



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

EcoVillage Project/Dakota EcoGarden

This is Nancy Waidtlow writing my first EcoGarden report in a long time. First thing, the project is now owned by the nonprofit EcoVillage Project.

My health problems have made it necessary for me to back off from much hands-on work. Luckily, Gerry Bill has taken up the slack. What I do try not to miss is the Second Saturday garden work party with vegan/blueberry pancakes and fresh-squeezed orange juice. (Volunteers are always welcome. Join us.)

Here's a little recent history. We stopped taking new residents at the beginning of Covid and went down to seven residents. We started accepting new residents again a few months ago, and our EcoGarden population quickly grew to 16—more than we'd ever had. Having three couples made this larger population possible.

As the gardening, cleaning and other upkeep is done by residents, the place has looked extra good with so many people dividing up the work. Many residents have found jobs, but low wages and high rents are huge problems, as is transportation.

Our "oversight board," also known as the "small board," consists of Gerry Bill, Dixie Salazar, Caroline Jackson and Bev Fitzpatrick. Our funding is entirely made up of donations from the community.

You are invited to visit the Dakota EcoGarden, at 2231 W. Dakota Ave., to volunteer or even to become a member of the big, or small, board. Call Gerry Bill at 559-341-2254 to make an appointment.

U.S. Democracy Could Work If We Got Rid of Racism

The people have spoken. Sen. Raphael Warnock was the people's choice to represent the State of Georgia and to bring back "balance" to the Congress. This race was about the balance of power.

Power: "The ability or capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events." One could say that this was the job description for a senator.

I was in Atlanta when the runoff took place between Rev. Raphael Warnock and Herschel Walker. I recall that it was a tense evening as we waited to hear the results of the ballots. I recall voters standing in the rain patiently waiting to cast their vote, and I could only admire their commitment to change.

A lot of smear ads on both candidates were blasting the media, but that did not deter the voters from casting their ballots. It was as though people had already made up their minds on who was getting their vote. Before my very eyes, I was witnessing a red state changing to purple.

I was glued to the media as both these men moved closely to the finish line. I would remind myself to breathe. I thought to myself while waiting for the results: "Georgia is about to put themselves in the history books once again."

I could not help thinking that in my lifetime, Jim Crow laws were around to keep Blacks in their places and make it difficult for them to vote. A racist society that did not place much value on Black folks. Or, maybe they knew that once we discovered our power, we would make change.

I imagined the blood of ancestors running down onto the ground, drenched with their blood from the beatings and hangings, and the violence that was done to "Black bodies." But this night, the spirits of the ancestors would witness history in the making one more time, as Georgia would be electing their man for the Senate seat. "Don't nobody get it twisted, Georgians are woke."

What did these two candidates have in common? Well, they both wanted to win the Senate seat. They both presented themselves as men of faith, the same faith, in fact. Their last names started with W.

They were both Black men but on the opposite side of the political agenda; when it came to their political positions, they were very different in what they thought the people wanted. It was obvious that Walker was running as a representative of Republican ideals and Warnock would run on the Democratic ticket.

Do I really need to discuss the "quality" of the candidates? Whom do you think had the credentials for this seat? It was a no-brainer, but why then did the Republicans back Walker, and with big money I might add! Let's unpack racism or maybe the act of racism.

Why did the political powers run two Black men? To split the Black vote. You cannot get any more racist than that! Two Black men, one representing the Republicans, Walker, and one, the Democratic candidate Warnock, for one Senate seat.

Who had more experience on the job? Yep, Sen. Warnock. So, why did the Republicans run Walker? It's a rhetorical question at best. Could you imagine the Reverend signing up to be a "running back" for any football team? Yet the Republicans ran a running back for a touchdown and put money on it. Walker ran an expensive campaign with big money supporting him—Republican money backing an inexperienced candidate.

Do we really want to "Unpack Racism"?

One person described Walker's candidacy this way to me: What happened in Georgia was an interesting sight to see. Here you have a party (the Republicans) that claims to be the Christian party, appealing to White evangelicals and Christian voters primarily, which is a large voting bloc that has "power" in southern states. But in Georgia, they won't vote for a pastor because he's a Democrat, while the guy they are voting for has had problems with adultery, assault, abortion and telling the truth, let alone with making sense while he is talking, period.

In fact, when White people make fun of Black people, he (Walker) actually fits into that character that they (White folks) stereotype us (Blacks) as, and yet they voted for him because he's Republican.

Here is what is even more hilarious about that race for the Senate: The party (Republicans) that always asks "why does everything have to be about race all the time," and seems to be offended when you bring race into something, yet they put an unintelligent (in my opinion) Black man against the Black man running as a Democrat, with the hopes he would win the Black vote.

They could have chosen anyone smarter, but they just needed "a Black guy" to run because they thought that was their best chance of winning. That says a lot about how the Republicans perceive our intelligence level as Black people. Power comes at any cost!

Well, the Reverend won and I say "power to the real people" for casting a vote for Senator Raphael Warnock. Big ups my brother.

—Dr. Jean Kennedy, PsyD/OB/OD

THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY WILPF. THE WILPF PAGE IS USUALLY COMPILED AND EDITED BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES (LENIVREEVES@GMAIL.COM).

Our Location and Description

Dakota EcoGarden: 2231 W. Dakota Ave., Fresno, CA 93705. Big house in front (light green, two-story, banner on front fence). There are two large bedrooms upstairs in the house with a bathroom between them.

We actually charge a small rent for these. Residents in outside shelters are charged a materials fee only.

Behind the house are three Art Dyson-designed bedroom shelters (Dyson is president of the "big board"). Other shelters outside are tents on platforms with rainproof covers and corrugated metal roofs. The 10 x 10 tents inside have straight sides and include a clothes closet and a real bed. Each tent has a small solar panel that powers a light and a fan.

The house has a kitchen, a bathroom, a computer room, a living room, a TV room and a living room. Freezer and refrigerator space and shelf storage are provided for each resident.

Outside residents are invited to use the house to get warm, or cool, or to sit on a comfortable couch or chair. There also is an outdoor kitchen, an outdoor half-bath and a separate outdoor shower. About a fourth of the lot is devoted to an organic garden with vegetables and fruit available to the residents.

Fresno WILPF Book Donation to Libraries

Many parents/guardians/caregivers are searching for support in addressing the tough questions being raised by today's school-age children and youth as they confront social/political questions raised at home, at school and in the broader community. Using the books selected by the Jane Addams Peace Association as award winners for the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards 2022, the conversations can begin.

The Jane Addams Children's Book Awards, sponsored by the Jane Addams Peace Association, annually recognizes children's books of literary and aesthetic excellence that effectively engage children in thinking about peace, social justice, global community and equity for all people.

A national committee of members with passion for and expertise in children's literature and social justice makes the choices each year. The awards have been presented annually since 1953.

The Library Committee of the Fresno Branch of WILPF has celebrated this annual literacy event by gifting six county libraries branches and Jane Addams Elementary School in the Fresno Unified School District with sets of the award-winning and honor books as part of our commitment to building better communities.

For 2022, *Shirley Chisholm Dared: The Story of the First Black Woman in Congress* by Alicia D. Williams was the winner in the Younger Children category. Throughout her life, Chisholm dared to ask questions and challenge the status quo.

This picture book biography portrays Chisholm as an outspoken individual who was curious, stood her ground, pushed the boundaries of what was considered "proper" and blazed trails of her own as a teacher, a school director, a New York State Assemblywoman and a Congresswoman, an inspiration for future generations to follow in her footsteps and dare to follow their own dreams.

The winner in the Older Children category, *How to Find What You're Not Looking For* by Veela Hiranandani, is a historical novel set in the years after the *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court ruling.

Ariel struggles with dysgraphia and is bullied because she is Jewish. Her sister, Leah, runs away with Raj, a recently immigrated Indian man, but her family rejects the marriage because Raj is not Jewish.

Throughout the novel, Ariel questions behaviors she deems contradictory and expresses her thoughts through poetry, while she bravely asks the adults in her world difficult questions that compel them to interrogate their actions and beliefs, demonstrating that activism also includes confronting the everyday acts of racism and antisemitism that we often witness within our own families and communities.

There are also two Honor Books in each category. For younger children, these are *Runaway: The Daring Escape of Ona Judge* by Ray Anthony Shepard and *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre* by Carole Boston Weatherford. For older children, they are *Strong as Fire, Fierce as Flame* by Supriya Kelkar and *Rez Dogs* by Joseph Burcha.

After being cataloged, a six-book set will be received by each of six Fresno County Public Library branches—Sunnyside, Gillis, West Fresno, Betty Rodriguez, Mosqueda and Central. These book sets are purchased from Petunia's Place with monies from donations and fundraising activities of the Fresno Branch of WILPF.

For more information about the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards, resources and activities, visit www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/book-award/.

Envisioning a future where people actively work to dismantle injustices and build a more peaceful, equitable world is the vision that the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards 2022 celebrates.

To support this annual literary event, you may donate to WILPF Fresno Branch, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

—Cheryl Caldera, WILPF Fresno Library Committee Chair

WILPF MEETING

Jan. 12, Thursday, 7 p.m., online for sure, and maybe also in person at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and a call-in number. For more information, contact Teresa at taca_03@gmail.com or Leni at lenivreeves@gmail.com.

STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM

Jan. 25, 3 p.m. (fourth Wednesday of each month). Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

UNPACKING RACISM

Resumes on Jan. 29 at 6:30 p.m. With Dr. Jean Kennedy. RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

WOMEN IN BLACK

Jan. 4, noon, Courthouse (first Wednesday of each month). Check first with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-349-3777.

MEMBERSHIP

Send dues to WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755.

For questions and information updates, e-mail Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.