surprised to get a call from Sargent Mercado of the Fresno Police Department late last year asking me about plans for a demonstration he said he had heard about. The strange thing about the call was we had not even decided to hold that demo but he already seemed to know most of the details that only a handful of people had knowledge of. I couldn't figure out how he knew about this demonstration even before we decided to hold it.

The group was confused about how the police had so much inside information about their plans until the informant was revealed at the court hearing, through a discovery motion at the criminal proceedings. The use of a police informant in a group of community activists has many ramifications. Everyone, of course, wanted to know the identity of the informant.

**Everyone** was a suspect and mistrust grew between the activists. Some of the more experienced members of the group counseled to not over react to the information, that you have to assume that the police know what we are doing and that they have done this to disrupt us. But months later we are still hearing from people that stayed away from the demonstrations out of fear or because they thought they were suspected of being the informant.

The governments use of informants in community groups has far reaching implications to our First Amendment and Civil Rights. This attack on our fundamental democratic rights of Free Speech must be confronted.

The massive police presence during the arrests served to intimidate and threaten community members who would dare to speak out against sweatshops and unjust working conditions. The Fashion Fair mall, owned by the Macerich Corporation, decided to draw a line in the sand and take total control over events at their property.

Even though they define themselves on their web site as "the new town square" they demanded the right to censor any flier handed out, insisted on a list of all participants at the May 2000 demonstration, and refused to make any compromises that could have avoided the arrests.

Their lawyers determined how and why people would be arrested and called on their allies at the Fresno Police Department who gladly supported Fashion Fair property rights over our civil rights. The police laughed when we suggested that they should be protecting our rights against those of the soulless corporation.

In the months following the arrests the protestors returned again and again to demonstrate against The Gap's use of sweatshop labor. The media coverage surrounding the arrests and subsequent demonstrations has led to an understanding by most people in Fresno that The Gap has their clothing made at sweatshops. When protests are held now, motorists honk support and people wave to the demonstrators. Sometimes, during the monthly demonstrations, the honking is so loud that you can't hear what the person next to you is saying.

Fresno anti-sweatshop activists have now negotiated with Fashion Fair to set up a table inside the mall. The table is set up right where Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny are seasonally located. You can't get a better location inside the mall. Protestors are free to hand out fliers to shoppers, distribute literature from the table, and while Fashion Fair tries to limit the number of protestors in the mall we can and do bring in as many protestors as we want.

There was an incident a couple of months ago when protestors started distributing "Stop Gap Sweatshops, The Gap can afford to pay a living wage" helium filled balloons in the mall. Fashion Fair security at first threatened to have balloon holding protestors arrested and took the balloons out of the hands of children as they entered the mall.

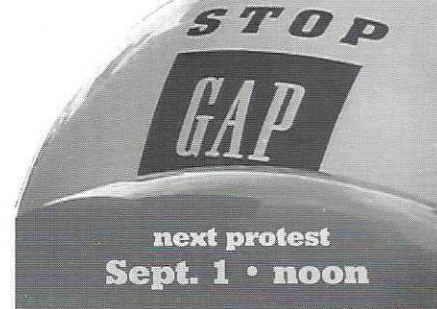
**Persistence** once again paid off, and now balloons can be seen everywhere at the monthly demonstrations outside and inside the mall. The sight of security guards taking balloons out of the hands of crying children was not the kind PR the mall was looking for.

One thing I believe we would have done differently, in hind sight, is to have gone inside The Gap store in May 2000 to hand out fliers. That action would have forced The Gap to make the decision of whether or not to arrest us. The Free Speech fight with the Macerich Corporation has taken an enormous amount of our resources and has taken the focus off The Gap.

If The Gap had called the police and had us arrested the sweatshop issue would have been more central in the criminal proceedings. Since we were arrested by Fashion Fair, this has really become a two pronged struggle against sweatshops and in defense of Free Speech rights.

Global Exchange <[www.globalexchange.com](http://www.globalexchange.com)> coordinates the national campaign to Stop Gap sweatshops and co-direct

(continued on next page)





# Gap pays 11¢/hour in Russia; \$4/day in Honduras

(continued from previous page)

tor Media Benjamin, former Gap sweatshop worker Chie Abad, and other staff from GX have participated in numerous Fresno demonstrations. The protests at Fashion Fair are coordinated by activists from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, The Green Party, Labor/Community Alliance, and United Students against Sweatshops.

**Fresno activists** chose to focus on The Gap's use of sweatshop labor because Gap located their West coast distribution center in this community. We found out from Global Exchange that Saipan is a US territory replete with sweatshops where The Gap does the most business of any company on the island — over \$200 million a year, contracting in six factories.

Whereas these companies import without tariff or quota restrictions and label their clothes 'Made in the USA,' they do not adhere to US labor laws. Workers and the anti-sweatshop groups UNITE, Global Exchange, Sweatshop Watch and the Asian Law Caucus filed a billion dollar lawsuit against Gap and 17 other retailers for labor abuses in Saipan.

The sweatshop problem undoubtedly extends beyond Saipan. In Russia we were notified that Gap pays factory workers just 11 cents/hour and keeps them in slave-like conditions. Workers from Macao contacted the Asia Monitor Resource Center in Hong Kong complaining of abusive treatment by factory managers, who forced them to work excessive overtime and cheated them out of their pay.

A delegation from the National Labor Committee in June 1999 reported that Honduran Gap factory workers are subjected to forced pregnancy tests, forced overtime, exceedingly high production goals, locked bathrooms, and wages of \$4/day, which only meet 1/3 of their basic needs. The workers said that if they tried to organize a union or even become more informed of their rights, they would be fired. They had never heard of Gap's code of conduct. In Indonesia, 700 workers went on strike in July, 1997 protesting miserable wages

and the factory management's refusal to recognize their independent union.

As with other major apparel retailers, Gap must be pressured to pay workers a living wage, ensure their right to organize, disclose factory locations and allow independent monitoring.

The campaign in Fresno to expose The Gap's use of sweatshop labor has been an unqualified success. While the criminal proceedings drag on in court, the message about sweatshops gets to more and more people. A civil rights lawsuit filed by several defendants is challenging the Macerich corporation's right to have people arrested for exercising their First Amendment rights.

**To make** a contribution to The Gap 19 legal defense fund, or to learn more about this situation, contact: The Labor/Community Alliance, P.O. Box 5077, Fresno Ca 93755, call (559) 233-3978, or email [LCAeditor@mediaone.net](mailto:LCAeditor@mediaone.net). Information is also available on the Internet at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/GAP.htm> and at <http://www.sunmt.org/gaparchives.html>

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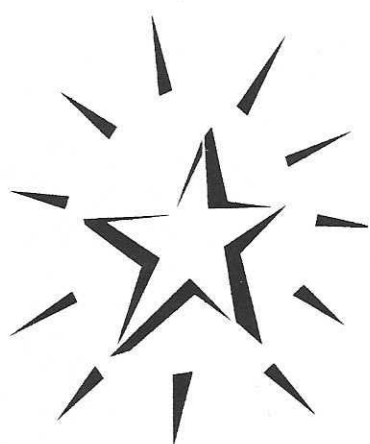
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## CCLS Proudly Presents Its: "Annual Awards Reception"

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Come  
Join Us!





# Civilize Fresno police with *civilian review*

by Rebeca Rangel

In the last one and a half years there has been a group of people working on creating a legal body outside the police department that is responsive to individuals' complaints of police misconduct and police abuse.

This group is a diverse mix of clergy, community workers, housewives, teachers, students, attorneys and, in general, concerned citizens. I must refer to Christian Parenti's *Lockdown America* published in 1999. Parenti dedicates

almost twenty-five pages to Fresno holding the dubious distinction of "the paramilitary police city-state of the future in America."

According to news articles

and actual complaints and horror stories people have shared with us, this characterization of our police department is accurate... and then some. As a result, Central California Criminal Justice Committee (CCCJC) has sponsored four forums with speakers from three cities which have a version of police oversight agencies or a police auditor. They came to Fresno, presented how they operate while we listened and video taped these forums. The executive director of the Human Relations Commission

for California also came to talk with us on how we might move forward with our need for a police oversight committee.

**OUR GOAL** was to gather background information needed in order to design a model of an oversight police agency for Fresno and what might be the best format for setting it up. We have prepared summaries of these presentations. The last week of July, three people were shot, two of them killed, one by a police officer and the other by a Violent Crime Suppression Unit officer.

It was this outrageous, out of control, typical Fresno, but still extreme inexplicable rash of shootings by our own public servants that pushed CCCJC into high gear. CCCJC meets August 14th to put a proposal together for presentation to the City Council in September. When we go to the City Council, we need to pack the City Council Chambers.

**SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE** our City Council supports police Chief Jerry Dyer and is not interested in our call for a police oversight agency. We give the City Council the benefit of the doubt --- there's no question that the need exists --- the question is, how out of touch is city council with the needs of the people who put them in office? Can they, will they respond to the needs of the people? CCCJC is still collecting complaints. If you or someone you know wants to send a copy of a complaint to us, we will

be presenting these complaints to City Council, as additional proof that there is a need for this agency.

**Send your written complaints to CCCJC, P.O. Box 4555, Fresno, CA**

August 3rd, 2001, Police Chief Dyer put together a Police Advisory Committee. His intention is a bit confusing. CCCJC has not been mentioned in Dyer's statements even though we are clear that he likes our ideas.

**H**is exclusion of our existence demonstrates to us that, more than ever, our work cannot stop and will not be deterred.

The police oversight agency must be supported and financed by the city. Most importantly, this agency must be separate from the police department, otherwise, it's a simple case of the fox watching the chickens or more of the same. Fresno needs more. Fresno deserves more. Fresno is ready for more. Fresno has grown up and says, "Ya basta!" **THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE HEARD.**

If you are interested in working with us, here's what we need: a proposal writer. Nancy Marsh and Diane Scott wrote our previous proposals and we still need assistance. People interested in making Fresno a safer more just city for everyone call *Ellie* at 229-9807 or *Rebeca* at 225-7627.



Rebeca Rangel

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## 3 new folks on KFCF board

Was it just apathy, or something worse? Only three people applied for four openings for new Fresno Free College Foundation board members. They were Jeffery Eisinger, Mark Hernandez, and Sue Kern.

During the brief executive session meeting on August 14th they were approved. When the meeting was opened back up to the public it was not announced what the board planned on doing regarding the fourth open position. Committees were established for By-laws, Programming/Policies, Fund Raising and the Annual Banquet. The KPFA Local Advisory Board will hold a full board meeting in Fresno on November 11, 2001. KFCF listeners were heard by the KPFA Local Advisory Board member who was in Fresno in June. They requested more local information to be broadcast in the Bay Area. In the past few weeks I have heard two Fresno stories on the KPFA six o'clock news.

KFCF is also working on training several volunteers to provide news reports. We have met three times. The first meeting was with Aaron Glantz from KPFA and Vic Bedoian, executive director, KFCF, to teach the group how to do news stories. Hopefully, soon you will be hearing local people providing Fresno news on KPFA. Rych Withers has provided us a video on news writing and reporting from the PBS University that was very helpful.



by Vickie Fouts





by Scott Moore

**When** I was at the precocious, impressionable age of nine, my parents decided to uproot my sister and me from our home in a rapidly decaying Fresno neighborhood and transplant us into one of the shiny new developments on the then-easternmost boundary of civilized Clovis.

Construction on our house (only the second, if I remember correctly, on our cul-de-sac) began near the end of the school year and was scheduled to be finalized in July. My mother, being the kind of scrapbook historian typical in the elementary school teacher demographic and, like me, incredulous at our ability to purchase a new house, thought that it would be wise to document the building of our future home with our handy Polaroid camera.

Because our weekly excursions to the site were carried out exclusively in the evening (so as not to disrupt the work) it always seemed to me that the evolution of the house was happening on its own, that there was nothing more natural in the world than for an A-frame to erect itself overnight or for sheetrock to blossom on cue into its vertical position.

Alas, my quasi-organic fantasy was always belied by the thousands of footprints crowded about like mackerel in the surrounding sea of dirt, forcing me to invent appropriate descriptions for the men that were crafting my family's new geographical center. Perhaps because no other image of construction workers existed in my preadolescent mental lexicon, I always envisioned the laborers as such: no-nonsense but jovial, curt yet good-natured, blissfully content with their efforts, prone to hoist a few after a hard day's work, and invariably white, not unlike the men in a series of Bayer commercials airing at the time.

For exactly how long I maintained this unjustified characterization, I am uncertain. I do know that a final, sparsely attended memorial was held for my flannel-clad Treat Williams clone fourteen years later as I stood in the naked frame of a home in a north Fresno development, distributing water and union fliers to the thirsty, criminally underpaid carpenters toiling on the structure.

**M**y guide for this eye-popping experience was Tom Kelly, business representative and organizer for the Carpenters Union Local 701. While Tom exercised his right to perform legally sanctioned union organizing activities throughout the jobsite, I took the opportunity to observe the inhabitants of what I would soon come to know as the underground economy of the Valley housing industry.

The workers, almost exclusively Mexican immigrants, predominantly undocumented, by and large had crossed over from field work for the prospect of earning marginally better wages. In exchange for the (maybe) higher pay, the workers have found themselves caught at the bottom of a system of economic and physical oppression, a system propagated by those in all levels of the construction power hierarchy, from the lowliest subcontractor to the most aristocratic land developer.

The prevailing arrangement, commonly known as the coyote system, has been the standard of local residential construction for as long as it has been non-union. In a typical situation, a contractor or subcontractor will offer a job to someone, usually one of his current workers, as long as the worker is able to provide the

labor force for the assignment. The worker, now a coyote, recruits from family and friends and arranges for their transportation to and from the worksite. *The coyote is paid all of the money for the job, and the responsibility to dole out wages becomes his.*

*It should, at this point, become apparent that the capacity for corruption and misappropriation in this system is boundless.* The carpenters, who, as undocumented immigrants, live in a constant state of silence and vulnerability, are at the mercy of the coyote, the man for whom they depend on wages, transportation, and often times, housing. Since these activities occur in the blind spot of the labor commission, the process is allowed to continue with little to no intervention.

Sammy Blanco began working as a coyote in 1990. That July, he was approached with an offer for a piece-work job, as long as he could supply the extra manpower needed for the work.

At the time, according to Sammy, the pay for piece-work was "decent"; he would be paid between 28 and 31 cents per square foot, an amount from which he would pay himself and his workers.

*The motive behind the contractor's decision to filter through the coyote, as Sammy sees it, is to allow the boss to focus on completing the necessary construction paperwork instead of payroll; some worker advocates believe that the contractors work this way to absolve themselves from probable minimum wage violations. It should also be noted that Sammy's translator, his brother and co-worker Miguel, provided a great deal of his own insight into the state of the coyote system. Consequently, some of Sammy's quotes may meld with Miguel's.*

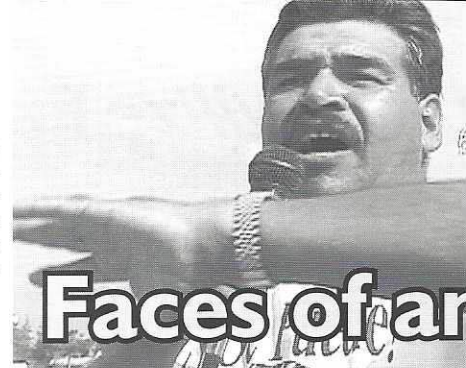
In a mind bogglingly bizarre turn, a couple of years later, the Blancos' boss dropped the piece-work rate by 50%, claiming that the war in the Persian Gulf had thrown America into an economic tailspin that could apparently be remedied only by further breaking the country's already impoverished immigrant workers.

*"We believed him- they said 'We're at war with Iraq, we're going into a crisis.' so they dropped the prices," describes Miguel. Inexplicably, the wages did not return to their prewar levels after the "crisis" was over, even in the wake of skyrocketing housing prices.*



*Says Sammy, "That's when we started suffering. My attitude changed because of the pressure. I had to push my workers to finish the houses, to get paid, to get some bills paid." Whereas before that crucial*

downturn Sammy was making \$1,200 every two weeks, he was now making between \$600 and \$900 to split between himself and three or four workers. (Fortunately for Sammy's workers, he is one of the few fair and generous coyotes. Even now, when he has run into a shortage of jobs, he pays his charges almost all of the money made, keeping only enough for the cost of his gas. He can afford to do this because he knows the cyclical nature of house construction, that he will soon again be inundated with work. (He is also the kind of boss that refers to his workers as *mis amigos*.)





# anguish behind Fresno's up\$cale housing



ers will tell their laborers that they are covered under the company's health insurance. What they are referring to is workers' comp.

According to testimony presented by John Howard, Chief of the Division of Occupational Safety and Health in California, at a

The situation is just as dismal for the residential carpenters not under the coyote system. Tom tells the story of a carpenter, who, because of the piece-work rate he was being paid, was making the equivalent of about \$5 an hour, clearly sub-minimum wage. Additionally, his contractor rented to him the tools required for the job at the rate of \$2 an hour. One day, the boss sent him out to do some driving errands (probably the transportation of the workforce) and told the worker that he would be paid \$10 an hour for his troubles. Imagine the worker's befuddlement on payday when, in addition to not getting paid the appropriate wage for his side job, there was no check at all for him. The contractor's response? Well, even though he had been working for the company for several months, he would not be getting paid because he was an undocumented resident. Tom has filed a wage claim with the labor commissioner on behalf of the worker.

Last October, the Industrial Welfare Commission passed an important, if half-hearted, attempt to improve the lives of California's construction workers. The measure, referred to as Wage Order 16, went into effect on January 1 of this year.

Not only does it, for the first time in the state, require ten minute rest periods for the workers, it also establishes a pay rate of twice the minimum wage for those who provide their own tools (almost all of them do). Tom has found not a single worker actually getting paid that amount. In most cases, they haven't even heard of the new law.

The contractors, an adept group at manipulating numbers, avoid the requirement by misreporting hours worked. While a carpenter may actually work fifty hours in a week making the equivalent of, say, \$7 per hour, his paycheck will show only twenty hours worked at a much higher rate. For the contractors, the outcome is twofold: their licenses are not revoked for violating wage laws and they pay a much lower workers' compensation fee (the higher the wage per hour, the less the employer has to pay for work comp).

Aside from the unscrupulous habits of Valley contractors, another major road block stands in the way of Wage Order 16: no budget was passed for the purpose of enforcing the law. In fact, it appears that the labor commissioner doesn't really know what to do with the wage claims filed under the order. Tom, who boasts of filing the first such wage claim in the state, is still waiting for an answer on several that he sent in months ago.

But, as is always the case when discussing workers' rights, abysmal wages only paint half of the inadequacy picture. It is a common story to hear that, as a way of both luring workers and muting complaints about substandard wages, employ-

June 2000 Assembly hearing on labor and employment, the construction industry, which constitutes about 5% of the workforce, ranks the highest in incidence of illnesses and injuries (9.7 per 100 workers) and the second highest in fatal injuries (nearly 20% of workplace fatalities occur in construction). "Falls from heights of one story or more (usually from roofs or scaffolds) are the most prevalent cause of death in construction." What Howard's testimony fails to mention is that, no matter how frightening the threat of death or injury may be, far scarier is the fact that, in the face of such an "incident," medical assistance for the worker, emergency or otherwise, is, at best, an uncertainty.

Sammy Blanco, beneficent coyote of song and lore, has himself been injured on the job. In addition to frequent, seemingly crippling back pain, he once had the misfortune of slicing open the thumb of his working hand, rendering him incapable of work for two weeks.

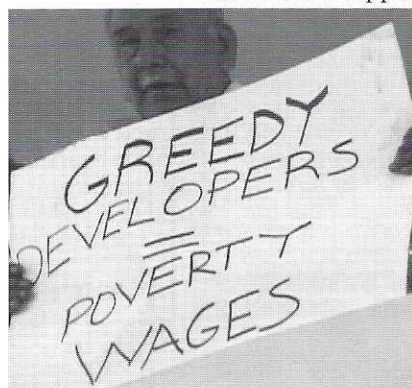
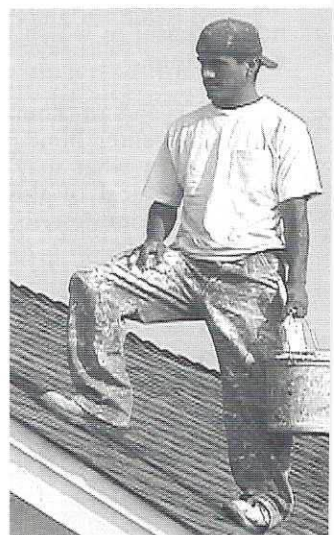
For one reason or another, workers' comp was not an option for Sammy (Many undocumented workers are under the false assumption that either they are ineligible for compensation for work related injuries or that they will be deported if they seek such assistance.)

Sammy often have good reason to believe this (he heard it from their boss or coyote) and ended up spending money out of his own pocket to see a medical professional. The doctor told him that he should go back to his job, but only perform "light work." There is no "light work" for someone in Sammy's position.

As something of a response to the obvious lack of sympathy displayed by Fresno's contractors and developers, the Carpenters' Union, working in conjunction with the Mexican Government, has been developing health insurance for workers' families still in Mexico. Apparently they have secured a rate that will cover a family for a year at a cost less than a month's coverage in the States. Doug Whipple, lead union organizer, cites the reasoning behind this landmark program: "We wanted to help the guys. It's not a lot of money, but waylays some of the carpenters' fears for their families. It shows them we're serious about their well being."

Not all injuries and illnesses come from errant tools. Some significant health and safety

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# Anguished tide begins to build

measures are also frequently shirked by the contractors. Drinking and/or cleaning water for the workers were nonexistent at the sites I visited with Tom. On an excruciatingly hot mid-summer Fresno day, availability of drinking water can become a matter of life and death. In the instances where bathrooms are supplied at a worksite, they are, according to Sammy and Miguel, often decrepit to the point of uselessness. "Es horrible," agrees Tom.

Often times, conditions don't get much better at home. As with most low wage workers, the Valley's residential carpenters spend most of their waking hours working for a company whose products they could scarcely afford.

To drive from the houses in which the carpenters work (growing increasingly large and complicated every year, boasting three car garages and ornate atria given to the buyers as "freebies", an incomprehensible standard in new developments that mean that the carpenters were not paid for that portion of the construction) to the tenements in which they live, perhaps with multiple families, is to illustrate more clearly than ever the economic chasm in which the working poor find themselves at the very bottom.

A good friend of Tom's, an elderly carpenter, blind in one eye, lives in what may be a dwelling typical of those in his caste. Tom describes the situation: "He isn't making squat for wages. His apartment is a little bigger than a pickup truck and his bed takes up most of the space." Yet, out of financial necessity, he has often had to share the apartment with several other carpenters.

Not that the workers' apartments are in any unkempt. The one that I was privileged to visit, while certainly located in a desperately impoverished neighborhood, was beautifully decorated.

And, what the carpenters lack in economic mobility, they make up for with a sense of actual community. Tom invited me to one of his favorite places, a close knit neighborhood of workers who spend their nights playing with their band while the women serve tacos to their visitors. It is an invitation that I plan to accept at the first possible chance.)

And the contractors are all too knowledgeable of their workers' situations. Opines Miguel, "What I see in contractors and subcontractors- I don't know if they're blind or they're just too selfish that they can't even reach out for their own workers to lend a helping hand. On the same token I'd say they are just as human as we are." Perhaps they're just afraid to ask the developers for more money, he wonders.

History, I'm sure, will show that oppressed people can be pushed around for only so long. Four years ago, the Carpenter's

Union embarked on a nation-wide project to organize the undocumented workers in residential construction.

Fresno, with its relatively strong insistence as a non-union town, availability of cheap labor, and booming construction industry, along with Las Vegas and Seattle, has become a hot spot for this battle. Tom Kelly, a life-long carpenter, recognized the necessity of an advocate for the low paid carpenters. He began volunteering as an organizer for the union and soon became a permanent part of the team.

Even before Tom came around, Sammy was busy organizing his fellow workers to demand more money. When he approached the contractor about the subject, the boss at first laughed in his face and then, through some sort of calculator slight of hand (again, masterful fiscal magicians) attempted to prove that Sammy was already making \$12 an hour.

Then, when representatives from the union began making appearances, the contractors began to really feel the pressure to up the wages. Sammy and Miguel are now very active organizers for the union. Both are well known for being hell raisers. In fact, near the end of our interview, Miguel excitedly recounted for me the events of one very successful strike wherein he ran through a development pulling the power plugs to stop work.



Unfortunately, according to Sammy, the people that most took advantage of the pay hikes were the coyotes. The coyotes will offer \$55-\$60 a day (an apparent increase) but will then make the carpenters work nine or ten hours, sometimes more. "Essa total rip-off," says Tom half-jokingly, and Sammy and Miguel agree.

What really needs to happen, all three again agree, is for the coyotes and the workers to truly band together for the benefit of all. If they unite, they can demand more money than by working against each other.

And that is what Tom and the union have been trying to promote these last four years. Armed with bags of iced bottles of water, they have been entering the worksites to educate and encourage workers to fuse into an effective unit and have held organizational meetings at parks and residences. Hundreds of workers have signed a petition granting bargaining power to the union.

The organizers' efforts appear to be paying off. After one of a series of strikes (which often shut down entire neighborhoods' worth of construction), many of the participating carpenters returned to work to find a small but welcomed pay raise. As important as securing better pay and conditions is, perhaps the most significant victory has been the demonstration that the workers are willing to unite in order to shift the balance of power more fairly in their direction.

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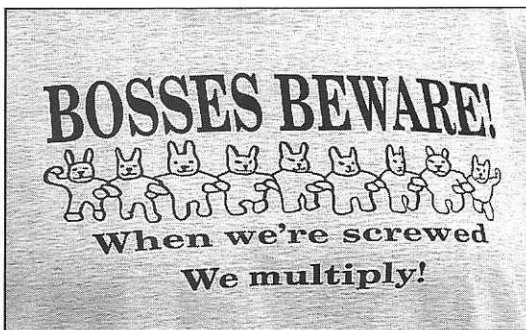
Another aspect of the union's work approaches the issue from a different angle. Tom and Doug have a long record of talking to the contractors themselves, attempting to convince them that bringing their workers into the union is the surest way to obtain company sustainability.

They have been told privately by many contractors that they would like to provide a union environment for their workers; they just don't want to be the only company in town that actualizes the desire.

Doug has commented that he doesn't think that contractors are necessarily bad guys, it's just they have become willing players in a system that rewards building contracts so cheap that can they barely pay poverty wages. So, in late July, the union invited many of the city's largest contractors to a meeting to discuss the union benefits to the companies and their employees.

The goal of the meeting was to arrive at a consensus on the issue, possibly even signing a contract to begin negotiations. When the owners from only two of the approximately ten interested companies attended, the true level of general commitment to the idea became clear.

If the IWC (Industrial Welfare Commission) neglected to include money to enforce Wage Order 16, it most certainly failed to consider the massive amount of time it takes to fill out the incredibly complicated wage claim forms. Because of the fact that many of the workers would have difficulty completing the forms without assistance, Tom has been spending his evenings in the homes



of the underpaid, scribbling out complex math problems, often making three or four trips when needed. To help out with the task, the union has recently joined the Workers' Rights Center, a coalition formed by the Labor/Community Alliance and Amnesty Coalition. The Center has recently hired an assistant, Vicky Valenzuela, mainly to take over a large portion of the wage claim work.

And every sign indicates that more wage violation forms are soon to come pouring in. Tom has had entire crews clamor for his help with filing complaints. Most of the complaints center around being paid less than the new Wage Order 16 level, some less even than the state minimum wage. Other complaints cite a clear labor code violation: the widespread practice of holding mandatory, unpaid "safety meetings" on payday. Those who don't attend don't get paid. Clearly, advocates for the Valley's residential carpenters have their work cut out for them.

As I stood thinking about all this, on that sweltering July afternoon in the shell of a future house, my attention kept returning to the one object that broke up the monotony of lumber and concrete. Installed in the middle of the living room's open wall, where sunlight crept in as if through prison bars, was a marble and metal fireplace. A common, comforting site in the family room of a completed house, the structure in this house resembled some lone petrified organ in the gut of a decomposing skeleton.

What will this place look like in a few months, I pondered, wiping the sweat dripping from my eyebrows? I imagined a family of four, most assuredly white and upper middle class, sitting around this very same fireplace, sipping hot cocoa, mourning the bankruptcy of another dot com, happy to have escaped the increasing segregation of their older neighborhood for the relative homogeneity of North Fresno.

Would they ever entertain even a passing thought about the men, hopelessly engulfed in poverty, who shed their sweat, possibly even blood, for the construction of their new house? Would the parents explain economic injustice and its dastardly effects to the community to their children, or would they leave the youngsters to develop unqualified assumptions of their own, perhaps as ignorant and dangerously delusional as were, at a possibly similar age, my own?



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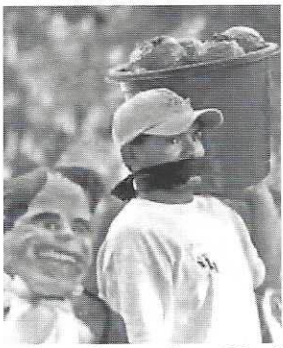
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# YO NO QUIERO TACO BELL!

1 Penny for Justice!

SUPPORT TOMATO PICKERS, **BOYCOTT** TACO BELL



by Fabiola Valdez

On September 22, Fresno residents will have the opportunity to protest against Taco Bell for not supporting farmworkers that pick the tomatoes used in their Chalupas and Burritos. The Taco Bell Truth Tour sponsored by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, will be passing through town as they head on down to the Taco Bell headquarters in Irvine, CA. The bus tour will depart from Florida and make stops in cities such as Denver, Chicago, San Francisco and our very own Fresno!

We are the heart of the agriculture industry, hold the majority of the farmworker families in California, and, have the power to come together as a community and help make this tour a huge success. Taco Bell needs to know that college students in particular, will not fall in their advertising traps and will act upon what they believe is wrong.

Advertising techniques to draw more and more young consumers have been their tactic for the past years. The Fresno Community needs to come together and shout out: **BOYCOTT TACO BELL** to make them understand that we do not believe in human suffering!

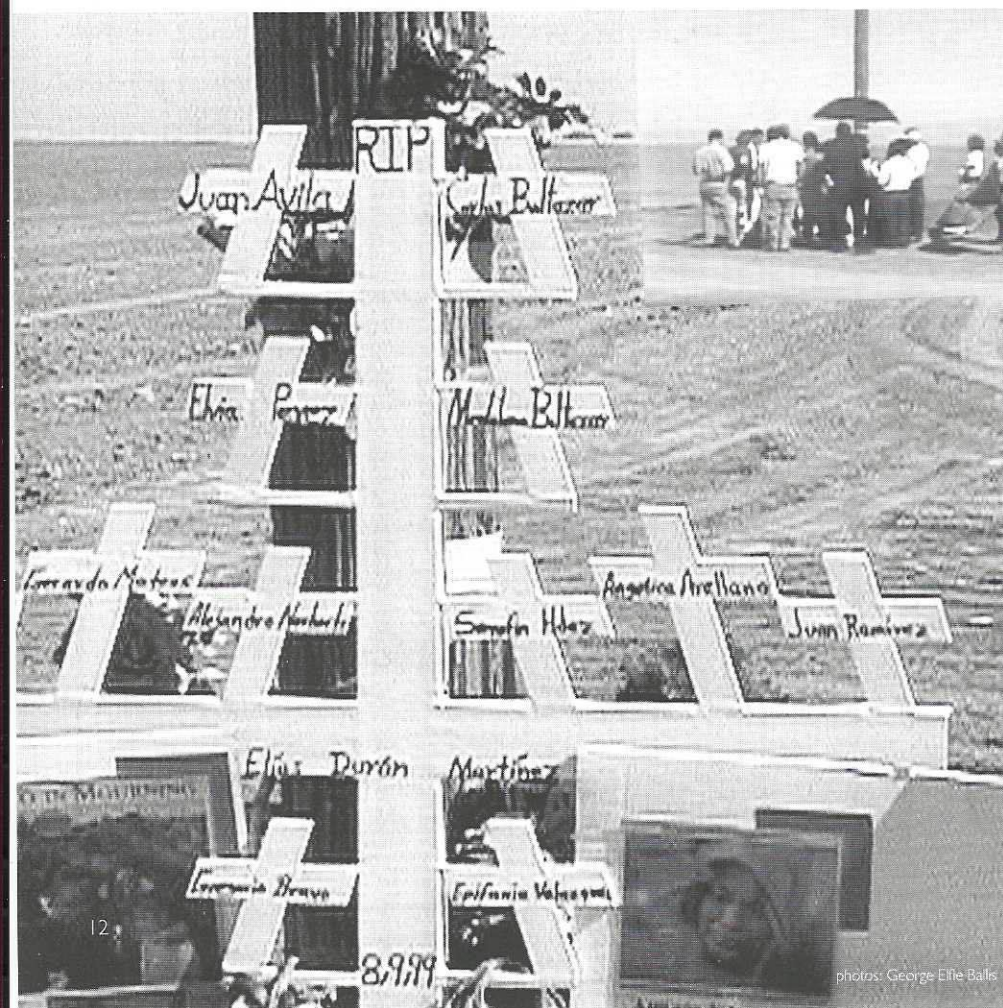
Since 1980 farmworkers have earned the same - 40 cents per every 32lb. bucket of tomatoes that they pick. With inflation, they need 73.5 cents to keep the 2001 value of 40 cents. This campaign has already given them 45-50 cents, but they need a little more.

Farmworkers average \$5,000-\$7,500 a year due to their seasonal work, yet big corporations such as Taco Bell refuse to pay 1 PENNY MORE for every bucket of tomatoes that they buy from the growers. 1 PENNY MORE would bring the price per bucket to 75 cents, assuming that the penny goes to the

workers' wages. With one penny more, workers could have a living wage, something that is long overdue. You can come out and support the Farmworkers in their \$\$ struggle for a better wage: **Saturday, September 22, 1:00 p.m.** in front the Taco Bell located on Cedar Ave, between Shaw Ave. and Bulldog Lane. Join protesters from all over the country and meet the Florida farmworkers that will arrive in the Truth Tour Bus!

For more information contact me at [tapatia4ever@hotmail.com](mailto:tapatia4ever@hotmail.com) or visit the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' website at [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org) Now is the Time for Taco Bell to Stop Supporting Human Suffering, !

**No quiero Taco Bell**  
**Sat • Sept. 22**



## Commemoration Ceremony

Aug. 9, 2001 • Five Points, CA

In memory of  
13 farmworkers killed in 1999  
travelling in an unsafe van

The memorial service turned into a rally demanding Gov. Davis sign AB60, which mandates that everyone including undocumented people have driver's licenses. Current law prohibits undocumented from getting driver's licenses, endangering themselves and all of us on our highways.

Call Davis: 916 445-4633

E-mail: [governor@governor.ca.gov](mailto:governor@governor.ca.gov)

photos: George Elie Balles



# September Events

## SEE YOU THERE

Saturday, September 1 9 AM

**Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** meeting at Denny's restaurant at Willow and Shaw. Call 439-8140 for more information. <http://home.att.net/~barbarapyle/kennedy/kennedy.htm>

Saturday, September 1 12 Noon - 2 PM

**Protest The Gap's use of sweatshops.** Demonstration will gather at Fashion Fair (Shaw Avenue and Angus Street at the north end of the shopping center). This month The United Students Against Sweatshops will set up a table inside Fashion Fair and hand out fliers. Call Gabrielle Kirkland for more information: 875-0057

Monday, September 3 Labor Day

Wednesday, September 5 3:30 PM

Stir it Up on KFCF 88.1 with your host Pam Whalen from the **Labor/Community Alliance** focusing on labor organizing, workplace issues, and immigration.

Wednesday, September 5-7 PM

**FREE OPEN MIC POETRY READING** AT FRESNO STATE'S COFFEEHOUSE & PUB: Come celebrate the spoken word and the end of summer with us at Fresno State's Coffeehouse & Pub (across from the University Student Union)! Poetry, prizes, performance & plenitude! COME JOIN US FOR THE FINEST POETRY IN FRESNO!!!

Saturday, September 8 9:30 AM

**Fresno Center for Nonviolence** monthly meeting at 985 N. Van Ness. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see their web page at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence/> or call 559-23PEACE (559-237-3223).

Monday, September 10

**Deadline for submissions** to the September issue of the Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter. Send to <LCAeditor@mediaone.net>.

Monday, September 10 7:30 PM

Monthly meeting of the **Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides** (FresCAMP). Call 439-0280 or 227-6134 for further information.

Tuesday, September 11 1:30 PM.

Important court appearance in the **criminal proceedings against THE GAP 20** will be held in the Fresno County Courthouse in Judge Hamlin's court. For background on this issue see page 5 & 6 in this newsletter. Community support is appreciated. Call (559) 226-0477 for more information.

Wednesday, September 12 12 NOON

**Community Hunger and Nutrition Forum**, sponsored by Fresno Metro Ministry. Trinity will be held at the Lutheran Church, 3973 N. Cedar. For more information: call 485-1416 or email <metromin@qnis.net>.

Wednesday, September 12 3:30 PM

**Fresno Center For Nonviolence radio show** on KFCF, 88.1 FM. Vincent Lavery hosts the FCNV radio show.

Thursday, September 13 7:00 PM

**Fresno County Green Party** Council Meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness Ave (S. of Olive). The Fresno County Green Party invites you to its regular monthly County Council meeting. The four pillars of the international Green movement are Social Justice, Grassroots Democracy, Nonviolence, and Ecological Wisdom. Call 265-3647 or go to <http://www.greens.org/cal/fresno>

Friday, September 14 3:30 PM

Lloyd Carter will host his monthly radio show, **Down in the Valley**, focusing on San Joaquin Valley water, environment and Ag issues, on KFCF, 88.1 FM.

Saturday, September 15 3 PM

**JOIN CRITICAL MASS** ON THEIR MONTHLY RIDES THROUGHOUT FRESNO to educate motorists that bicyclists exist, that we are entitled to an equal share of the roads, that the politicians need to work to assure our safety with bike lanes. Meet on Fresno City College grassy area by the Administration Building.

Saturday, September 15 7 PM

**FAITH PETRIC** concert in the Garden at 6661 N. Forkner, Fresno Adults:\$10/ kids under 12 \$5. Sponsored by the Fresno Folklore Society INFO: 431-365

Tuesday, September 18 7:30 PM

**Fresno Stonewall Democrats** meets on the third Tuesday of every month. The August meeting will be at the Express Restaurant, 3075 N. Maroa, Fresno. For more information call Jay Hubbell 292-4905, e-mail: hubbell@online.no, or visit their new web site at: <http://www.mangen.com/stonewall/>

Wednesday, September 19 3:30 PM

STIR IT UP on KFCF 88.1 FM featuring the **'Green Scene'** and hosted by Theresa Rogerson and Jeremy Hofer of the Fresno County Green Party and the Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (FresCAMP), this program focuses on Green values, including ecological wisdom, social justice and grass roots democracy.

Thursday, September 20 7:30 AM

**Community Health Care Roundtable** sponsored by Metro Ministry meets at Trinity Lutheran Church 3973 N. Cedar (between Ashlan and Dakota). For more information: call 485-1416 or email <metromin@qnis.net>.

Saturday, September 22

**Boycott Taco Bell.** See the article on page 12 and then join the PROTEST at a local Taco Bell. Call Gabrielle Kirkland for more information: 875-0057

Saturday, September 22 6 PM

Join with us as we **celebrate the 5 year anniversary** of the Labor/Community Alliance. The party will be held at 6661 N Forkner in Fresno. See article on page 16 for more information or call 226-0477.

Saturday, September 22 7 PM

An **Evening in Paradise:** Hawaiian Luau and Polynesian Show to support the Living Room' services for men, women and children infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Dinner and Show 7:00 PM. \$30.00 per person. For tickets call 559 485-3667

Sunday, September 23 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**San Joaquin River Parkway** and Conservation Trust will host RiverFest at Lost Lake Regional Park from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (entrance fee: \$3 per car). Come out to the river and enjoy canoe rides, fly fishing demonstrations, international food, live music, Native American weavers and drummers, Hmong dancers, a live birds of prey exhibit, nature walks, square dancing and more. For more information about RiverFest, call (559) 248-8480.

Monday, September 24 6:30 PM

The **Labor/Community Alliance meeting** at 985 N. Van Ness. Call 226-0477 for details, or see <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/home/>

Wednesday, September 26 3:30 PM

**"Stir It Up" WILPF-style** on KFCF 88.1 FM. Join hosts Lauralee Crain Carbone and Zay Guffy-Bill.

Friday, September 28 5 PM

**Street Heat** on KFCF 88.1 FM featuring Labor and Community activists.

Friday, September 28 7 PM

**"Secrets of Silicon Valley,"** a brand new documentary about the exploited underclass in the computer industry, will be shown at Fresno City College Forum Hall 101. The award winning co-director of the video, Alan Snitow, will accompany the film, tell the story behind it, and answer questions. The film reveals some dirty little secrets about the high-tech world of Silicon Valley. It covers the exploitation of production workers in electronic sweatshops, many of whom are immigrant "permatemps" with no unions and few rights. For more information contact Vic Beldoian at the KFCF office, 233-2221.

Saturday, September 29 9 am

**WILPF Program meeting** with Sarah Hedgpeh-Harris, President of Fresno Unified School District Board of Education. See page 15 for details.

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Every Thursday and Friday 1 - 3 PM

**Radio Grito** is on the air (in Spanish) bringing you Community Radio at its finest. Listen on KBIF 900 AM as Proyecto Campesino brings you news and information about our valley. Call ins are welcome. Have something you want people to know about? Call them up and be a guest. For more information call (559) 733-4844.

Every Saturday 1-2 PM

**Food Not Bombs** feeds the hungry near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. Volunteers are needed to help cook food Saturday mornings, 9:30 AM at Sierra Vista United Methodist Church, corner of Maple and Illinois. Donations of good or almost good produce can be dropped off also. They are always in need of servers at the park. For more information call 266-5305 Or 452-0277 (ask for Dallas). Visit their web site at: <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB/>

Every Saturday 8 PM

**Centro Bellas Artes dance** at 1048 E Street. Merengue, Salsa, Rock, Cumbias and more. This is a fund raiser to save the Centro Bellas Artes cultural center. \$5 at the door Call 237-2783 for more information.



## HOW TO SPEND \$\$\$?

by Richard Stone

Our conversations (still in progress) about how to use the \$12,000 special funds have been intense and fruitful. The focal question seems to be "What does the Center do best, and do uniquely?" The way I would phrase one part of the answer is, "We find a need...and point to it."

We seem well-equipped to take in the various activities of other organizations, to receive an array of messages from emerging but unhoused concerns, to receive proposals from individuals who have some particular activity on their minds. We then serve as resource to articulate, support, amplify, connect--and allow something new to happen.

Our manpower and financial resources are modest. But we offer the physical facility of the Center; the umbrella of our non-profit status; financial and publicity services; start-up and supportive dollars; encouragement and a wide-branching set of contacts/referrals ("our feet are in many camps").

A second part of my answer is "We're good at formulating the NEXT meta-issue, the one now emerging as a problem that many of our allies are facing in common and are prepared to act on together." A few years ago, when we brought Bill Moyer in for a workshop, the question was how we understand our relation to each other, and achieve a common sense of purpose and timing.

Earlier this year, we brought people together to begin dialogue about use of the media, still a hotly debated topic, but the debate is now around actualities as much as possibilities. Currently we have convened a series of meetings around building bridges between different "communities".

My sense is that the emerging issue is money and resources. That our \$12,000 (a meagre enough treasure) has catalyzed this discussion seems to be emblematic of the Center's role.

### RIGHT STUFF ON TV

Our TV show has survived through August, thanks to the hard work of folks such as Ray Ensher, Angela Price, Steve Malm, Julius Rasmussen; the fundraising event featuring Vince Lavery and Kevin Hall & Friends; individual donations and our new business sponsors.

We produce the show in the midst of paradox: the people we look to to support the effort are not the intended audience, and often are dissatisfied with the production (and its cost--relatively high for what we're used to paying, amazingly cheap for what we're trying to do.) In fact, most of our friends tell us they don't even watch TV.

The show is a work in progress. We continue to argue about its purpose and how to achieve it. We constantly improvise because we don't have the time or means to do what we'd like to do.

We are dealing with a high-pressure medium that requires healthy egos to stand up to the challenge; and that means clashing points of view.

Yet when you talk with people who actually watch the show (and I do, often being the one to field the call-ins) it becomes clear that there are people watching who are mostly grateful for the attempt at honest discussion and challenging the claim to Truth of any partyline, but especially the right wing version of reality.

Anyone who believes in the importance of reaching the unpoliticized majority of our populus, and interested in doing so via the television air waves, is welcome to join the weekly planning meetings held at our Center on Monday evenings at 7:30. If we are still producing in September, that is. Call Vincent at 439-0821 to find out.

THE WELCH REPORT August 8, 2001 Jack H. Welch, M.D.

## GETTING HOT HERE — BUSH WON'T ACT

President Bush this spring announced the broad outline of his approach to global warming: more study, with a vague commitment to participate in an international process to develop a new framework for greenhouse-gas reductions globally.

*"Coming on the heels of Vice-President Cheney's plan to expand the use of fossil fuels, the president's announcement makes clear that his administration will do essentially nothing about the most serious environmental problem of the 21st century."*

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), a highly reputable organization, is showing that solutions to global warming are both feasible and effective.

*"They have released a new analysis of renewable energy illustrating how nearly 1,000 of the 1,600 new fossil fuel plants V.P. Cheney called for could be displaced by energy efficiency and renewable energy. UCS has analyzed federal fuel economy standards for automobiles and SUVs, providing a solid foundation for new legislation to close the SUV loophole."*

How can one distinguish misinformation from fact when one is not expert in the field of climate change? First, seek out a reliable source of information. "The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the world's foremost scientific authority on global warming.

The IPCC notes that the Earth's average temperature has increased by approximately 1° F since 1860 and projects that it could rise another 2.5-10.4° F over the next 100 years if emissions are not dramatically reduced."

### 1998 THE WARMEST YEAR EVER

The warming observed in the northern hemisphere during the 20th century appears to be the largest during the past 1,000 years, with the 1990s the warmest decade and 1998 the warmest year. *"Global changes are occurring in response. Glaciers are shrinking, permafrost thawing, and ice in rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier than in the past. Sea levels rose about 10 times faster during the 20th century than the average rate during the last 3,000 years."*

Who is responsible for this? The IPOC cites new and better evidence of human influence on climate, especially greenhouse—gas emissions from human activities.

Further, in separating misinformation from fact, we must distinguish the real science from "junk science". "The latter is information that has not been subjected to the rigors of the scientific method and peer review process. At its worst, junk science is nothing but opinion and speculation given seeming respectability by scientists financially supported by self-interested lobby groups."

Don Kennedy, chief editor of Science, wrote in the March 30, 2001 issue, "By now the scientific consensus on global warming is so strong that it leaves little room for the defensive assertions that keep emerging" from a shrinking group of scientific skeptics.

What will we say to our grandchildren when they ask what we did back in 2001 "when we heard clear warnings from the world's scientific community and when we had affordable solutions, when people in other countries shook their heads in disbelief over the lack of leadership from the world's biggest political and economic power, its single greatest consumer of energy resources, and its greatest polluter?" (Source: "Nucleus", the magazine of the UCS Summer 2001)



## SEPTEMBER WILPF EVENTS CALENDER

There will be no board meeting in September.

**Wed 9/ 26 "Stir It Up" WILPF-style.** Tune in to KFCF 88.1 FM 3:30 to 4 p.m with hosts Lauralee Crain Carbone and Zay Guffy-Bill.

**Sat 9/29 WILPF Program meeting.** Sarah Hedgepeth-Harris, President of Fresno Unified School District Board of Education. See Catalyst in this edition.

### Catalyst:

**WILPF Program Meeting Slated With Sarah Hedgepeth-Harris,** President of Fresno Unified School District On Saturday, Sept 29th at 9 am-noon. Sarah Hedgepeth-Harris, President of Fresno Unified School District Board of Education and longtime WILPF member, will evaluate the state of the school district in terms of her goals when she took office. She will also answer questions and take comments. We have asked her to report on the state of the Edison Project at Bethune School, the conflict resolution activities in our schools and the use of excessive testing to evaluate student achievements. Please come to Rosemarie Splight Guglielmino's home, 940 E Cambridge.

Long-time Legislative Chair, Joyce Huggins, Retires Her Duties The Fresno Branch of WILPF proclaims a big "THANK YOU" to Joyce Huggins for her years as Legislative Chair, keeping us informed about government moves (and non-moves) related to peace and social justice issues. *A job well done, Joyce!*

### Local Health Coalition News by Marcia McLane

As your WILPF representative to the Local Health Coalition I want to tell you some of the more interesting things that have been happening. Our Thursday morning group has continued to meet together @ 7:30am each week. We continue to interview City and County officials and others that are busy directing our City and County government as well as the CEO's from Community Hospital and the various clinics in Fresno and Fresno County. We look at how Community Hospital is keeping the agreement that it has with Fresno County. They are the only "Safety Net" for the medically poor in our county. Our emphasis has been as always to become aware of the injustices in all parts of our community. *On the third Thursday: 7:30 AM of every month we meet at Trinity Lutheran Church* in their social hall for a public meeting. Our emphasis has been to examine the health care in the rural part of the county and to be more aware of who is not served by our present system and attempt to find solutions. The public is invited and our attendance has routinely been between 60 people. If you are interested please come and join us.

### Fresno Branch WILPF Members Open Charter School by Lauralee Crain Carbone

The phrase "Back to School!" had special meaning for three local WILPF members: Klara East, Denise Carmen and Lauralee Crain Carbone. On August 13th, 2001, after over a year's planning, grant-writing, studying, meetings, and lobbying, these three homeschooling moms opened the Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center, a public Charter School, chartered by Tulare County Board of Education and located in Exeter. One unique aspect of this venture is that it's a grassroots effort, by and for homeschoolers, which sees its mission as supporting parents, not policing them.

Parents are provided with instructional resources such as textbooks and supplemental materials, frameworks for organization and record keeping, and workshops designed to assist parents to become more effective teachers. Students are offered optional enrichment classes and weekly field trip opportunities. Parents and students work in partnership with the Learning Center's Education Coordinator to create an individualized learning program for each child. The individualized learning program is driven by the State Standards while allowing parents the freedom to individualize instructional strategies to fit the needs of their child(ren) and their family.

ERCLC currently has 25 children enrolled with the phone ringing off the hook from interested parents. Klara East serves as both Director and Education Coordinator. Another Education Coordinator will be hired soon with the rapidly increasing enrollment. ERCLC operates under the non-profit corporation, Autodidact, an umbrella organization that funds the school and other progressive programs for the community. In addition, this non-profit enterprise will educate the general public about the rights and responsibilities of homeschooling; provide non-discriminatory scouting programs; activities to promote positive parenting, educational children's activities, fieldtrips and lectures; publish educational articles regarding the various programs offered by the corporation; and promote conflict resolution skills and activities.

### Book Review: God's Last Offer

by Ed Ayres, Four Walls, Eight Windows Publishing, 1999. Compiled by Polly Victor

In November 1992, a major manifesto was released, worldwide. Signed by over 1500 distinguished scientists, the World Scientists' Warning to Humanity began: "The Environment is Suffering Critical Stress." It listed the dangerous conditions of the atmosphere, water resources, oceans, soil, forests, living species and population. Then came the WARNING: "We, the undersigned, senior members of the world's scientific community, hereby warn all humanity of what lies ahead. A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."

Continuing with "WHAT WE MUST DO," the scientists then urged a great movement for change from all the world's people. Instead of a turnaround, the 1990's showed a world *increase* in all the danger signals. But a more informed awareness has developed.

God's Last Offer by Ed Ayres, editor of World-Watch, appeared in 1999. With its improbable title, some may pass it by, but the book does not exaggerate. Ayres bases his themes on four spikes, each in crisis.

- First, the Spike of Carbon Dioxide concentration.
- Next, the Extinction of Species.
- Third, Consumption.
- Fourth, the Population Spike.

Clear charts demonstrate the stability of past millenia and the vast increases of the past century skyrocketing in the last twenty years. This book confirms fears that the world is on the brink of devastating water and food shortages.

The massive Oglalla fossil aquifer underlying the wheat belt of our country is being exhausted. Our own San Joaquin Valley has long had a falling water table. With the construction of the Aswan Dam, Egypt has deprived the Nile Delta of the sedimentation that nourished its food supply, and once fed Rome. In China, farmland is shrinking. WorldWatch and our government satellites, have ascertained that by 2030, China will need to import 200 million tons of grain, already the world's capacity. In the last chapter, Ayres presents the major changes needed. They are sensible, but extreme extensions of environmental and evolutionary principles, for which we must face the risks.

WILPF members, we encourage you to submit any information you want to share with other members. Call or email Zay at 227-2133 or [zaygb@earthlink.net](mailto:zaygb@earthlink.net). And thanks to this month's contributors for the wonderful info they provided.





As the editor of this publication I really hope you will join us at our upcoming party as we celebrate our success and survival during the last 5 years. Just as important, I want our readers, writers, proofreaders, and editorial board to join us in marking this occasion as we begin our next 5 years of printing this great publication. We can't do this without you!



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# Labor/Community ALLIANCE

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Make sure you don't miss any issue of our new magazine format, dynamically linking the local left through  
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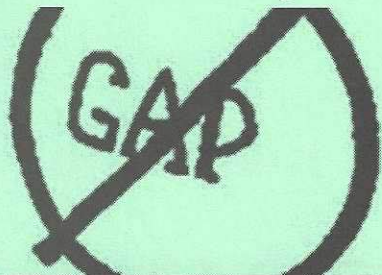
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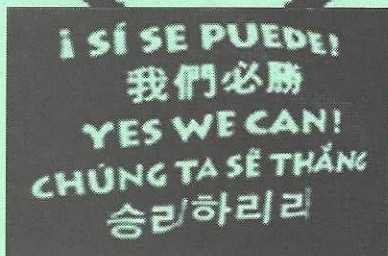


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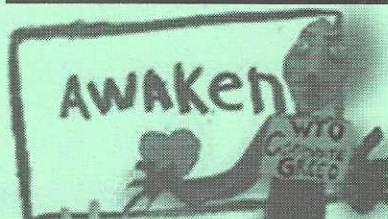
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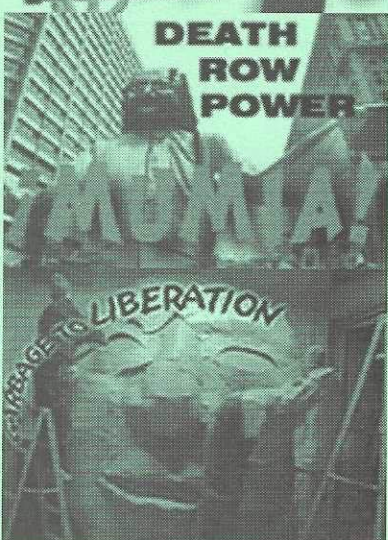
Fresno GAP sweatshop protests, arrests, city hall face-offs, legal tangles. 20 minutes. \$125 value.



Faces of anguish behind Fresno's up\$cale housing start to rise up and organize. 10 minutes. \$70 value.



6 union plumbers immersed in the Seattle WTO protests & shutdown. 32 minutes. \$125 value.



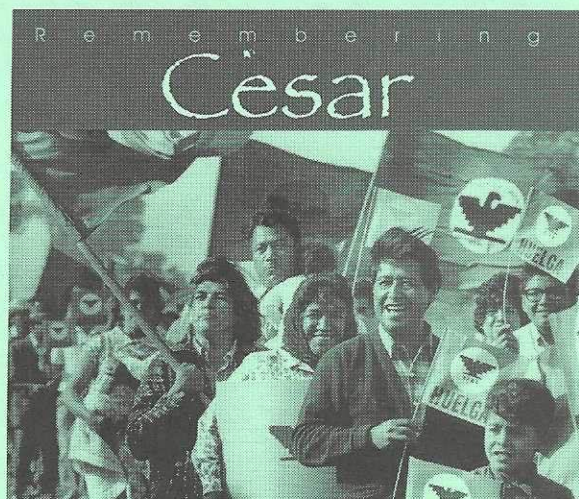
Fresno teenager discovers inspiration for personal and community transformation at save Mumia rally. 10 minutes. \$70 value.

Inside the April 2000 IMF-World Bank protests in Washington, D.C. Mass arrest of puppets. Details of IMF-World Bank outrages. 55 minutes. \$175 value.

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# The California Faculty Association – Taking a stand for our university

**THE CFA is committed to a California State University that:**

- ✓ PROTECTS ACADEMIC FREEDOM
- ✓ SUPPORTS TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP
- ✓ HONORS THE PROFESSOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP
- ✓ RESPECTS THE VOICE OF THE FACULTY

## OUR BARGAINING GOALS:

- increase percentage of CSU budget committed to instruction
- increase the ratio of tenure-track faculty to full-time equivalent students
- close the faculty salary gap
- provide non-tenure track faculty with long-term contracts and strengthened due process protections
- ensure that YRO summer term is paid and operated with the same standards as other terms
- protect faculty authority over curricular decisions (e.g. distance learning)

## Petition of Support

We, the undersigned, support the CFA's commitment to improving the CSU and the quality of its education, and to reversing the trends that have threatened that quality and the professional role of CSU faculty. We commend the CFA, the faculty's professional association and collective bargaining agent, for taking a principled stand on the issues facing the university and its faculty.

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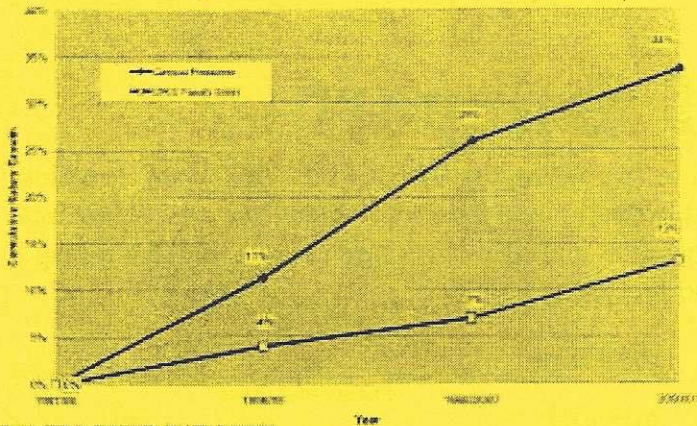
# TURNING THE TIDE

The future of the CSU is inseparable from the future of its faculty. And the current crises of the CSU are inseparable from recent management policies, which undermine the pay, professional authority, and morale of that faculty.

**Over the last decade those policies have increasingly imposed a corporate model:**

- effectively freezing the hiring of tenure-track faculty
- increasing the ranks of part-time faculty, who lack adequate pay, protections, and institutional support
- drastically increasing the salaries of high-level administrators in comparison to lagging faculty salaries
- increasing faculty workload and the size of many classes
- decreasing the percentage of the CSU budget for instruction

**Cumulative Growth in Campus Presidents and Faculty Salaries from 1997/98 to 2000/01**



The current contract negotiations present the opportunity to reverse these trends and shape the future of the faculty and the university. Success will require that faculty be prepared to stand up for the CSU if necessary to insure a collective bargaining agreement that protects their professional role and a quality education for students.

**California Faculty Association: 310-641-4430**  
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**When the petition on the reverse is filled out, please fold this self-mailer, with the CFA address on the outside, tape and drop in any U.S. mail box.**



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