

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

PROGRESSIVE CULTURE, POLITICS, ART, AND ENTERTAINMENT SINCE 1996

10

INFILTRATED!

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
CONTINUES TO INFILTRATE FRESNO
PEACE GROUPS

15

MAY IS BIKE MONTH

CELEBRATE A MONTH OF EVENTS
AND RIDES FOR ALL CYCLISTS

17

MOTHERS DAY

HONOR MOTHER WITH RALLIES IN
THE STREETS.

THE COUNTER-RECRUITING EDITION!

VOLUME 1 ISSUE NO. 6 MAY 2005



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

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PROFILES OF LOCAL ACTIVISTS

By Richard Stone

DANVEER YASEEN—BETTER KNOWN AS DAN— has become an active activist in a short time. Though holding a progressive perspective throughout his adult life, as an immigrant from Pakistan he kept a low profile. Until 9/11.

Dan says he remembers well first going to a street rally, then to a gathering at the UU Church of Fresno for a discussion of responses to the attack. There, comments by Mike Rhodes galvanized him to action. On Mike's Web site, Dan located an organizing meeting for a new antiwar group. So it happened that he was present at the inception of what became Peace Fresno. Now, just two and a half years later, Dan finds himself president of that organization and on the Board of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence.

Dan describes a major part of his personal agenda as educating people to understand how they've been disfranchised by the military/industrial complex. He says, "I've thought it through and war is not the answer. If it were, we'd have had peace years ago." Dan views war as a stratagem of corporate capitalism to keep the

general public from looking after its true interests, meanwhile showering wealth on corporate beneficiaries. He is incensed by the disinformation and fear tactics that won support for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and he sees his involvement with Peace Fresno as a direct response of truth to lies.

Dan's work with the Center for Nonviolence represents his broader vision of educating people to alternative economic and political priorities. "We've watched big business's control of the government turn the US into a welfare state for corporations. We need to change the basis of our economic relationships, and we need to change nonviolently."

Working with Peace Fresno has brought Dan into alliance with people and groups from all over the Valley, and he has found new skills in helping organize large events like Rally in the Valley and in building coalitions. He says his natural strong suit, though, is in educating himself thoroughly about world affairs, and using the insights derived from growing up in a non-Western culture to shed light on the realities of US

policies abroad. He says, "I have a passionate belief that a better world is possible, and I have a drive to motivate others to get informed and become active citizens."

Faced with the almost-daily onslaught of bad news, Dan sustains himself with a belief in persevering for the long haul and being buoyed up by association with like-minded colleagues. "Economic justice is possible. We can find ways to protect ourselves from the ravages of corporate capitalism. We can lessen inherited inequalities of class and caste. We can create a universal social literacy to give everyone the skills needed to secure a living."

While working toward these ideals, Dan and Peace Fresno are currently focused on creating a coalition to oppose military recruitment and the draft, and to repeal portions of the Patriot Act. He invites readers "to get involved, visit our Web site, attend our events, become a member." You, too, might find yourself an active activist in a matter of months.

Contact information: (559) 487-2525; <www.peacefresno.org>

IDENTITY BOX

- PRIMARY IDENTITY—**
Pakistani-American, human being
- POLITICAL AFFILIATION—**
The Green Party
- RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION—**
None
- MOST FREQUENTED PARTS OF FRESNO—**
The Central Area
- INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES—**
Gandhi, M. L. King
- PERSONAL MOTTO—**
"Live, learn, love, leave a legacy"
- NON-POLITICAL INTEREST—**
Reading up on current affairs (mostly via the Internet)
- UNLIKELY PLEASURE—**
Cooking Pakistani food

KFCF - Celebrating 30 Years of Community Radio

Listener sponsored, non-commercial KFCF Radio is celebrating 30 years on the air with a free concert and BBQ on Sunday, June 12 from noon to 4 pm at Umbrella Grove in beautiful Roeding Park. KFCF is the first non-commercial broadcast medium to take root in the valley, going on the air on June 6, 1975.

Come hear some of the diverse music available to you every day on KFCF 88.1 FM from home grown bands including: Tocanto, Brazillian choro & folk group performs a wide variety of Brazillian music styles; Classical Persian with Farrokh on tomak and Hou Shang on violin; Full Circle Band, an electric, multi-genre acoustic band; DL Music, progressive Iranian pop music; Zambra, an eclectic combination of flamenco, funk, jazz, salsa, folk, gypsy, and rock; Indian Folk Tunes with Shree & Edwin Ram; and a Gospel experience.

The Umbrella Grove is located near the Belmont Avenue entrance of Roeding Park in west Fresno.

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POETRY CORNER

As the struggle to save Jesse Morrow Mountain continues, Stephen Barile sends us this offering:

Everlasting *for Waballich*

"Man must never take the good things of the earth for granted, or else they will be taken." Author unknown

I see words just above my vision-field
Speaking to the footprints of the vanquished
Slowly winding around the roundness
Of the grass-covered mountain, under cloudy rosettes,
At night you can almost touch the revolving stars,
The rock outcroppings are exposed
Like blood spilling, or in the speech of the conquered:
Tears of a crying mountain.

Silence of the mountain, unfastened
On the eastside, there will be dynamite for the past,
And the present; a carving of space, leaning all it holds,
Eviscerated stone, gravel and dust, hushed up
At the kill, dragged down, hung head down and gouged
For cruel revenues, scoured as deep as prayers;
Words for centuries of naming and explaining.
Life is not as easy as it seems.

The wind is fierce with no shelter
Of trees. The circling red-tailed hawk knows
There is tomorrow. High up on the sacred headlands,
In the inner-life of stone, where time moves slow
And deliberate, there is suffocation;
The souls of the dead, cast in a devil-wind
Will be released and fly in the air like dust,
Unburied, confronting darkness and evil.

BUSH HATES MIDDLE CLASS

REFLECTIONS ON BUSH'S ASSAULT ON SOCIAL SECURITY

By Dan Yaseen



Democracy Now! is a national, daily, independent, award-winning news program airing on over 225 stations in North America. Pioneering the largest public media collaboration in the U.S., Democracy Now! is broadcast on Pacifica, community, and National Public Radio stations, public access cable television stations, satellite television (on Free Speech TV, channel 9415 of the DISH Network), shortwave radio and the internet.

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IT IS VERY HARD TO THINK OF GEORGE BUSH AS HAVING ANY PRINCIPLES. LET'S try anyway. I can think of one that he has been practicing for a long time: "Rich must get richer; poor must get poorer." As the governor of Texas, he was so good at that that the ruling elite decided to make him the president, and they made sure that he got selected. One of his priorities in the first term was tax cuts for the rich, which will cost the middle class \$2 trillion. (A tax cut for the rich is essentially a tax hike for the middle class.) It is a transfer of wealth from people who do "not have enough" to the people who "have too much," thereby increasing the number of "have-nots."

Bush's priority during the second term is an assault on Social Security. The Social Security system is the most successful social service program in our history. It started 70 years ago when almost two-thirds of the elderly lived in poverty. Today the poverty rate among the elderly is 10%, lowest among all age groups.

Social Security is financially sound. It can pay all scheduled benefits for decades without being fixed. According to the bipartisan Congressional Budget Office, in 2052 the system will face its first shortfall and it will still be able to pay 80% of its benefits for a few more decades.

Social Security does not have a problem; it is not broke now and, even if nothing is changed, it is not going to be bankrupt for the next 60-70 years. Social Security does have a trust fund, which has a surplus of \$1.7 trillion, and it is increasing at the rate of \$150 billion a year. The trust fund is invested, not in worthless IOUs (as Bush stated), but in high grade US Treasury Bonds—the same investment used by the central banks of China, Japan, South Korea, and other countries. These bonds support ever-increasing US debt and deficits to pay for Bush's wars and the wealth transfer from the middle class to the rich.

Today the concentration of wealth and the income gap in the United States is not only the worst among developed countries in the world; it is the worst in our history since the 1920s. But it is not good enough for George Bush, so he has come up with another scheme to make the rich richer. He is trying to convince people,

facts be damned, that the Social Security system is facing an immediate crisis: it's broke and it will be bankrupt soon, and he has a "privatization" scheme to fix the system. Bush's "privatization" plan is just another scam to transfer hundreds of billions of dollars to Wall Street investment firms.

The Social Security payroll tax is levied disproportionately on the working poor and the middle class. The rich derive almost all of their income from investments, real estate holdings, and capital gains, which are not subject to payroll tax.

The recently released, progressively indexed benefit program does not cut the benefits of the poor, but reduces the benefits of the middle class and the rich. Since the rich receive a very tiny percentage of their retirement income from Social Security, their retirement income will be cut by less than 7% in the next 70 years. On the other hand, the middle class depends heavily on Social Security for their retirement income; their retirement income will be reduced by as much as 25%.

Since Bush became president, the middle class has been shrinking. It's time for us to wake up and protect the middle class.

Dan Yaseen is the president of Peace Fresno
<www.peacefresno.org>.

"Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things. Among them are [a] few other Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or businessman from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid."

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 11/8/54

"My goal is to cut government in half in 25 years to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub."

-Grover Norquist, right-wing anti-tax nut, advisor to Bush's White House and Republicans in Congress.



COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATISM



FREE SPEECH VICTORY AT CSUF

BY MIKE RHODES



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-FRESNO (CSUF) PRESIDENT JOHN Welty has issued a memorandum prohibiting undercover “surveillance activities” by campus police officers. The statement was viewed as a significant victory by student activists on the campus who have been concerned about civil liberties violations and the erosion of academic freedom. Ruth Obel-Jorgensen, president of the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition said, “We appreciate that President Welty has taken this important first step.”

Dr. Welty’s statement was issued following revelations that six undercover law enforcement officers attended a lecture sponsored by the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition. After learning of the undercover infiltration of their group, Obel-Jorgensen and at least 12 other students held a 48-hour fast to bring attention to the issue. Saying they were hungry for civil liberties, fasting students set up a tent city outside of the Thomas Administration building, where Welty has his office.

The students took this dramatic action because they were outraged that undercover law enforcement officers attended a lecture on veganism by nationally renowned animal-rights activist Gary Yourofsky. With about 60 people attending the lecture, undercover police made up 10% of the audience. Media spokesperson for the student group, Nick DeGraff, explained that one of their main concerns was “the chilling effect this surveillance would have on our civil liberties.” In addition, DeGraff said that the students felt they were being lied to by the administration. Official statements from the university’s public relations department, statements made by the campus police chief, and numerous e-mails from CSUF president John Welty seem to confirm the students’ concerns.

At first, university officials were in denial that any undercover law enforcement officers were present at the Yourofsky lecture. After the students held a press conference on April 6, 2005, in front of Welty’s office, exposing what they knew about the infiltration, the students got the first official statement from the university on the incident. On April 18 Welty issued a statement saying that the university had two uniformed officers at the event, but insisted they were not undercover and that they were there for security only.

On April 21, Welty sent an e-mail to the *Community Alliance* newspaper updating the statement sent on April 18, saying that “at a campus club event on Nov. 10, 2004, the University Police Department assigned three plainclothes police officers for event security.” Not only did Welty confirm that they had three undercover officers attending the lecture of a campus group, but he went on to reveal that there were three additional undercover law enforcement officers from the Fresno County Sheriff’s department at the event. He said, “The campus police chief has indicated that it was his understanding that three officers from the Fresno County Sheriff’s Department were present at the public

meeting. The Sheriff’s office has not provided information to the university about their activities.”

At a rally in front of the CSUF police department, campus activists continued to press for the truth. This time they were told that in addition to the three campus undercover officers at the Yourofsky lecture, there were three undercover agents from the state anti-terrorism task force. This information was quickly contradicted by another statement from Welty, saying, “The campus police chief initially reported that there were three officers from a state anti-terrorism group at the event and that was provided to the reporter. Immediately following that report the chief was informed that the state law enforcement officers did not attend the event, but rather that three Fresno County Sheriff’s officers (in plainclothes) were present in the public event.”

In a press statement issued by the university on April 27, during the student 48-hour fast, the campus administration dropped all mention of the three undercover Sheriff’s officers. They also refused to release the operations plan that the campus police had written for the Yourofsky event. The Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition and the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (ACLU-NC) responded to the barrage of misleading information coming from the university with Freedom of Information Act and Public Records Act requests.

On May 6, the Fresno County Counsel’s Office responded, saying, “At the request of the Fresno State Chief of Police, the Sheriff’s Department did have undercover officers present at the November 10, 2004, appearance on campus by Gary Yourofsky.”

Ruth Obel-Jorgensen remembers a meeting she had with CSUF police chief David Huerta where he “looked me straight in the eye, reiterating that he was an honest man and a man of integrity. He urged me to trust him and assured me that I would see that he was a man of his word. He stated specifically that there were not undercover campus officers at the event and that he would not send undercover campus officers because he felt it was a covert action. Chief Huerta stated that one of his goals was to reach out to the student body to form a trusting relationship.”

While the students view Welty’s statements prohibiting undercover “surveillance activities” by campus police officers as a victory, their optimism is tempered by the new information received from the Fresno County Counsel. The revelation that the Campus Police chief invited Fresno County Sheriff’s deputies to monitor the November 10 event is in contradiction to university officials’ previous denial of knowledge of the actions of the Sher-

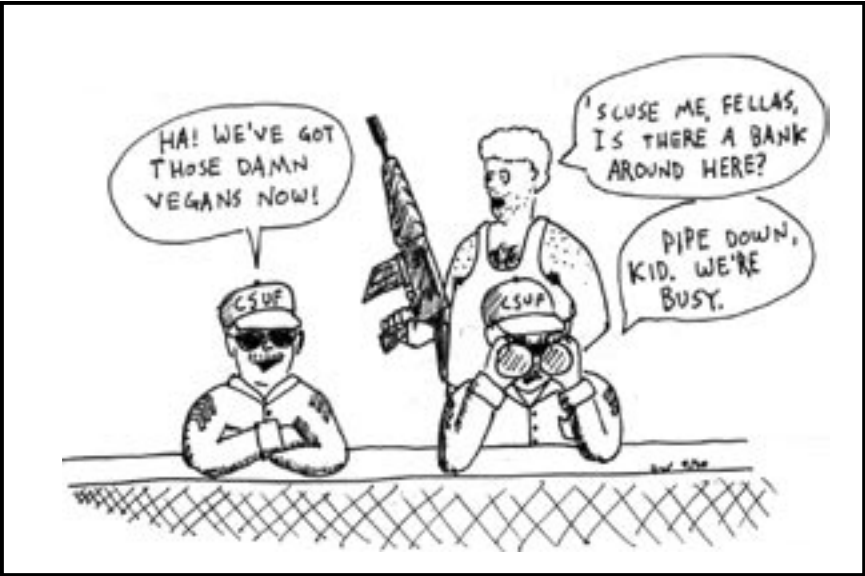
iff’s Department at the lecture.

In response to this conflicting information, the ACLU-NC and the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition have sent a letter to President Welty, urging full and accurate disclosure of all information related to the use of undercover officers at the campus lecture, including the police department’s “operations plan” and a chronology of police and university activities surrounding the lecture.

“While President Welty has taken an important step by announcing a policy change, the only way to ensure that this policy is followed and move forward from this event in a positive and constructive manner is through full disclosure,” said Mark Schlosberg, ACLU-NC Police Practices Policy Director. “Students, faculty, and the broader campus community deserve to know why undercover police monitored a peaceful student-sponsored campus lecture.”

The California Attorney General’s office is currently investigating the Fresno County Sheriff’s Department regarding the six-month infiltration of Peace Fresno—another Fresno community group—by a member of the Department’s anti-terrorism unit. In September 2003, the California Attorney General issued guidelines cautioning law enforcement agencies that monitoring individuals or organizations engaged in First Amendment-protected activity is a violation of California’s strong constitutional right to privacy.

The perseverance of the student activists and the ACLU-NC is starting to pay off, and the truth is starting to come out. One victory has been achieved: the university has been forced to publicly change its policy on infiltrating campus groups. Obel-Jorgensen said that “while we celebrate that victory we are still trying to find out what files the campus police department has on students.” Welty denies that the police have any files on campus activists. Obel-Jorgensen says that if that is true, then why are they refusing to release the campus police department’s operation plan for the Yourofsky incident? ...



GIVING PEACE A CHANCE -AND A DANCE

JUNE 26 IS A DAY OF CELEBRATION FOR LOCAL PEACE ACTIVISTS. THE FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE will be marking its lucky 13th anniversary, and the public is invited to come "Give Peace a Dance." The event will be held at the Hudson barn and grounds, 4247 N. Thorne (just north of Ashlan), from 3-5 PM. There will be dance performances by guest artists Gary Harley and Kara Bithell, and contra dancing for (as Bush terms it) "the willing," taught and called by Evo Bluestein. The Center will also be announcing its annual Way of Peace Awards, and drawing winners for its Fine Arts Raffle.

The day is particularly special, though, as an occasion to honor the practical visionaries who made the Center a reality, through their work with "Visions of Community." On June 26, a pamphlet will be made available documenting the work of "Visions," which led directly to the founding of the Center, as chronicled by Dr. Jack Welch, former chair of Visions and still on the Center's board of directors. The Honor Roll of those who made the Center possible (many of whom are pictured on this page) includes Linda Mack, Dr. Welch, Dr. Liz Maury, Robert Vallett, Gerry Bill, Mary Ellen Guerrero Clay, Valta Pointer, Ellie Bluestein, Mona Reed, Dr. Arthur Siegal, Sudarshan Kapoor, Dalton Reimer, Angela Price, Howard Hendrix, and Hollis Higgins.

"Visions" was an ad hoc coalition of 18 organizations formed in 1983 with the following goals:

to establish a peace community that will be effective and permanent

to provide a model for nonviolent conflict resolution

to involve directly the community at large

to promote awareness of the linkage of issues and empowerment of the individual.

In Dr. Welch's words, "This coalition met regularly through 1994, serving as a forum for the exchange of information and mutual support, and worked in coalition with other groups and institutions in the community to support or coordinate many activities..." "Visions" organized conferences, programs, vigils, lobbying and education campaigns. But after the

first Gulf War, when ineffectual-seeming demonstrations had been only hastily organized as events played out, Mona Reed began stating at every meeting she attended, "We need a Center for ongoing peace activity and presence." This thought echoed a frequently articulated dream of Su Kapoor that Fresno have a Peace Center. The time was right: the idea-seeds of Mona and Su fell on fertile soil, and the vision moved toward realization.

In early 1991, "Visions" formed a subcommittee to explore the possibilities of establishing a Peace Center in Fresno. A plan was drawn up for funding a Center for its first year, and for locating an appropriate facility. As Dr. Welch reports, "On 27 June 1992 the new Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness, celebrated its grand opening. The ceremonies include an interdenominational Blessing of the Space, speakers, and live music. It was a happy, long-awaited occasion, attended by more than 100 supporters."

In our 13 years the Center has been able to continue many of the practices inaugurated by Visions. We have co-sponsored and actively participated in several community events honoring the great exemplars of nonviolent social action (M. L. King, Cesar Chavez, Gandhi . . .). We have brought to Fresno speakers and programs from out of town; and we have organized forums for dealing with divisive issues. We have established contact with non-local peace groups like Fellowship of Reconciliation and Pastors for Peace, and following the example of Visions, served as a focal point for such activities as putting peace ads in the *Fresno Bee* and initiating the recent evening to honor Margaret Hudson. We also, as Visions presciently began, played a material role in the development of a publication to serve the whole peace and social justice community...now known as the *Community Alliance*.

On June 26 we will have the chance to recognize and thank the members of Visions of Community who paved the way and pointed the direction for so much of what the peace community now does, as well as leaving us with goals we have as yet only aspired to.

...



OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LIMIT PESTICIDE USE IN OUR HOMES

By Judy Stege

MOST HOMEOWNERS WOULD NEVER intentionally harm themselves, their families, or their pets. But we do so unknowingly these days. Insecticides and pesticides are one of the ways we keep our homes and yards "clean and safe"—but evidence is mounting that those products are more dangerous than the warning labels suggest. When you use Bayer's Advanced Lawn Grub Control in your spreader, or Ortho's Malathion Plus in your sprayer, do you know where those pesticides end up? On and in the ground, our plants, our pets, our bodies, our air, and our water. Did you think about that when you "spray to drench" those ants or the plant with bugs on it? Did you look at the label warnings to notice if it said "harmful if absorbed through skin" and "eye irritant—flush with water for 15-20 minutes. Call Poison Control Center for treatment advice"?

In January 2003, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the Second National Report of Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals. Over 9000 people were tested for 116 chemicals, including 34 pesticides. Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA) took a look at the CDC report and identified our "pesticide body burden." The Average person (among those tested by the Centers for Disease Control for pesticide residues in both blood and urine) had 13 pesticides in his or

her body. Two chemicals found in nearly all the test subjects were TCP, a metabolite of the insecticide chlorpyrifos (found in 93% of those tested), and p,p-DDE, a breakdown product of DDT (found in 99% of those tested). Mexican Americans showed significantly higher concentrations of agricultural pesticides and higher body burdens of the waste and breakdown products of the insecticides lindane and DDT. This was a sampling across the United States, not in our pesticide-laden Central Valley. Do you care to contemplate what our "pesticide body burden" is here?

We know that pesticides cause cancer, depress our immune system, disrupt hormone levels, decrease fertility, and cause birth defects. What we don't know is the long-term effects of multiple or repeated exposures of the chemicals we now recognize as "acceptable."

What does all this have to do with the homeowner in Fresno? Many of us use pesticides indiscriminately. Those same pesticides we spread or spray also become airborne toxins. Those beautiful cooling breezes that clear our skies also move particles of chemicals off the soil and plants and into the air. On January 19, 2005, environmental health and community groups filed suit in Sacramento Superior Court to require California's Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to uphold the Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC)

law. That 1984 law requires DPR to assess all pesticides as potential air contaminants and regulate them in order to protect public health. Of the more than 900 pesticides registered in California, DPR has completed the review process for only four in the past 20 years. Well then, who is protecting your children and your health?

Be aware, homeowners, that you too may be contributing to the childhood asthma rate (one in six kids in Fresno has asthma) and to the particulate matter pollution, which causes more than 1200 premature deaths each year in the Valley. How many pesticide applications do you make in your house and yard? Do you know what your gardener applies? Are you careful not to spray or spread on breezy days? We each individually must look for alternatives to those chemical pesticides we have been using, and choose to keep our air cleaner and our grass maybe not as green but definitely safer for children and pets, because we cannot depend upon the government to do it for us. The Pesticide Action Network North America has a web site listing alternatives. Check them out: <www.panna.org/resources/advisorContent.html>.

SOURCES:

www.panna.org/campaigns/docsTrespass/chemicalTrespass2004.dv.html

www.panna.org/resources/documents/tacRelease.dv.html

Central Valley Air Quality Coalition <www.calcleanair.org>

A visit to Orchard Supply Hardware to read labels in the gardening aisle

...

4TH MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH 7 PM

FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meets at the Barn at Margaret Hudson's house, 4230 N Arthur. For more information e-mail sasso2003@yahoo.com, call (559) 227-6134, or visit the Californians for Pesticide Reform Web site at <www.1000friendsoffresno.org/pesticides.html>.





Have you ever had a job that cried out for someone to write a book entitled *The Confessions of a _____*? You fill in the blank: Public defender, pesticide salesman, prison guard.... Well, John Perkins actually did it—and what a book! It’s the story of a highly successful corporate man who spent years deep within a clandestine realm of global corporations, the World Bank, the CIA and more. His mission was to bankrupt third world nations, make them financially helpless, and orchestrate the wholesale theft of their resources. This is the current *de facto* US foreign policy and has been since the end of World War II. Think of that, the next time you hear Bush saying that the best way to stop terrorism is by spreading “democracy and freedom.”

CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN PERKINS

By Mike Beevers on KFCF 88.1 FM

Here are some questions I put to John Perkins last month on KFCF Radio 88.1 on “The Waste Land of the Free,” hosted by Rick Flores on Tuesdays 10 AM to 12 Noon.

Mike Beevers (MB): What is an economic hit man (EHM)? Let’s read from the book:

“Economic hit men (EHMs) are highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and other foreign “aid” organizations into the coffers of huge corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet’s natural resources. Their tools include fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex, and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalization.

I should know: I was an EHM.”

Welcome John Perkins. Could you expand on this question of what is an economic hit man?

John Perkins (J.P.): Thank you, I loved your opening when you asked people if they had a job they might want to confess something about, because in fact I think we all do a lot of things that we know are not right, you know we drive alone in too big a car, we do lots of things like that, and while I am not trying to justify what I did—I take full responsibility for it; what economic hit men do in many respects is very horrible stuff—nonetheless what I will say is, it is fairly easy for us to justify what we do. It was for me and it still is, because, in fact, our society tells us that it is good, our business schools tell us that increasing the gross national product of these countries is always a good thing and usually we do that and we don’t do anything illegal. It should be illegal but it isn’t because our government writes the laws—the international commerce and banking laws. And so because it’s not illegal and because business schools pat us on the back for doing this, it’s kind of easy for us to turn our back on the wrongness of it. Nonetheless, all the time I was doing it, in my heart I knew it was wrong. It is wrong. One of the things that we do, for example, is we would go to a third world country that has resources we covet, like oil, and arrange a

huge loan for that country from the world bank or similar organization and most of the money from that loan goes to one of our own companies that you hear so much about these days, like Bechtel or Haliburton or others, to build a large infrastructure project in the country like a power system, an electrical system, and industrial park, that sort of thing that really benefits the rich and only hurts the poor by polluting the environment, destroying their land, et cetera. The country is left holding the debt it can’t possibly repay. So at some point we go back to the country and say, “Look you can’t pay your debt, therefore give us our pound of flesh. Sell oil to our companies real cheaply, give us land for military bases, vote with us at the next UN vote, or send troops in support of us in Iraq or some other place.” Strictly speaking what we are doing is not illegal and often does increase the gross national product of these countries. What people often don’t realize is increasing the gross national product only helps a very few very wealthy families who get much wealthier, and poor people suffer and don’t get anything in return. It doesn’t help their economy at all.

MB: As I read your book I see

constant connections between the corrupt activities and today’s headlines. You describe many connections between industry and government with personalities like McNamara, Shultz, Weinberger, Cheney, who went from large companies into government. You actually met McNamara, is that correct?

J.P.: That is correct.

MB: How does this nexus between industry and government play into current affairs like the war in Iraq?

J.P.: You know, what I describe in the book is what we have really managed to do since World War II is to create the first really global empire. It is a unique empire in that it is global. It is also unique in that it wasn’t created primarily by the military; it was created primarily through economics and economic hit men. The military is only a last resort. And another way it is unique is that it has no emperor, no king. Instead it has what I call a corporatocracy. The people at the top are the large corporations, big banks, and government, and they run this thing and it doesn’t matter if you have a Democratic president or a Republican president, they are still in charge of it all. It is not a

partisan issue; Republicans and Democrats alike have built it. So people like you described—the McNamaras, the Cheneys, the Bushess, the Rumsfelds—these people are constantly moving back and forth. Rumsfeld, for example, was a CEO of a major pharmaceutical company, and he’s also been a cabinet member. Cheney was a cabinet member, then with Haliburton, now vice president. Those are all Republicans but the Democrats have theirs: Robert McNamara, et cetera. And so at the very top of the corporatocracy you can’t really distinguish between the corporations, the big banks, and the government. They are the same. It’s really rather shocking. If a Graham Greene or some other fiction writer were to write about the situation and we were to read this without giving the names of the countries, we would say, “Oh my God; that is absurd to run a country like that. It’s a banana republic in the extreme.” The temptation for corruption and conflict of interest is huge in this situation and it’s constantly happening.

MB: Your personal involvement adds a level of credibility and fascination to the book. One character that I was very interested in was Noriega, the president of

Panama when we actually invaded his country, kidnapped him, and then put him on trial. I always wondered if he could possibly get a fair hearing from the American justice system. Is there a comparison between Noriega and Saddam Hussein?

JP: That is the first time I have been asked that question, and it's an interesting one. I suppose at the root of it all, there is, because both of these men stood up to the corporatocracy, both did not give in, and both paid the ultimate price. And interesting too because I think both of those men are pretty despicable. I didn't think much of Noriega but I liked his forerunner very much: his mentor, Omar Torrijos, who was assassinated because he also stood up to the corporatocracy.

MB: And you befriended him, right?

JP: Yeah, I counted him as a friend. I had a great deal of respect for him. Of course he had weaknesses, everybody does. Saddam Hussein was a brutal and bloody dictator, but the fact of the matter is we supported him all through the eighties with tremendous amounts of money and supplies and weapons and we helped him build chemical plants. These plants were built by our big industries, including companies like Bechtel, and then could be used to create chemical weapons. We did this throughout the eighties when he fought the Iranians as enemies of ours. And we did the same thing with Noriega; we supported him a great deal and he helped us to fight the drug cartels of Colombia. But in the end, neither of these men went along with the system.

I talk in the book about when the economic hit men fail—which isn't too often—then the second line of defense is what we refer to as the jackals. These are CIA-sanctioned assassins. And when we failed, they stepped in, and in the case of Omar Torrijos of Panama they assassinated him, as they did with Jaime Roldos of Ecuador because we economic hit men failed. Now when the economic hit men and the jackals both fail, then as a last resort we send in the military. That's what happened in Iraq. Throughout the eighties we tried to bring Saddam Hussein around. We went in '91 and destroyed his army, thought that he had been sufficiently chastised and that he would come around. We didn't want to kill him, because he was a powerful strongman, and we like those. He was a strong deterrent against Iran, so we thought if we destroyed his military, he would come around but he didn't, so we tried to assassinate him again but we couldn't—his security guards were too good. So we sent in the military.

Something very similar happened with Noriega, we could not bring him around at all and apparently couldn't assassinate him so we sent in the military, bombed his city, killed several thousand innocent Panamanians, and put him in prison where he continues to rot today. Basically, he is in solitary confinement. I know reporters who have tried to interview him and can't get through to him.

But there is another important

lesson from Noriega. Right now in South America we have six presidents who have been elected because they ran on anti-globalization, anti-corporatocracy, basically anti-American and very nationalistic policy, in Chile and Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, and Ecuador. These men are now having tremendous pressure put on them by the economic hit men to come around. Certainly they have to be very, very aware of what happened to Noriega. You know it's one thing to put your life on the line and be assassinated, like Torrijos was, or Roldo or Allende. But, it's another thing to see two to three thousand of your innocent countrymen also destroyed in a huge section of your major city and then be put in prison for the rest of your life, essentially in solitary confinement. And that's what happened to Noriega and that's got to send a really strong message to any other president that is considering not bending to our will, like Noriega did not bend to our will.

MB: Mr. Perkins, you are also a current activist, you have a Web site, and you are involved in a whole realm of other interests. Could you describe these for us?

JP: Certainly, Mike, I appreciate that. In 1990, I quit doing everything that had to do with economics and energy and so forth and formed a nonprofit organization to help indigenous people in many other countries that I had ripped off previously to assuage my guilt and I formed an organization called Dream Change <www.dreamchange.org>. You can check it out. I also work with an organization called <www.hatchamallo.com>. These organizations do great work. I have done this to assuage my guilt and I do think that it is very, very important that we support great causes. However, I would also add that I did not write the book. I did not speak out. I was basically bribed, and to some degree threatened, to not write the book. And I gave into that and accepted bribes, which I put forth in the book and used the money for the nonprofit work I was doing. Nonetheless, I did not write the book until 9-11.

MB: You have a chapter entitled "The Saudi Money Laundering Affair." Saudi Arabia is not an undeveloped country, but it was brought into the fold with influence of economic hit men. You refer to an event in 1973 when OPEC was going to cut off the United States: they were going to remove all OPEC countries' money from the banks. They were going to induce a 1929-type scenario. Are OPEC and Saudi Arabia not capable of doing such a thing now?

JP: It is a very complicated question; they are capable of it on one level. They are capable of doing something else, which may be even more serious, which would be to go from accepting dollars to accepting euros, which ultimately could bankrupt the United States, because we are the largest single debtor country in the world. And in fact Saddam Hussein threatened to do that, and it's one of the reasons we invaded him. There were a number of reasons. Now Venezuela has emerged as our bad guy. Hugo Chavez has taken a very strong anti-US stand at least verbally, and threatening not to sell oil

to us. They are our fourth-largest producer right now—but rather sell it to China instead. His minister of energy became the secretary general of OPEC very recently. So OPEC has that potential; however, we have to remember that any time OPEC has stood up to us, we have put them down. And we struck this deal with Saudi Arabia in the seventies (Saudi Arabia has the largest supply of oil of anybody in the world): Part of that deal was that Saudi Arabia would make sure that the price of oil and the supply of oil stayed at levels that met our approval, and in exchange we promised to protect the house of Saud, the royal family, and keep them in power. So far they have always done that. When the price of oil starts to go up too much, as it has recently, they step in and offer to produce more, which will bring the price down.

MB: But that is a very fragile situation, is it not?

JP: That's correct—the House of Saud itself is in a very fragile situation. It's very unstable, and they are very disliked by a great many Muslims and many of their own people.

MB: There was legalized slavery in Saudi Arabia until 1963.

JP: Yeah, and they westernized so much, despite the fact that when I went there in the seventies when we struck the deal, they were very much an underdeveloped country. They are not any longer: we built huge cities for them: US companies have. The fact is that they are still in our pocket and if OPEC tries to stand up to us, we call in the Saudis to make sure that doesn't happen. And probably because the Saudi family is so shaky, that is another reason we went into Iraq. We felt that if we controlled the flow of oil in Iraq, then we didn't need to count on the Saudis so much. Of course at this point we don't exactly control the oil of Iraq, because there is so much turmoil there. It is a very iffy situation. But that was one of the justifications for going to war in Iraq, to control that oil too—which was a hedge against something happening in Saudi Arabia.

MB: You indicate that now these EHMs are even more common. You mention that they are walking the halls of companies like Monsanto. Is there an increased presence of this whole approach?

JP: Yeah, back in the seventies when I began my career as an economic hit man, our job was to bring in World Bank money, and other bank money into US corporations. It was kind of a generic thing: we really didn't identify which corporations; we didn't really care. The result was to bankrupt those countries. Today what I am talking about is EHMs that work specifically for the corporations; they are going into these countries and creating sweatshops, et cetera, to benefit their particular corporation. Not just a generic thing—it is much more specialized. They still have the other kind of EHM. They are very much at work in places like Venezuela, Argentina, and Ecuador and many other places.

MB: We admire your honesty. There are a lot of people out here doing the jobs, maybe not as suc-

cessfully as you, but definitely participating in the system that subjugates less developed countries. A lot of us are sitting here saying we are going to hang in here and take the cash until I can maybe retire et cetera. Would you have any advice for these people who are part of this juggernaut?

JP: Yes, I absolutely do. You know those people are pulling the wool over their own eyes. They are trying to convince themselves that they are not really doing this. There are cadres of lawyers, psychologists, and economists working for these corporations telling them that they are doing the right thing, but they know they are not. My suggestion is to realize that this system has failed, it is failing. Empires always collapse. Right now we have 5% of the world's population. The United States is consuming over 25% of the world's resources and creating over 25% of the world's pollution. That cannot continue. That cannot continue. We have our children to think about, and our grandchildren, not just those here in this country, but those around the world. We are all tied incredibly close together. It is a very small world with an Internet that reaches everybody, information that reaches everybody. We will have dire change within the next thirty years if we continue on this path. It will be catastrophic and entirely difficult. This cannot continue. So if we are smart, and if those people out there doing this kind of work are smart, they will clear their own consciences, they will admit to what they are doing, and they will strive hard to change the system. They will add to the world compassion, and the things that people in these remote corners of the world need in order to survive. Help people around the world truly become self-sufficient. Help those dying of curable diseases to heal themselves and build their own medical establishments. In that process we here in the United States are going to have to consume a lot less resources and create a lot less pollution around the world. We need to do this, we will be a lot happier for it, we will be a lot more secure, and our children and grandchildren will honor us for it.

MB: They may hate us for what's going on now. You have been involved also with shamans. I saw something about someone visiting shamans in South America. Many of the shamans had found themselves reduced to a low position in their societies as no longer relevant. Recently, the incredible value of their knowledge is being rediscovered. They have knowledge not only of plants, et cetera, but a deep knowledge that fits into this scenario you describe. The shaman's knowledge is now being recognized as survival knowledge. Is that your experience?

JP: Yes, they have been some of my greatest teachers. I have had an interest in Shamanism since I was in South America living with indigenous people in the sixties with the Peace Corps. One of the things I am struck by is that they teach us something called "walking without looking at your feet" and that's how they walk through the jungle. You have to look all around you at the plants and animals all around you. The greater point is that it seems in our culture we spend a lot

of time looking at our feet. Worrying about who's on trial right now. What is Scott Peterson doing or Michael Jackson? What are the latest football scores? And we don't really pay attention to what is really impacting our children and us. What's going on in Bolivia and Nigeria and Iraq and all over the world? What are we doing out there that is impacting us on a huge level? So I think these indigenous people are great teachers. We need to really look around us to the people we relate to that we are so dependent upon and they are dependent on us. We need to try to make things right so that we live in harmony and in balance with that world. Right now we are terribly out of balance with 5% of the population consuming 25% of the resources. It is out of balance, and it is a failed experiment.

MB: Well, that is a bittersweet answer for our last question, so let me see if I can put a little more plus on it. In the past few months, you have counteracted this media control and distortion we have been suffering through for the last 5 years. Your book has been very successful on many best-seller lists. To what do you attribute this?

JP: Well, thank heavens for programs like this. There is an amazing alternative media in this country, which is very successful. Yet my book has been on the New York Times best-seller list or extended list for 14 weeks now and every major list in the country, yet none of those magazines has reviewed it or written an article on it. Not only the network programming—I have basically been ignored by what I call the mainstream press. Nonetheless, the book is out there selling very hotly. People are very interested in what's going on in the world. People really are interested through the Internet and programs like this.

MB: Well, it has been an absolute honor today. Again, I would strongly recommend that our listeners buy this book. By buying the book, you encourage publishers to feature authors like John Perkins, and you help to spread these vital ideas. I could ask a million more questions but we have to go, with a heartfelt thank you from KFCF.

JP: You are welcome, Mike, and thank you for the great work you are doing. You are protecting democracy.

...

"The best way to fight terrorism is to spread freedom and democracy." Is there something wrong with that statement? Well, if you think so, pick up a copy of Confessions of an Economic Hit Man by John Perkins. It's a page-turner: nonfiction that reads like an adventure story. Imagine a James Bond of international financial pillage and mayhem. I couldn't put it down. It's got international intrigue, assassination, lies from the highest levels of government, and much more. We see it in the news but it takes a book like this to make it real.

BUY YOUR GAS AT CITGO: JOIN THE BUY-COTT!

by Jeff Cohen

Looking for an easy way to protest Bush foreign policy week after week? And an easy way to help alleviate global poverty? Buy your gasoline at Citgo stations. And tell your friends.

Of the top oil producing countries in the world, only one is a democracy with a president who was elected on a platform of using his nation's oil revenue to benefit the poor. The country is Venezuela. The President is Hugo Chavez. Call him "the Anti-Bush." Citgo is a U.S. refining and marketing firm that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company. Money you pay to Citgo goes primarily to Venezuela -- not Saudi Arabia or the Middle East.

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(Go to: <http://www.citgo.com/CITGO-Locator/StoreLocator.jsp> to find one near you.)

By buying your gasoline at Citgo, you are contributing to the billions of dollars that Venezuela's democratic government is using to provide health care, literacy and education, and subsidized food for the majority of Venezuelans. Instead of using government to help the rich and the corporate, as Bush does, Chavez is using the resources and oil revenue of his government to help the poor in Venezuela. A country

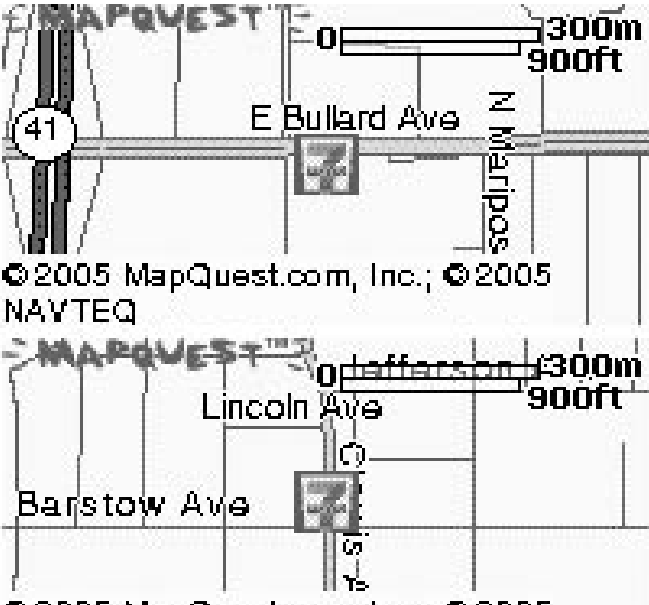
with so much oil wealth shouldn't have 60 percent of its people living in poverty, earning less than \$2 per day. With a mass movement behind him, Chavez is confronting poverty in Venezuela. That's why large majorities have consistently backed him in democratic elections. And why the Bush administration supported an attempted military coup in 2002 that sought to overthrow Chavez.

So this is the opposite of a boycott. Call it a BUY-cott. Spread the word. Of course, if you can take mass transit or bike or walk to your job, you should do so. And we should all work for political changes that move our country toward a cleaner environment based on renewable energy. The BUYcott is for those of us who don't have a practical alternative to filling up our cars.

So get your gas at Citgo. And help fuel a democratic revolution in Venezuela.



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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH WORKS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Anidelle Flint

INSPIRED AND SUPPORTED BY THEIR RELIGIOUS FAITH, MEMBERS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH of Fresno are active participants on many fronts in the ongoing struggle for social, environmental, and economic justice in our community. Three of the seven principles by which UUs seek to live out their faith and order their lives are part of our covenant, which calls on congregations and individual members alike to "affirm and promote (1) the inherent worth and dignity of every person; (2) justice, equity and compassion in human relations; (7) respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

In addition to a wide variety of actions by individual members, the congregation donates the entire second-Sunday monthly offering to a different progressive organization addressing local social justice concerns, and often partners with such groups to support their work in the Fresno/Clovis area. One such partnership has been with the Gay and Straight Alliance (GSA) Network, a recipient of one month's offering this church year, which has also been able to use the church's meeting, kitchen, social hall, and sanctuary space for several of its events.

On Saturday, April 3, the third annual Expression Not Suppression LGBT and Straight Ally Youth Conference was held at the church. I am indebted to the Rev. Diana Bohn, formerly interim Director of Religious Education at the UU Church and a current board member of GSA Network, for her description of the Conference.

DIANA WRITES, "Seventy-five 14- to 23-year-old youth from throughout the Valley attended the event designed by an all-youth planning team. The event was sponsored by the Gay Straight Alliance Network, a statewide organization that empowers youth to make schools safer, particularly for high school students who are regularly targeted with homophobic slurs or physical violence.

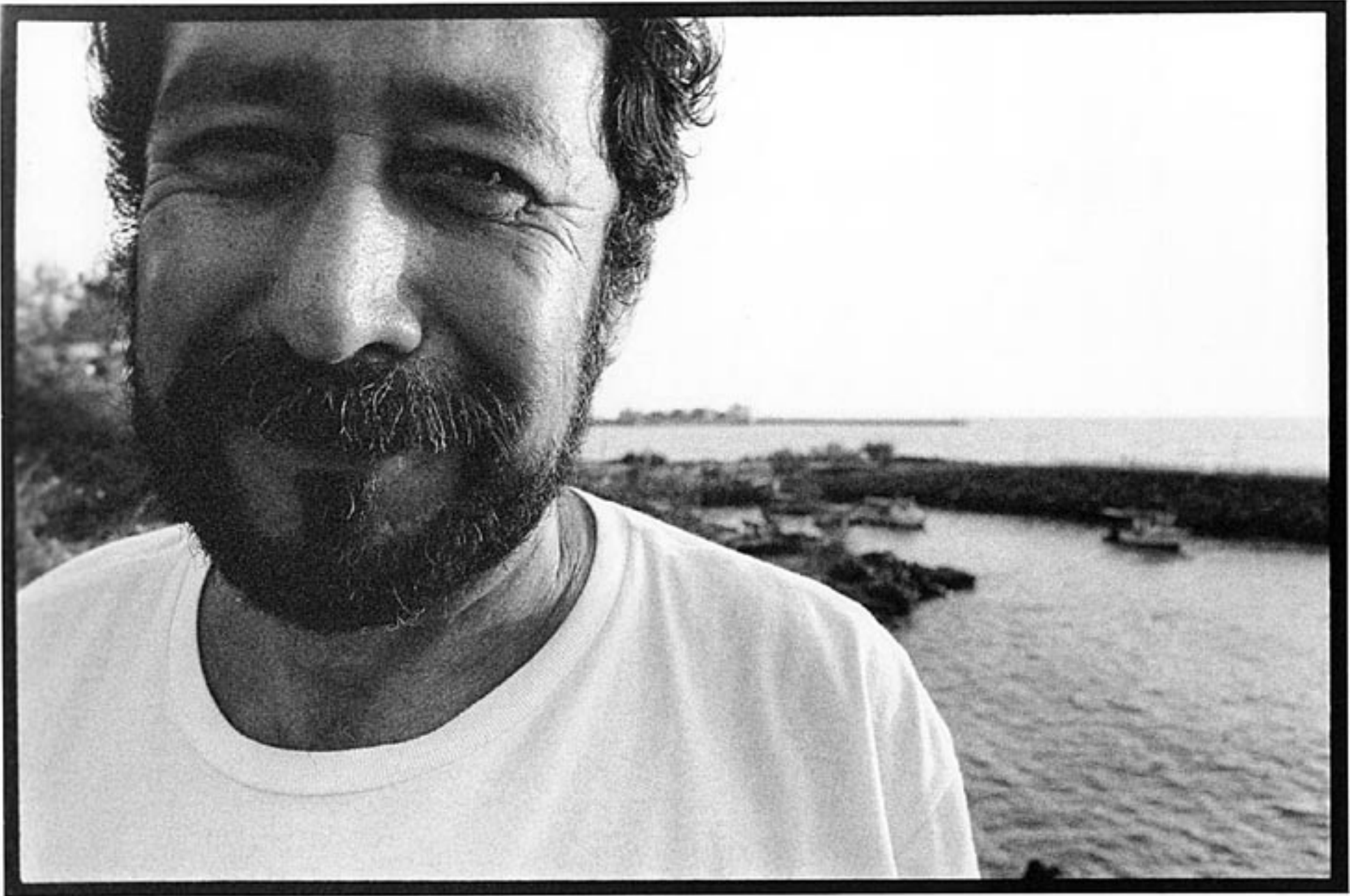
"This year's event featured such workshops as Activist Life after High School, Coming Out, Transgender 101, Comprehensive Sex Education, and Beyond the Binary Gender System. Most workshops were student-led; however the entire event would not have been possible without the support of a number of adult community members, including members of PFLAG and the UU church family.

"The GSA Network maintains an office across the street from Roosevelt High School on Tulare. Community activist and College of the Sequoias professor Robin McGehee has recently been hired as the Central California Community Organizer."

...

Anidelle Flint is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Coordinating Committee.





David Marroquin, fired and blacklisted for being an officer of El Salvador's longshore union.

CAFTA'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

By David Bacon

ACAJUTLA, ELSALVADOR (5/7/05)—

Long before the current debate over the Central America Free Trade Agreement, workers throughout the region had suffered from economic reforms that have broken unions, privatized workplaces, and lowered wages. They oppose the agreement because CAFTA cements those reforms into place, especially because it would require dismantling the public sector to encourage private, especially foreign, investment, regardless of its social cost.

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement, the model for CAFTA, Mexican unions lost tens of thousands of members in huge privatization scandals during the 1990s. Labor contracts were ripped up, wages plummeted, and some unions even disappeared. Central American trade unionists view this experience as a warning of what may lie in store for them. But Central Americans also have their own bitter experiences with privatization. When they think about CAFTA, they look at what happened to the longshore workers of El Salvador.

That country's main port, Acajutla, employs approximately 1200 dockworkers. Until September 2001, their employer was the state port authority, CEPA. Their union, the Sindicato de la Industria Portuaria de El Salvador (the Union of the Port Industry of El Salvador), had a 50-year history of fighting for a fair standard of living in one of Latin America's poorest countries.

Longshoremen had a union contract with a set wage for every job. Working two shifts a day, four days a week, dockers could make \$125 per day or \$25,000 a year. "The sons and daughters of people who couldn't themselves read or write, humble people, were able to go to the university," says its secretary-treasurer, Carlos David Marroquin, who worked in the port's warehouses. "The government never complained about our willingness or ability to do the work."

Nevertheless, on September 11, 2001, within hours of the attack on the twin towers in New York, the Salvadoran government moved troops into the port and the airport. El Salvador's ruling conservative party cited the New York attacks as evidence of a terrorist threat. Both port and airport were placed under military authority for the first time in Salvadoran history.

Sending soldiers to assure the port's physical security was just the beginning, however. On the January 23, 2002, the union was officially dissolved by government decree, and thrown out of its office in the port. Union members haven't been permitted back into their building since then. By May all the port's workers had been terminated.

When the union sought to protect the jobs of port workers and their union contract, Francisco Flores, then president of El Salvador, called members "terrorists" and "guerril-

leros." That language may seem extreme in any country, but from 1978 to 1989, during El Salvador's civil war, people so labeled were often picked up on the street, imprisoned, or just "disappeared." These epithets produced an atmosphere of fear and terror.

The government told workers they could reapply for their old jobs, but with new private operators. "They told people they'd be liquidated, but they'd get jobs with the private operators," Marroquin says. "But they didn't say how much they'd be paid." Dockworkers are now employed by seven private companies, who set the new wage at \$12 per day--cutting the daily income of longshoremen by more than 90 percent. Privatization was a gift from the Salvadoran government to at least one of the country's wealthiest families--terminal operator OPSSA is owned by the family of Francisco Flores.

Following its expulsion from the port, and its official dissolution, the longshore union made three attempts to reorganize.

At first, they tried to call a meeting of all former members working in the port. But workers were told by government officials that if they went to the meeting, they would no longer be allowed to enter the port area, and would therefore lose their jobs. That's what had already happened to 25 union leaders, including Marroquin.

The following election year, El Salvador's left-wing party, the FMLN promised to demilitarize the port and recognize the union. In the National Assembly, however, their proposal was only supported by the party's own delegates--not a majority.

Then workers decided to organize a new union. On December 6, 2004, 41 workers signed up as members, and asked the government for recognition. By December 13, 36 were out of work, and haven't been able to get a port job since. The Ministry of Labor denied legal status to the union, saying that the workers who signed the documents were not employed by the terminal operators.

Meanwhile, conditions have deteriorated, along with wages. Workers say they don't receive overtime pay, and they're told they can't eat during the workday. Payroll deductions for healthcare aren't turned over to the Social Security agency, so when workers go to the hospital, they find they have to cover the doctor bills themselves.

Among the people pushing CAFTA in El Salvador are the employers of Acajutla dockworkers and the government that broke their union. When unions in Central America consider their own possible fate, should CAFTA go into effect, they to look to Acajutla. And it's no wonder they don't like what they see.

...



FRESNO WELCOMES THE GOVERNATOR

BUSH’S ADVANCE MAN IN CALIFORNIA SCHWARZENEGGER CARRIES OUT THE CORPORATE AGENDA FROM THE CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF LABOR

Mike Rhodes

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER CLAIMED HE WOULD “TERMINATE” POLITICS AS usual in Sacramento. In reality, his proposals are nothing more than a blueprint for California based on the Bush plan for America.

These are the same old right wing attempts to reduce benefits, cut salaries and weaken protections, just wrapped in new packaging. We are seeing “take-away” attempts from Schwarzenegger on everything from pensions to lunch breaks. This is not about balancing the budget or spending within our means, this is a nationwide strategy to undermine union protections for the benefit of corporate profits. While the Legislature has resisted some of these attacks on workers that’s not stopping the Governor. He is now pushing to qualify a number of his proposals for a special election this fall.

One of the Governor’s ballot initiatives is to dismantle our public pension system from the current defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. This essentially privatizes pensions by offering only 401K style plans run by private, for-profit investment companies. It won’t help balance the budget and will cost the state more money. If this sounds familiar, it should it is the same idea as the Bush plan to privatize social security.

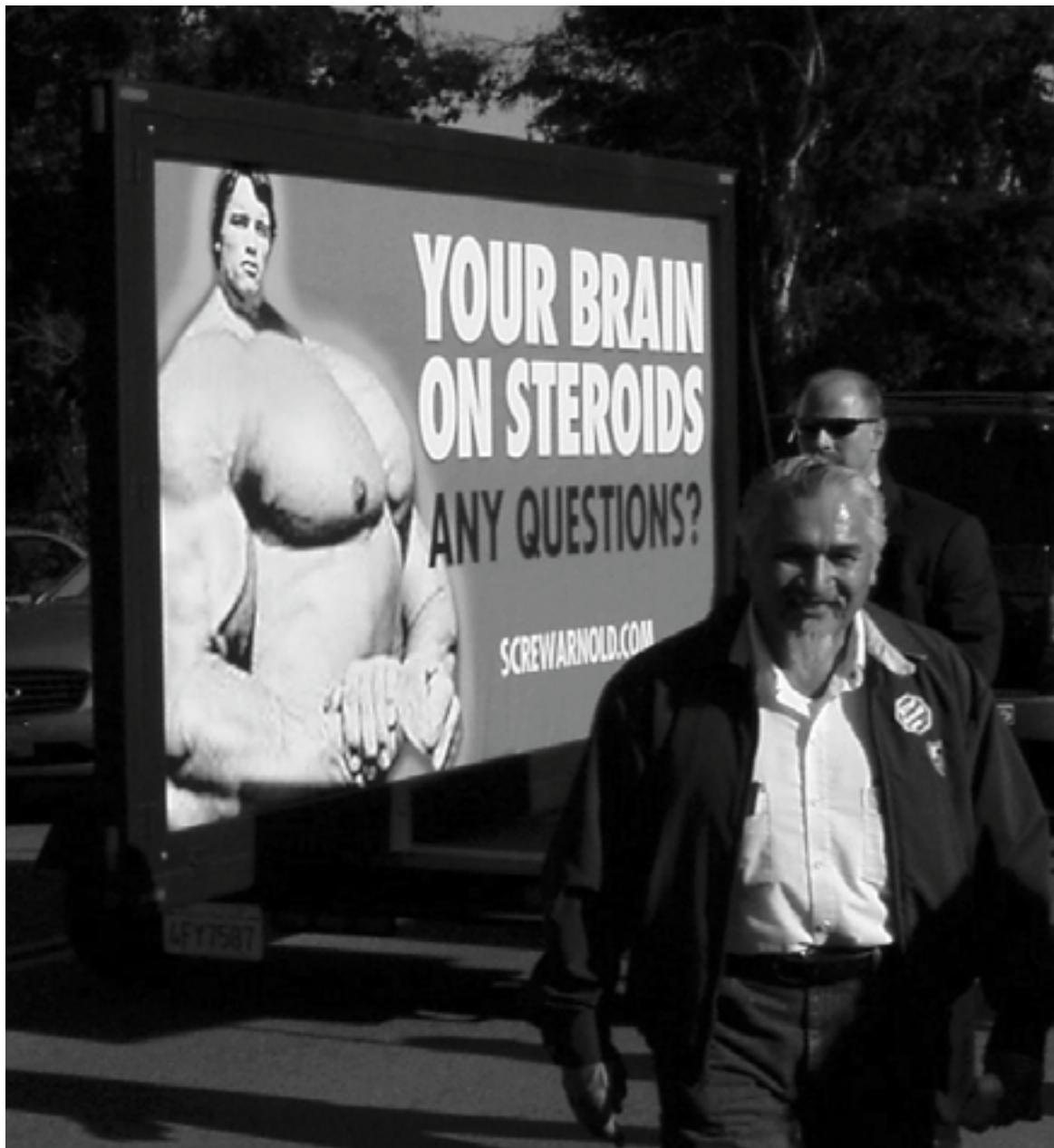
The Governor is also following Bush’s lead by attempting to silence the voice of union members, targeting public sector workers first, through a so-called “union dues check-off” initiative. This rehash of Prop 226, which failed to pass in 1998, would make public sector unions helpless to protect themselves against these attacks. Governor Schwarzenegger conveniently claims it is not “his” initiative, though it is supported by his closest allies.

Borrowing a page from the Texas handbook, the Governor also wants an initiative to re-draw the state’s legislative districts. In Texas, this recently led to five members of congress losing their seats to Republicans who are more agreeable to big business. This barely legal, partisan attempt to win seats is fueling an unnecessary election that will cost the taxpayers \$70 million dollars. These lines are drawn every ten years after the census and should not be manipulated midstream so that Schwarzenegger can control the legislature.

Schwarzenegger and his business allies are willing to pay millions to put these initiatives on the ballot. Please do not sign any of these anti-worker petitions. Over the next weeks and months, we will be calling on you to join us in protecting our rights against the Gov. Schwarzenegger’s attacks.

Is this the same Governor who promised to fight for the people? Schwarzenegger professed to be strong and independent, but is doing little more than carrying out Bush’s corporate agenda. As promise after promise gets broken, it’s clear that the only people the “Terminator” fights for are his corporate donors.





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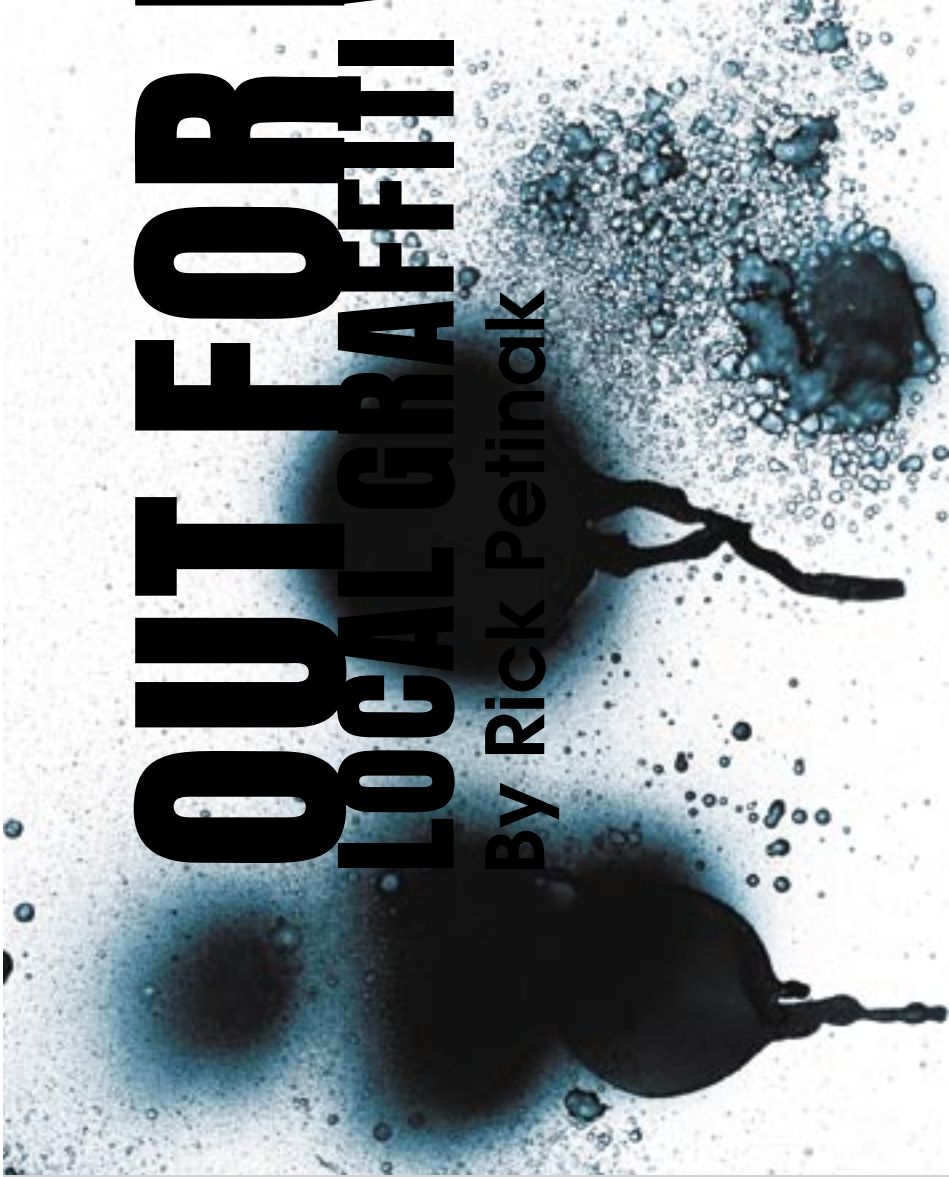
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OUT FOR LOCAL GRAFFITI WRITERS FAME KEEP THE ART FORM ALIVE

By Rick Petinak



“ . . . the words of the prophets / Are written on the subway walls / And tenement halls ”

So went the words of Simon & Garfunkel’s “The Sound of Silence.” Little did Paul and Art probably know that spray-can art on subway trains, vacant buildings, and brick walls would one day evolve into a rich artistic tradition of international proportions now three decades old and counting. There are active *writers* (artists, in the graffiti vernacular) in virtually every major city on Earth, from graffiti’s birthplace in the Bronx, to Hamburg, to Lagos (Nigeria), to Zagreb, to Rio de Janeiro. Graffiti art is a truly enigmatic discipline: It has gained the reputation of being more about vandalism than creative expression, but writers doesn’t seem particularly concerned about changing public perception.

It is to the artists and aficionados that this “who cares what the hell *they* think?” attitude has endeared itself and framed graffiti art as perhaps the last truly pristine and unexploited canvas for counterculture artistic license devoid of corporate usury. With this reference in mind, I recently sat and spoke with Fresno-based graffiti artists Super and Knistt (their writer names), as they took a break from a huge, city-sanctioned mural project at Calwa Park, to talk about what’s happening with the scene on a local level.

Super, 26, and Knistt, 29, have both been active in the graffiti scene since their early teens. They both recall first seeing graffiti art showcased in the Michael Jackson “Beat It” video and soon after in the early hip-hop feature film *Beat Street*. Graffiti itself is considered in the hip-hop culture to be one of the “four elements” of hip-hop, which include deejay-ing, emcee-ing, breakdancing, and graffiti writing. Some have broken this list down to eleven or more elements. In any case, both Super and Knistt agreed they got into the music and dance elements before the art. We all recalled how

breakdancing was so prevalent in the mid-1980s that school assemblies actually featured breakdance competitions.

Fast forward to the early 1990s: the breakdance phenomenon had subsided, the art of the deejay began to fade, rap music began to first taste commercialization, and graffiti art encountered a backlash from many communities nationwide. Super recalls how he became more deeply involved in the scene.: “Me personally, you know, when I first learned that you could work with cans, you know, to do something shiny...as I learned my skills, it gave me more thirst to get different walls.”

Knistt concurred and offered insight on how the scene perpetuates itself through new writers: “You know, like, you start hitting up [painting walls], and once we do walls, you know, like, more younger people start coming around and get influenced, and then some people that’s been doing it a while get influenced and want to do it even more.”

During the interview, I couldn’t help but steal glances at the elaborate mural in progress behind us. The Parks and Recreation operators of Calwa Park (on Church and Maple) authorized Super, Knistt, and their crew of writers (“N.E.M.”, “E.Y.H.O.” and “G.T.L.”) to design and create a huge mural the length of the wall, about a football field long, featuring pictures of various athletic and sporting events. The technique and detail was captivating. To see these young men, mostly of black and Latino descent, finding a place through their own efforts to engage in what has been labeled a largely unwanted art form was truly inspiring. Perhaps the same alienation and struggle faced by so many inner-city youths is what has ironically

resonated with them in their search to find an avenue of social and personal expression. However, Super was quick to acknowledge that responsibility for the survival of the art lies at least partly within the community, particularly with younger writers.

“Some of the younger artists do graffiti art for the wrong reasons,” says Super, “they don’t take it to an art, you know, stance. I think they need education before doing mural projects, you know, because if you’re gonna have a knucklehead go out there and paint a good piece and he has a lot of beef with a lot of people, you know, he’s not gonna make it.” This is part of the dichotomy that has polarized opinions around graffiti art. Is it a form of vandalism practiced by juvenile delinquents or a serious artistic genre created through unorthodox means and resourceful methods?

Super and Knistt, perhaps as a result of age and experience, have also learned the arts of public relations and community advocacy. Many business owners and public officials, particularly in poor and working class neighborhoods, have begun to recognize that the artistic fire burning in their youth can either be criticized or cultivated and guided.

Some people have chosen to offer wall space—previously cluttered with less-than-artistic graffiti scribble, usually marking gang or writer territory—to aspiring young local artists to complete a large mural relating to the business or community itself. Super has begun carrying portfolios of his crew’s work to present to potential clients. While this certainly represents a phase in the osmosis of a subculture into structured society, don’t look

for a graffiti exhibit at the Fresno Met just yet.

Particularly in the conservative climate of the 559, graffiti art has a long way to go toward acceptance. But the way Super and Knistt see it, they couldn’t really care less. When asked why writers still go out and “tag” their name around town, even when given so-called legal places to create, Super summed it up this way: “That’s fame, that’s fame, that’s fame, that’s straight up just fame. That’s the same reason we do (murals). That’s graffiti art. Our thirst is fame.”

Perhaps sometime in the not-too-distant future, graffiti art will suffer the same fate as rap music: commandeered by ad execs to pimp everything from Pop-Tarts to malt liquor. On the other hand, graffiti artists have learned a thing or two by watching the exploitation of the hip-hop culture at large, and they appear intent on keeping their art form in the alleys and subway stations of the world from which it spawned, and far away from the graveyard of media saturation and conveniently palatable corporate pre-packaging. The fame sought by writers like Super and Knistt, and others like them in ghettos and barrios worldwide, has little to do with public recognition and profit and everything to do with self-satisfaction and respect from their peers. It seems to me this is what should drive all forms of art and artists alike. Your opinion may differ. Regardless, Super and Knistt will keep on hitting up.

PRESIDENT FOX EXPOSES RACISM IN MEXICO

THE CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT OF VICENTE FOX ABOUT AFRICAN-AMERICANS GENERATED TENSIONS WITH BLACK US LEADERS, BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THOSE WORDS HELPED TO OPEN A DISCUSSION ABOUT RACISM AMONG LATINOS.

By Eduardo Stanley

FRESNO, CA—ON FRIDAY, MAY 13, DURING A PRESENTATION IN PUERTO VALLARTA, President Vicente Fox of Mexico criticized the new law approved by the US Senate called RealID, which will implement still more restrictions to immigrants in the United States. Speaking off the cuff, he said that “Mexican immigrants in the USA are doing the jobs that not even blacks want to do.”

Immediately, US media picked it up and distributed this phrase. African-American leaders such as Jesse Jackson criticized Fox and even the White House, as reported in Mexican media, also asked president Fox to clarify what he meant. The reaction of the Mexican media was merciless with its president. In their aggressive and straight style, Mexican journalists did not have piety—nor did the cartoonists. In one cartoon published in an important local daily, a gentleman reads a newspaper in which appears Fox’s phrase while he says, “That statement is so stupid that not even Fox would say it” (Hernández, Millenio newspaper, May 16, page 25).

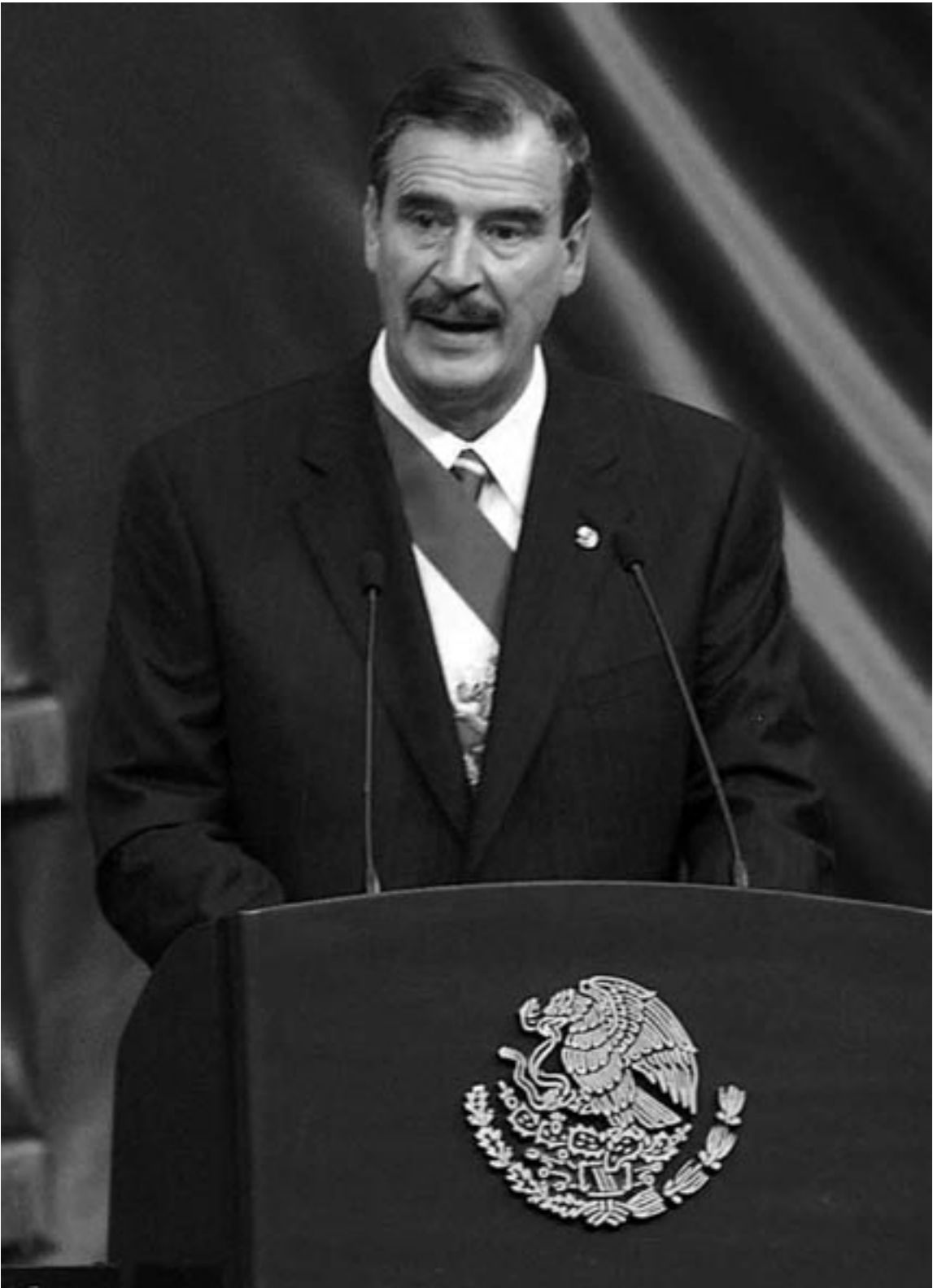
Fox is considered in Mexico as the local version of the American president George Bush: a rancher, rough and little educated. Therefore, this type of rebuff is common and hardly surprises anybody in Mexico. But this time the criticism transcended the local borders since it involved African-Americans. Among the criticism expressed by journalists and activists of Mexico, two trains of thought are evident.

The first one maintains that though Fox was mistaken, the phrase is not literal and was not intended to offend that community. Moreover, US media and politicians used it to distract the attention from the shameful “RealID” law approved by the Senate—a very common distraction method by the establishment everywhere, particularly in the United States. And after all, they say, the statement is true since Mexican immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, do the work nobody else likes to do, regardless of ethnic background.

The second train of thought maintains that Fox’s comment is part of a series of errors of his administration, particularly in the area of the diplomacy. “The Fox administration lost the course of Mexico’s diplomatic tradition,” expressed several journalists. And they described some of the numerous failures and problems of Fox’s diplomacy, like the clash with Cuba; the permanent concessions to Washington; the cool relationship with Chile due to the recent election of the General Secretary of the Organization of the American States (OAS), in which the Chilean candidate won only after Mexico’s candidate was withdrawn [The two candidates were tied after the first round of voting in April 2005. Days before the second, tie-breaking vote was to have occurred, Mexico withdrew its Foreign Minister, Luis Ernesto Derbez, as a candidate, leaving Chilean Interior Minister José Miguel Insulza the winner. –Ed].

Coincidentally, the day before Fox’s statement, a bi-national study on Mexico’s black population was presented in the United States by the universities of Notre Dame and Veracruz (Mexico). The study denounced the abandonment and discrimination suffered by the Afro-Mexican population, located mainly in the coasts of Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Veracruz. It is estimated that this group represents less than two percent of the total population—although the data are not very precise. Social researcher Sagrario Cruz-Carretero, a member of the project, says that although Mexico has laws against discrimination, there is a great difference between law and reality. According to the authors of the study, Mexico is a society “where the color of the skin marks the standards of success and beauty,” and the authors criticize the government for not doing enough to change this situation.

On May 16, the World Economic Forum presented a report in London about gender differences in the areas of education, employment, and political participation in 58 countries. Among the nine Latin-American countries that participated in the study, Mexico occupies



the last place. And as if that were not enough, the day Fox’s made his statement, the first National Survey on Discrimination, prepared by the Office of the Secretary of Social Development, was presented in Mexico City. The survey establishes that “nine out of ten women; disabled, indigenous, and homosexual persons; and members of religious minorities think that discrimination due to their condition exists.” In, one out of three people in these groups claimed to have faced such discrimination during the last year, including on the job. Tellingly, this study established that more than 40 percent of Mexicans are willing to organize themselves in order to avoid an indigenous group moving close to their residences. Discrimination against indigenous groups has been reported by the Mexican media and denounced by numerous organizations, among them the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB), with headquarters in Fresno, California. These studies and accusations show an unquestionable reality: the existence of racism in Mexico, a condition that could be extended to all Latin-American countries. Racism is considered by some anthropologists to be the result of a society divided into classes and in which one class dominates the others. One positive thing is that it is possible these days to talk about this issue. And Fox contributed to this, although it wasn’t his intention.

Eduardo Stanley
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SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION PUSHES FOR MORE STRATEGIC FOCUS, NEW AFL LEADER

by Sal Rosselli (PRESIDENT, UNITED HEALTH CARE WORKERS WEST/SEIU)

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING RECOGNITION THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS IN crisis. Over the past 12 months, even the most ardent defenders of the status quo have accepted that we are in trouble. Ten years after the election of John Sweeney to lead the AFL-CIO, labor's decline has continued to a level now below 1 in 12 private sector workers. The Sweeney era has demonstrated that it is not enough to change the leadership of the AFL-CIO. More importantly, there should be structural change as well.

EMPHASIS ON ORGANIZING

Over the past few years, recognizing that gains will continue to be harder to achieve at the bargaining table as the number of workers represented by unions falls, SEIU implemented programs that mandated all of the 300 SEIU locals to devote at least 20 percent of their resources to new organizing. Members of dozens of local unions voted to merge or restructure to unite the strength of workers in each of our primary industries. We also instituted a series of reforms that have encouraged coordinated bargaining with common employers.

As a result of changes like these, more than 700,000 workers have joined SEIU in the past eight years. During that period, our local union (SEIU Local 250) alone grew from 33,000 workers to 100,000. Then, last year our members and our counterparts in SEIU Local 399 in southern California voted to form a united statewide health care workers union with 137,000 members United Healthcare Workers West.

The best example of the strength derived from combining our two locals in an industry can be seen at Catholic Healthcare West (CHW), the largest hospital system in California. In 2000, our union represented 1,500 workers at three CHW hospitals.

After a five-year effort that required multiple strikes and a strategically focused campaign, we won a corporate-wide election agreement. Just this past year, we negotiated our first statewide master agreement with CHW, which covers 14,000 SEIU caregivers at 28 hospitals. The agreement includes employer-paid health insurance for employees and their families, a voice in how our hospitals are staffed, a defined-benefit pension plan, and a multi-million-dollar training and upgrade fund.

STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE: DEBATING LABOR'S FUTURE

As the largest affiliate in the AFL-CIO, and a significant participant in numerous state labor federations and dozens of local central labor councils, we also analyzed the AFL-CIO's strategies and how our resources were being used by the federation. At our International convention in San Francisco in June 2004, we authorized our officers to put forward a set of proposals to produce fundamental change in the AFL-CIO. If that change were not possible, we authorized our officers to withdraw from the AFL-CIO to build something stronger.

After Bush's reelection, SEIU put forward a ten-point program to reform the AFL-CIO called "Unite to Win." The goals of many of our proposals are not controversial: taking on Wal-Mart; expanding the diversity of our unions' leadership; real solutions to the health care crisis. But two elements of our proposal generated particular controversy: 1) devoting more AFL-CIO and affiliate resources to organizing; and 2) clearly identifying lead unions in each industry with the focus, resources, and strategy to win instead of letting unions divide workers' strength and undercut each other through overlapping organizing across industries.

For weeks after we made our proposals public, there were few responses on their merits but a great deal of fanfare about SEIU's "arrogance." The pace of the debate changed dramatically when the Teamsters offered a response to the issues SEIU presented in Unite to Win. After the Teamster response, the floodgates opened.

ORGANIZING VS. POLITICS

At its March meeting, the AFL-CIO executive council split into two camps: those who advocated more resources for organizing and a shift to more industry-focused unions and those who opposed those changes and advocated instead for shifting resources to politics.

In a heated exchange, Sweeney, with the support of AFSCME President Gerald McEn-

tee and Steelworkers President Leo Gerard, led defeat of a proposal supported by the Teamsters, the United Food and Commercial Workers, UNITE-HERE, the Laborers, the United Auto Workers, and SEIU to increase spending on new organizing by \$35 million per year, channeled to lead unions pursuing industry-based strategies.

In its place, Sweeney and his supporters passed a proposal to double spending on politics to \$45 million per year, thereby decreasing the amount of money the AFL-CIO devotes to new organizing.

The two proposals depict fundamentally different approaches to how the labor movement begins to organize out of this mess. From our perspective, the key to rebuilding workers' strength both at the bargaining table and in politics is strategically organizing more workers who are engaged and mobilized to fight for standards that improve their lives. Through that struggle, we will build a more powerful labor movement that will then have the ability to effect political change. In contrast, the Sweeney/McEntee/ Gerard approach ties the labor movement to the fortunes of the Democratic Party. With a Democrat-controlled White House and Congress, they claim, labor law reform will be possible, which will then make organizing easier. According to this view, new organizing campaigns are futile while Republicans control the machinery of government, particularly the National Labor Relations Board.

Reportedly, Gerard from the Steelworkers actually said he plans to apologize to his local unions for having spent resources on new organizing. How a diminished labor movement will expand political power without organizing new workers is left unanswered.

SHOULD WE STAY OR SHOULD WE GO?

There has been a great deal of speculation about whether SEIU will remain in the AFL-CIO. That is a decision that will take place only after discussion within all our local unions, but from the perspective of our local it is hard to imagine why we would stay unless several basic changes are made. First, there would have to be major new investment in organizing by the AFL-CIO and its affiliates. Second, AFL-CIO rules and practices regarding jurisdiction, mergers, dues rebates, and other issues would have to be reformed to clearly establish unions with an industry focus. To give one example, Articles XX and XXI of the AFL-CIO constitution should be revised to give priority in organizing to those unions in an industry that already have a proven track record of representing that industry's workers.

Currently, jurisdiction is decided by which union hits the ground first, with virtually no consideration given for bargaining standards, union density, capacity to succeed, or other factors that may be greater indicators of the capacity and political will to win on the ground. Third, the AFL-CIO needs a new leader. Although we didn't start out in this position, Sweeney's handling of this important debate has demonstrated that he is not the person to lead labor into its next phase. It is just common sense that a new industry-based strategy and structure could only be led by someone who fought for and not against that change.

Some of Sweeney's supporters have reacted to the debate by further dividing workers' strength. Despite his avowed reluctance to spend union resources until there has been a shift in political climate, AFSCME President McEntee sent hundreds of his paid union staff in an attempt to undermine a ten-year campaign by 49,000 child care workers in Illinois to win the right to join SEIU. More than 20,000 workers had signed cards for SEIU, yet several weeks before the election AFSCME entered the scene, badmouthing SEIU and hoping to get a piece of the action. SEIU won that election by a 6-1 margin.

It is important to note that even if SEIU decides to withdraw from the AFL-CIO, that would not be the end of our relationship with other union partners. Like many organizations, we have a number of collaborative relationships through coalitions and other venues in which organizations that share a set of common principles work together.

Do we as leaders have the courage to make decisions based upon what is best for workers in this country, rather than what is best for us as individuals? The future of American workers may depend on the answer to that question.

...



Jim West

More than 700,000 workers have joined the SEIU in the past eight years. The union says it may leave the AFL-CIO unless the federation commits to major new investment in organizing and replaces its leadership. Photo: Jim West.



Mike Rhodes



RANCOR TO JOIN EUROPEAN ANARCHISTS IN G8 CONFRONTATION AT GLENEAGLES, SCOTLAND

BY G.(8) BRECHER

JUST A QUIET PEACEFUL DANCE

AT LEAST A DOZEN FRESNO RANCOR ACTIVISTS WILL BE JOINING thousands of European anarchists in opposition to the annual meeting of the G8 in Gleneagles Scotland, July 6-8. Along with the WTO, IMF, and World Economic Forum, the Group of Seven Leading Industrialized Countries plus Russia has become a key inter-governmental organization (IGO) in corporate/profit-oriented globalization. Coming four years after the murder of Carlo Giuliani by Italian riot police at the G8 protests in Genoa and one year after the US completely closed off all public access by declaring a “pre-emptive” state of emergency in advance of the 2004 G8 meeting at Sea Island Georgia, globalization opponents are determined to remind the G8 ministers that another world exists. Beyond the suits and storm troopers, beyond the closed boardrooms full of hot air and the streets full of tear gas, is a world of wild lands and indigenous cultures, of estates and factories occupied by landless people and formerly unemployed workers, and of anarchist collectives that refuse to allow the future to be decided by corporate puppeteers and their government marionettes. In short, beyond the iron cage of capitalism is a world of freedom.

One of the greatest challenges facing those serious about stopping the corporate takeover of everything is security. It appears that security was broken recently by a London Times columnist posing as an anarchist at the Festival of Dissent, an anti G8 planning session at a remote Lankarshire farm in northern England. The festival, which drew over three hundred anarchists, was a planning session for disrupting the G8 meeting by strategically encircling and cutting off road and rail transport to the Gleneagles country club/golf resort where the G8 meeting is scheduled to be held. The reporter identified key figures in the Wombles—which played a leading role in the London May Day of Chaos in 2002--and in the group Dissent which organized the festival. The planning meeting drew participants from Canada, France, Germany, S. Korea, Spain, and Iceland as well as from Britain.

But penetrating security cuts both ways. According to the Times, activists have infiltrated the police and have obtained security planning documents including the main police encampment for the summit. These have enabled G8 opponents to determine the key choke points and means of com-

munication to be used by the police. Of course, one needn't infiltrate the police to recognize who they protect and serve. From Gleneagles to the Bonadelle mansion in north Fresno, the primary role of police becomes more evident with each passing summit and fund-raiser: to protect capital held by the wealthy from those who created it.

The G8 summitters, including so-called world leaders Bush and Putin, will be secured by police from across Britain, numbering more than 10,000 at an expected cost of £20 million (\$36.5 m). In total the G8 meeting will involve fifteen hundred delegates from the eight countries attending, with three thousand members of the media covering the event. The total cost for hosting the event? One-hundred and fifty million pounds (\$274m).” On their website (www.dissent.org.uk), Dissent outlines a series of marches, blockades, protests, and calls for direct action including the autonomous formation of the PGA (People's Golf Association) with Golf Affinity Groups taking over the Gleneagles links under the motto “No Caddies, No Masters.” Fresno RANCOR has been designing black and mint green oakie kilts to help make its unique cultural contribution to this international event.

FOR THE THINGS WE'LL NEVER HAVE SO, WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT? WHAT IS THE G8 AND WHY IS IT WORTH CROSSING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO STOP IT?

The G8 was initiated in 1975. Since then heads of state of the major industrial democracies have been meeting annually to rub elbows and establish informal relationships for addressing both shared domestic concerns and issues affecting the international community. G8 summits provide an opportunity for leaders to reach agreement on how best to control the main international levers of power. Generally, delegates review the work of the “sherpas,” the derogatory name given to government functionaries attending the annual lower-level meetings that precede the actual summits. This year's ministerial, accompanied by a variety of protests, occurred March 17th in Derbyshire England.

The six countries at the first G8 summit in Rambouillet, France (famous for the bogus diplomacy the Clinton administration engaged in before its massive bombing campaign

against Yugoslavia) were France, the US, Britain, Germany, Japan and Italy. Canada joined in 1976 and representatives of the European Community in 1977. Russia began participating informally in 1991 and became a regular participant in 1994. Leaders of fifteen developing countries also attend to be lectured on how they can be just like the west (the north, actually) if they open up their markets and accept IMF structural adjustment programs in exchange for more debt. The essence of the G8 is summed up in its charter, the opening of which includes some surprisingly frank doggerel: “The rungs torn from the ladder, can't reach the tumor, ONE GOD, ONE MARKET, ONE TRUTH, ONE CONSUMER.” Who says these suits don't have a sense of humor?

The G-7's embrace of Russia revolved around increasing nervousness among US and European G8 ministers about future energy resources. The G7 shoehorned Russia into its clique despite the fact that it ranks 53rd in the world in per capita GDP, just ahead of Botswana (hardly a “leading industrialized country”). But with the sixth largest proven oil reserves in the world and as an influential player in the extraction of Caspian Sea oil, Russia is a key figure in the international energy game. G8 ministers continue to aggressively pursue Russian support for a Global Strategic Petroleum Reserve to offset OPEC's cartel. With Russia's support G8 countries will be in a better position to leverage other countries and the International Energy Agency to support corporate energy policies like the Global Reserve.

Bringing in Russia is hardly surprising given that G8 countries consume 40 million barrels of oil every single day. As we have tried to continually point out, capitalism is coincidental with systematic and heedless violence against the earth; this is perhaps most evident in the energy sector. The biggest capitalist pigs in the world are us--we emit 19.4 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year, PER CAPITA (fy 1998). That's not a typo or mistake. On average, by 2005, every man, woman and child in the U S of A will emit over 20 TONS of CO2, that's over 40,000 pounds of greenhouse gases, into the atmosphere per year. The combination of mass consumerism and corporate profiteering is, quite literally, deadly. It is not even possible to get many liberals and progressives out of their cars so tied are they to the comfort and convenience (and accompanying debt peonage) that serves corporate profit. The basic energy formula of the G8 is spelled out in section 3 of the charter--“mass graves for

the pump and the price is set, and the price is set.” They are committed to doing whatever is necessary to keep this formula in place.

On the other side of the equator, the *raison de etre* of poor countries is to serve us the materials we need to continue bingeing. Their standard of living, like their energy usage is the inverse of ours. Sub-Saharan African countries, the poorest in the world, emit less than one ton of CO2 gases per year. It is not necessarily the case that basic material well being and colossal atmospheric pollution go hand in hand. No. It is that control of energy policy by oil, coal, and natural gas tycoons and their minions in elite institutions like the G8 goes hand in hand with colossal atmospheric pollution. Tony Blair’s welcome message to G8 delegates drips with hollow concern for climate change. But follow the money, and it leads you back to further investment in and development of oil fields, especially in the Caspian Sea region and in areas like Nigeria and the Amazon basin.

As Frederick Douglass said “power never yielded without a demand; it never has and it never will.” Especially these days, with influence increasingly concentrated among a small group of corporate/state power dons, the choice is becoming increasingly stark: either you are among the real activists, taking real action, and demanding real change, in places like the streets of Gleneagles, the Amazon forests, or the Ogoni lands of the Niger Delta or you are among the vast unconscious or cowardly majority that stands by and permits profit to take precedence over our children’s health and our great grand children’s climate.

TERROR’S THA PRODUCT YA PUSH

In a further bid to prop up the traditional energy sector and big utilities G-8 ministers have recently begun using the n-word. Yes, they’re racist (one need only look at their extraordinary hypocrisy in Africa and other poor countries south of the equator). But we’re talking about what our dear leader refers to as nuke-ye-ler power. At a May 6 meeting in Detroit, G8 ministers asserted that nukes can help solve problems of economic growth, energy security, and environmental protection.

US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, one of the real kingpigs in the Bush junta, was the most vocal proponent of nukes at the meeting. This coincides with the Junta’s recent energy proposals featuring even more subsidies for coal, natural gas, and oil and a new insistence on nukes. Abraham is also a vociferous supporter of ITER. ITER is an international research project sponsored by Europe, the US, and leading Asian countries that combines plasma physics and fusion power generation. In concept it uses a hydrogen plasma torus operating at over 100 million °C. (And you thought Fresno was hot!) It will produce 500 MW of fusion power. If you want to think of it in these terms, the sun is a giant fusion reactor. Solar panels can safely and soundly produce energy from the sun without the inconvenience of hazardous nuclear waste. But where’s the fun in that? More importantly where is the fat corporate profit for the big utilities?

Incidentally, ITER’s web site shows a smiling toe-headed boy atop the shoulders of an even more ecstatic, positively beaming man, presumably the boy’s father (perhaps the mother is undergoing cancer treatment). Father and son reach up, enraptured, toward an open cross section of a nuclear reactor. (I’m not joking--look it up on the web.) This truly is the nuclear family we hear so much about. It looks like a combination of Head and Shoulders dandruff shampoo commercial and Dr. Strangelove. But it’s not; it’s your taxes at work via the good people at IGO’s like the G8.

Coordination of international energy policy is just one area in which the G8 helps to set the global agenda. They also work on items from trade to terrorism. But it all comes down to the same thing--an unelected board of unaccountable politicians and corporate chieftains who close off all public input in an effort to decide our collective future.

**WELL I’M A TRUTH ADDICT,
AH SHIT I GOTTA HEAD RUSH**

It is precisely this hierarchy of global power that RANCOR and other G8 opponents seek to undermine. In doing so, a series of de-centralized, non-hierarchical camps surrounding Gleneagles, devoid of racism, sexism, and speciesism, will spring up. These gatherings will have the additional advantage of showing a glimpse of our other future, one of voluntary, consensus-based decision making and mutual aid.

For the record, RANCOR is opposed to violence; we are opposed to the violence done to the maquilladora women in Juarez Mexico, to the wage slaves in so-called “third world” countries, to the indigenous peoples of the rainforests who, for corporate titans, are mere obstacles to resource extraction, and to totally innocent victims of corporate destruction in places like Bhopal and Buyat Bay. We are opposed to the for profit corporate violence against ancient forests, local foothills, and pristine rivers right here in the once golden state of California and across the world. And we are especially opposed to the violent murders of people around the world

who seek to bring actual, corporate violence to light and to stop it. We are opposed to the murders of Carlo Giuliani, David Chain, Ken Saro Wiwa, Chico Mendes, Dorothy Stang, and Karen Silkwood just to name a few. How many murdered corporate CEO’s can you name? So ask yourself, who are the violent ones? Who are the real threats to the public? Who are the real eco-terrorists?

Many of you have been trained to shudder at the word “anarchist” because of our alleged violence. But all of the violence in the entire history of anarchy--even counting property destruction which, arguably, is not violent--is like one grain of sand on an entire coastline of corporate and corporate-state violence.

In his pamphlet “Common Sense” Tom Paine, one of our authentic American heroes, noted that when we are oppressed by a government that refuses to serve the public good “our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer.” It is our labor that pays

wing aircraft, telephone taps, undercovers, and informers. Our public schools give military recruiters unrestricted access to the persons and information of our children to fight an illegal and unconstitutional war while banning us--who pay for those same schools--from countering the recruiters. Our free press is anything but; it is a very expensive press owned lock, stock, and barrel by corporations, and it engages in a uniformity of pro-government messaging that not even the Soviet Union could have pulled off. Internationally, the state subsidizes the exportation of jobs to undemocratic, ruthlessly anti-labor countries and exports prisoners to undemocratic and ruthlessly anti-human rights countries that engage in torture (indeed, our government itself tortures and kills prisoners in violation of all custom and law).

Anarchists and other activists from nearly all continents will be aiming to counter the G8’s message in Scotland. We are doing so in the name of the principles each of you claims to espouse--the principles of liberte, egalite, and fraternite



**“CARLO GIULIANI, UNARMED ITALIAN ANARCHIST
MURDERED BY ITALIAN POLICE AT G8 PROTESTS IN
GENOA ITALY, 2001”**

the taxes that furnishes the military with its men, women, and materiel in Iraq. It is our labor that pays for the likes of Dick Cheney to funnel more of our tax money to his former employer turned war profiteer, Halliburton. And it is our hard earned dollars that send US trade and commerce functionaries and the Texas Kingpig himself to the G8 to determine the future, a future that is full of bright prospects for multi-nationals and dark clouds of fear and doubt for ordinary people.

Paine, an optimist, also once said that “the patriot is the person who protects his country from its government.” Now, our government uses our money to spy on us regularly with cameras, warrantless and secret searches, helicopters, fixed

that, since 1789, still have not been established. But if the state’s tentacles of fear have wormed their way into your vocabulary and it helps you to feel more comfortable in supporting Fresno RANCOR in the struggle against the G8 then don’t say anarchist, just say “patriot.”

We encourage you to show your support for RANCOR, and have a great time too by attending our first annual anarchist prom, June 10th at H St. studio, 1830 H St--just a few blocks south of Divisadero in downtown Fresno. DJ’s, live bands, and more--music starts at 8. Outrageous formal wear is highly recommended! Or visit our websites at www.rancor.info and www.sierranevadaearthfirst.org. See you on the Gleneagles links, laddy!



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WILPF Fresno, PO Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755
 Vickie Fouts, Editor, (559) 658-8260 or socialjustice@sti.net

THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY WILPF, WHO HAS COMPLETE EDITORIAL CONTROL OF THE CONTENT.

WILPF DATES:

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, NOON:
 Women in Black, Fresno County Courthouse Breezeway

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 7 PM:
 WILPF Business Meeting. 1584 N Van Ness Board Elections

JANE ADDAMS PEACE GARDEN MONUMENT:

WILPF presented a large \$2000 check to the Peace Garden Addams Monument Fund at a CSUF press conference at the Peace Garden on May 12 as a kickoff of the fundraising effort. This check represented all the donations made by WILPF members since July. We wish to thank all the WILPF members who were part of the process to include a monument to our founder (the first woman to be included!) in the Peace Garden. They include those who served on the Peace Garden Committee: Su Kapoor, Peace Garden founder, from the social work department, and Jan Slagter from women's studies, representing the CSUF faculty; and Ellie Bluestein, Fresno WILPF founder, representing the community. Thanks to Marilyn Byrne, a women's studies student, for her presentation on Jane Addams to the nominating committee. A special thanks to our social work intern, Lupe Orosco, for her tireless work to get WILPF into this press conference and in getting the large check printed for the presentation. Thanks to Pat Wolk for taking pictures at the event. A special thanks to the members who donated toward the monument fund. We couldn't have done this without you. A total of \$100,000 is needed to get the Jane Addams monument into the Peace Garden. They are only about one-third of the way there, so any donations from the community would be appreciated.

WILPF BOARD ELECTIONS:

Board elections will be held at our June 9 meeting. If you are interested in a position, please contact Catherine Garoupa at cgaroupa@csufresno.edu or 930-9995; or Ruth Obel-Jorgensen at ruthoj@csufresno.edu or 916-7396.

COUNTER-RECRUITER COALITION:

Our intern, Lupe Orosco, attended the first Counter-Recruiter Coalition organizing meeting on behalf of WILPF on May 7. Rick Petinak, our other intern, has been working all year on organizing materials around conscientious objector status and counter-recruiting. Both of them are working on doing a presentation to the new coalition soon. Since their internship is now over, we do need volunteers to represent WILPF at future meetings. Let me know if you are interested. At our May meeting we agreed to give the Coalition \$100 from the education fund to help buy materials for the counter-recruiting effort.



CHALLENGING CORPORATE POWER

Lydia Flores

WILPF members Ellie Bluestein, Bette Noblett, and Lydia Flores have formed a panel and have presented to a variety of groups a presentation entitled, *Challenging Corporate Power*. The content reveals how the Founding Fathers held the corporations in check and how the corporations were able to legally gain power over all elements of the United States government and the world. In the last year the panel has added their concerns for the privatization of water. It is important to know that whoever controls water rights, controls the people. The City Council in Stockton approved the privatization of Stockton's water, though there were many citizens who opposed it. The OMI-Thames took over and the Stockton water rates rose and customer service requirements have been unfulfilled. The Concerned Citizen Coalition Group of Stockton has found a way to fight this contract. An environmental study was not done by the city council. The Concerned Citizen's lawsuit challenging the privatization is pending before the state appeals court. For more information see <www.cccos.org>.

Our panel would be pleased to meet with interested groups. We also lend out the videos and DVD that we have. We have been circulating *Thirst and Tales of the San Joaquin* to anyone who calls to make a reservation. We also have access to *The Corporation*, a two hour and 40 minute video. Call Lydia Flores for details at 435-7360.

TITLE IX COALITION

Marilyn Byrne

In response to issues involving women at California State University, Fresno, a Title IX Gender Equity Coalition has been formed. Several WILPF members have been attending meetings the past couple of months. WILPF members were also a large presence years ago with another Title IX Coalition. The Coalition has served to support the Title IX position at a time when federal monitoring guides in the process of weakening. The present administration is calling for an e-mail survey of women students to determine if the school is meeting the criteria of giving women equal opportunity to play sports. The survey asks them what additional sports they might have an interest in and ability to play. If the women's responses to the survey do not indicate enough interest in additional sports, it is concluded that all is going well and that no additional sports need to be added. The problem with this method is that the e-mail survey makes it too easy for schools to claim they are in compliance. While the regulating organization Office for Civil Rights is presently still monitoring gender equity problems, the coalition is working to educate the public about problems faced by women athletes.

The Title IX Coalition is working to bring an understanding about Title IX and how it works at CSUF. It has given a forum for female athletes to discuss and address inequities in the status quo. Some of these inequities include an overall sports budget increase of \$4.6 million (with football salaries increased \$1.3 million) while allocation for women's sports decreased 3.5% and the allocation for women's coaching salaries decreased by 8.8%. In almost every field of sports, male coaches have replaced female coaches. Faculty commitments to improve women's sport facilities, such as locker rooms, and to give the women the opportunity to play volleyball in the Save Mart Center (as promised in written communication with the Office for Civil Rights) have not materialized. Thirty years after Congress passed Title IX, women and girls do not have equal opportunity to play sports. The Title IX Gender Equality Coalition is working to get the needs of female athletes recognized and to make sure that CSUF honors and enforces this law in the spirit that it was intended.

Quote of the Month: In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man— if you want anything done, ask a woman. - Margaret Thatcher



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INDEPENDENT, ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARIES. LEARN WHAT YOU'RE MISSING FROM MAINSTREAM MEDIA.

JUNE 8: HOTEL PALESTINE

This film follows a year-long investigation of the April 2003 killing of two foreign journalists in the Baghdad's Hotel Palestine by the Infantry of the U.S. Army. The purpose of the film is to counter the Army's claim that the tank had fired on the hotel in self-defense, and that the deaths were accidental. This claim is clearly contradicted by the footage, principally shot by one of those killed - Jose Couso, a Spanish cameraman and journalist -- before he was hit. 50 min. 12 noon & 7:30 P.M. Discussion to follow.

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THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch, M.D.

AILING HEALTH CARE

Most Americans are saying that terrorism ranks number one on their list of national problems. However, representing a real crisis, health care runs a close second. A recent survey of chief financial officers at major corporations found that 65 percent regard immediate action on health care costs as "very important" (only 31 percent said the same about Social Security reform).

The costs of Medicare and of private health plans are both rising faster than G.D.P. per capita, and at about the same rate. This rising spending is primarily a response to innovation: the range of things that medicine can do keeps increasing. For example, Medicare recently started paying for implanted devices in many patients with heart trouble, research having shown them to be highly effective. So what is the problem with this?

First, the US's traditional private health insurance system, in which workers get coverage through their employers, is unraveling. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that in 2004 there were at least five million fewer jobs providing health insurance than in 2001. And health care costs have become a major burden on those businesses that continue to provide insurance coverage: General Motors now spends about 1500 on health care for every car it produces. Second, rising Medicare spending may be a sign of progress, but it still must be paid for, and few politicians now are willing to talk about the tax increases that will be needed in the program is to make medical advances available to all older Americans.

Finally, the US health care system is very inefficient. Americans tend to believe that we have the best health care system in the world despite the fact we spend far more than any other country -- 75 percent more than Canada or France -- yet rank near the bottom among industrial countries in indicators from life expectancy to infant mortality. The waste in our current system means that effective reform could improve quality and cut costs.

To get effective reform, however, we'll need to shed some preconceptions, especially the belief that government is always the problem and market competition is always the solution. The fact is that in health care the private sector is often bloated and bureaucratic while some government agencies, notably the Veterans Administration, are lean and efficient. "The US has the most privatized, competitive health system in the advanced world; it also has by far the highest costs with in some ways the poorest results."

THE MEDICAL MONEY PIT

Why do other advanced countries manage to spend so much less and get better results? Britain's system isn't as bad as its reputation, especially for lower-paid workers whose counterparts in the US often have no health insurance. But Britain's health care system is run out on the cheap, with total spending per person only 40 percent as high as ours. In 2002 the US spent \$5267 on health care per person, of which \$2364, or 45 percent was government spending, mainly on Medi-care and Medicaid. Canada spent \$2931 per person, of which \$2080 was government spending. Our government spends more on health care than governments of other advanced countries even though the private sector pays a far higher share of the costs than is the case anywhere else.

The US has lower life-expectancy and higher infant mortality than other advanced countries. Social factors, especially our high poverty rate, play a role in this. A 2003 study found that the US scores high on high-tech services -- M.R.I.'s for example -- but on other measures, like the number of doctors' visits and number of days in hospitals, the US is only average or below. Why is the price of US health care so high? One answer is doctors' salaries. Another is that our system drives a poor bargain with the pharmaceutical industry: e.g., our VA pays reduced rates for drugs for its patients whereas Medicare is disallowed legally to negotiate lower prices for patients in the system. A large part of America's health care spending goes into paperwork. A 2003 New England Journal of Medicine study estimated that administrative costs took 31 cents of every dollar the US spent on health care, compared with only 17 cents in Canada. Essential is this: "Decades of indoctrination in the virtues of market competition and the evils of big government have left many Americans unable to comprehend the idea that sometimes competition is the problem, not the solution." (Source: Paul Krugman, New York Times, 04/05). This report is based upon multiple print sources and reflects personal opinion, but is consistent with the agenda of the FCNV.

The Welch Report is based upon mail received at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence coming from peace and social justice centers around the State of California, and at times upon articles in newspapers and other print sources. Each month I select and edit the material going into the Report, usually representing my personal opinion but consistent with the agenda of FCNV.

QUAKERS

FRESNO FREINDS MEETING
Silent Worship Sunday 10-11 AM

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Writer's Venue at Candy's

Candy's Mexican Restaurant 1245 Fulton Mall. The time is each Thursday from 5 to 9 PM

SAROYAN, LEVINE, YARBOROUGH, SOTO, the list goes on and on. The Valley has produced literary giants. Wonderful. But have we shot our creative wad? Are we out of talents that can further ennoble the written word? Not very likely, there are many, many writers in the Valley fighting to be read, to be known, to be famous.

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And talent – some new and raw, some published and a few scarred to death. The last talents may just hear their work read. But they will eagerly read your comments. Short stories, poetry, one act plays and even expositions of opinion will great and entertain you.

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I am Will (Tranquilli)
wheelswill@yahoo.com
Phone: 559 442-4513 or fax: 559 442-5889

You can sign up at Candy's or, to get a jump on walk-ins, use the above contact methods to get on the list.

Tell me your name, choice of reading (fiction, plays, poetry, exposition) Title of your piece and how far along you are in your craft (new, experienced and long suffering, published, etc) and your anticipated time of arrival. I will respond promptly.



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ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS

By Joe Price

Joe Price, 10, is in fifth grade at Mountain Home School in Oakhurst. He studied American History this year, and he found it interesting that while certain people (like Benjamin Franklin) are always included in the history books, certain others (like Benjamin Banneker) are generally left out. Joe thought Community Alliance readers, as readers of alternative media, might be interested to read a little bit about an important American about whom they probably never read in their mainstream history books.

IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF THE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE, THE REVEREND FLOYD HARRIS LISTED BENJAMIN Banneker among many important African Americans. Coincidentally, I was studying about Banneker at the time and I realized that nobody knew about him. This is too bad because he was remarkable in many ways. In fact, he can be compared to a well-known Benjamin who was his contemporary: Benjamin Franklin.

Both Franklin and Banneker had humble beginnings. Franklin left school at age 10 to make candles. He then worked in his brother's printing shop. Banneker's grandfather was a slave who later married his owner, a convicted milk thief from England. One of their daughters, Mary, also married a former slave. Mary and Robert were Benjamin Banneker's parents. He had no formal schooling and much work on his family's tobacco farm. He was always a self-sustaining man.

Franklin and Banneker were both public-spirited. Franklin, of course, organized the first fire department and public library. Banneker helped people who couldn't read or write, and wrote their letters for them. He also helped survey Washington, D.C. His friend Andrew Ellicott was picked to survey Washington and thought Banneker would be excellent as one of his associates. Banneker was the team's astronomer. In the wilderness there were no landmarks, so they used stars as reference points. Banneker got up every hour of the night to make sure his measurements were all precise.

Banneker, like Franklin, was scientifically advanced. Franklin, we know, believed and proved that lightning was electricity. He then built lightning rods. However, you probably don't know that Banneker believed, correctly, that the constellation Sirius is actually two revolving stars. This was long before it was confirmed by other scientists. He was aware that there could be life on other planets, an idea that was thought sinful at the time.

Franklin is known for his inventions, one of which is the Franklin stove, which both cooked and heated. Banneker created a four-faced clock made of wood, which struck hours and worked perfectly. He modeled it after a watch he "dissected," and he built pieces out of wood on a much larger scale. Clocks were very rare at the time and people came from miles around to see Banneker's.

Franklin created his well-known almanac, which was very helpful. Banneker too wrote an almanac that was also immensely popular. Many people at the time were astounded that a black man wrote an almanac. His almanac took about a year to write and it was very accurate—especially his opinions and weather predictions. But Banneker's almanac was forgotten.

Franklin and Banneker were politically involved, to say the least. Helping with the Declaration of Independence was big for Franklin, and also helping write the laws of the United States. Banneker also did something big. He wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson refuting the idea that blacks were unintelligent: "I apprehend you will readily embrace every opportunity to eradicate that train of absurd and false ideas and opinions which so generally prevail with respect to us...." Banneker also told Jefferson in the letter that when America was threatened, the Founding Fathers claimed equality of men. But now, after the war, they no longer needed help fighting from blacks, so they could exclude them. This is, of course, very grim irony.

If you've heard of Banneker, it's probably due to this letter. Furthermore, Jefferson wrote back, so he must have thought Banneker important enough to reply.

Banneker, of course, had a lot of disadvantages compared to Franklin. His beginnings were a lot humbler than Franklin's. He was the son of a freed slave and his grandparents were a freed slave and a person banished from England. Being black at that time, he was treated horribly. One time he tried to sell a perfectly good tobacco crop and a petty official told him that two-thirds of the crop was bad and had to be confiscated. Banneker knew the man was lying but could not do anything about it.

Few people cared enough about Banneker to show up at his funeral, and his house was burned down by an unknown arsonist during the service. Almost all of Bannaker's journals and scientific writing—about 65 years of it—was lost in the fire. And though you can read about Franklin in most history books, it's very hard to find much about Banneker. But if you want to know more about him, you can read *Benjamin Banneker: Surveyor, Astronomer, Publisher, Patriot* by Charles A. Cerami.

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SATURDAY JUNE 4TH

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SATURDAY JUNE 11TH

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SATURDAY JUNE 18TH

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THURSDAY JUNE 23RD

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jazz-folk
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FRIDAY JUNE 24TH

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Presents
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SATURDAY JUNE 25TH

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Presents
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& the long haul string band
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THURSDAY JUNE 30TH

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A NOVICE'S STORY
BY JUDY STEGE

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HAVE LIVED IN FRESNO FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, BUT I SELDOM SEE THE MIGHTY SIERRAS GUARDING OUR east. I joined FresCAMP in January and learned that pesticides are a part of the unhealthy air we breathe. FresCAMP is a part of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, so I happily joined the Clean Air Action Day in order to influence legislators and learn how political action works. Our goals, as defined in the Legislative Advocacy Training on May 4, were (1) to gain support from both Assembly and Senate for priority bills creating cleaner air; (2) to meet the legislators and their staff to open the door for future lobbying; and (3) to educate them on the importance of fourteen clean air bills introduced this session. This was my first opportunity to lobby in Sacramento.

A full bus left Fresno at 6:40 AM, May 9. Mark Stout and Carolina Simunovic, our organizers, had given us sky-blue T-shirts: the front read, "Let's clean our air!" and was decorated with a drawing by a Merced third-grader named Brandon, and the back read, "CVAQ Coalition CLEAN AIR for the San Joaquin Valley!" identifying our group. I wore mine backwards to make the name visible. I recognized some people from May 4, but I knew no one until we spent the day together.

At 10 AM we arrived in Sacramento at the Trinity Presbyterian Church across the street from the Capitol Building, where we were joined by activists from Earlimart and the South Valley. Organized into twelve groups, representative of our Valley's diverse population and ranging in age from six to sixty, we set off to enter the Capitol. My team leaders were Rey Leon, a young Latino who was one of the trainers on May 4, and Bonnie Holmes-Gen, a businesslike woman with a cell phone to her ear most of the time. Our group had five non-English speaking Hmong women, their translator—energetic Phoua Moua, who works for Metro Ministries—and me, a wide-eyed FresCAMP rep on her first trip inside the Capitol. I soon realized that Phoua, Bonnie, and Ray were experienced lobbyists, which gave me a lot to learn as I watched them work. The blue-shirted Hmong women and I followed along to share our interests and concerns.

Our first meeting was with Juan Arambula's staff (Assembly District 31). Andrew, a legislative assistant, grew up in the San Joaquin Valley, and he willingly listened and took notes carefully. I introduced myself as representing FresCAMP, then stated that "I am also here for all the children who need clean air, clean water, and safe food to survive." The Hmong women shared their stories of asthma and problems with dust, pesticides, and unhealthy conditions.

Our main goal was to get a commitment of support for SB 999. Rey explained that this bill would add four nonelected members to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Board: a doctor involved with asthma and air quality issues, a scientist researching air quality, a transportation and land-use consultant, and an environmental justice advocate. It would also give Fresno, Stockton, and Bakersfield permanent seats. Andrew concurred this would all be beneficial. Then we quickly highlighted some other pending legislation in the Clean Air packet. I talked about SB 879, which mandates the enforcement of existing pesticide safety regulations and requires that investigations into pesticide violations be completed within 60 days, instead of 120 days in the current law. I have recently learned that pesticide drift has harmed people in homes, on streets, and on school grounds throughout the Valley. Scientists and doctors are just now starting to collaborate on studies of pesticide drift and asthma occurrences. Since 16% of Central Valley children suffer from asthma, and more than 1200 premature deaths occur each year in the Central Valley, these studies are important in order to decrease pesticide exposure and poor air quality. Rey said, "This is an E-J issue." I asked him later what "E-J" was. "It is environmental justice for the people of color, like the farm workers, who have no voice in controlling their environment." So many residents have no health coverage, and their suffering goes unreported and untreated. We need an Environmental Justice Advocate on the SJVAPCD Board.

Near the end of our allotted time, Assemblyman Arambula returned to his office and greeted us. After we thanked him for sponsoring AB 841 to require air monitoring on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, he spent time listening to our priority bill requests. Assemblyman Arambula noted both the support for SB 999 by the Fresno City Council (one of whom would be on the SJVAPCD board) and the opposition of the County Board of Supervisors with their "no action" statement. My thought was, "Who are the 'civic leaders' on the Fresno County Board of Supervisors who without notice or public discussion in November 2004 opened our county to biotech research and then in May 2005, with 'no action,' can influence legislators in Sacramento against SB 999, which would give Fresno a voice in the efforts to make the air safe for all of us to breathe?" We left with Assemblyman Arambula stating he was "leaning toward" the support of SB 999.

Next we had two "drop ins" to Assemblywoman Wilma Chan (District 16) and Assemblywoman Noreen Evans (District 7). These are visits without appointments, to drop off our Clean Air packet and shake the hand of the young female secretary or, if lucky, one of the legislative assistants. We had to meet in the Assembly cafeteria (a noisy, busy meeting place) or in the hall because we had a large group (nine of us). The young legislative assistants, wearing ties (one young man also wore a Native American style ponytail) and their best manners, listened as we introduced ourselves and Rey and Bonnie quickly highlighted three important bills.

After a welcome lunch break, we raced back to the Capitol for our one o'clock appointment in Assemblywoman Nicole Parra's office (District 30). We talked with Shannon, a legislative assistant. I was impressed by the smooth way Bonnie explained specifically how SB 999 would help Assemblywoman Parra's constituents. Rey spoke about the need for clean air for underrepresented people like the farm workers and legal immigrants who have no means of claiming their human rights, and mentioned this was an "E-J" issue. Shannon also listened carefully to my pesticide drift concerns and to the Hmong women, translated by Phoua. As we left and dashed to our next "drop in," I asked Bonnie if she worked here in Sacramento, because she seemed so comfortable. She did, and for fifteen years she has been the lobbyist for the American Lung Association. No wonder she knew the legislators and their assistants! I thanked her for her outstanding work.

We dashed off to two more "drop ins." Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee (33rd District) was represented by Mark, who in the hall seemed more concerned about "business systems." We quickly moved to Assemblymember Tom Harman's office (District 67), where the smiling blond secretary received our Clean Air packet. At this time the five Hmong women and Phoua left to explore the Capitol. I was tired, too, but my job was to lobby. We headed to the Senate side to visit Gil Cedillo (Senate District 22) for our two o'clock appointment. Rey knew the legislative assistant, Nadia Leal. A hug and friendship gave us a long discussion. Nadia took notes carefully as Rey and Bonnie explained the bills we were supporting. I spoke of my hope for the pesticide control bills and the children we wanted to protect. Bonnie pointed out that SB 999 was copied from the successful Southwest Air District bill, which had helped Los Angeles County. Nadia assured us that Senator Cedillo was sensitive and aware of the E-J issues because of the Latino constituents in LA, and that we could count on his support. As we left, I grabbed a business card, understanding now that these contacts were important for the future. I was learning how to be a lobbyist.

Bonnie left us at that point. I now knew that the phone to her ear kept her in touch with the progress of specific bills and the legislators she needed to speak to. She was doing an important job every day, and I had thought she was just a businesswoman! Rey and I went on to the last two "drop-ins" to make a contact and leave a Clean

Air packet. I followed as Rey swept through the halls, hailing mostly women friends as we went to the last offices. I later found out that this young Latino, handsome and self-assured (I loved how he used his umbrella to push the elevator button!) was a busy policy analyst for the Latino Issues Forum. Wow! This young man from Huron had power in Sacramento.

Rey and I visited the offices of Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee (District 33) where we left the Clean Air packet with Faith, a secretary, and then the office of Tom Harman (District 67), where the legislative assistant, Cliff, offered us candy as we exchanged handshakes and grabbed business cards.

At 2:45 we headed to the Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing Room, where bills were aired to the public to offer pro or con statements concerning fiscal impact. I was happy to sit a while, but Rey left his umbrella and papers on his seat and dashed off to lobby on his own. I listened to the efficient chairwoman, Senator Carole Migden, call for comments on each bill on the agenda. The first bill I was aware of was SB 412, which would provide more state control over massage therapists. Carole said, "Is anyone here to speak on this bill? Does it rub anyone the wrong way?" I laughed, and a man representing Asian Body Work gave his dissenting remarks before she cut him off. Several bills

were aired, then our "priority list" bill, SB 497, was called, which would enact the Cleaner Construction Program for the purpose of reducing air pollution emissions from off-road equipment used by state agency and department contracts. Several people spoke in support, including Bonnie representing the American Lung Association. Despite

the support, this bill was sent to the suspense file. Rey explained that the bill would be rewritten to make it more acceptable to both houses. I had forgotten that each bill must pass both houses during this year, and that is why compromise is so important even before the initiating votes.

As I sat, I thought about my frenzied day, trailing along like a kindergartener, but learning all the while. I realized that I could influence the legislative process if I stopped being afraid of elected officials and took time to contact them. Recently I have called and written letters to state and federal legislators, but nothing is as powerful as a personal visit. I heard Assemblyman Arambula give his thoughtful opinion on controversial bills. I saw the legislative assistants willing to try to comprehend the importance of our position on air quality bills they had not seen. I was assured that we were heard when Bonnie and Rey used their knowledge of the legislator's interests or committee assignments to convince the assistant of the importance of at least one bill we were lobbying for. I came away with an unexpected respect for the busy Assembly members and Senators and their staffs as they shift through the bills they are asked to vote on. I am also in awe of the lobbyists like Bonnie, Ray, and Phoua, who are there in the Capitol building day after day to speak for those of us busy at home, but depending upon new laws to make our lives safer.

At 3:30 we met in the sunshine on the marble front steps of the beautiful Sacramento Capitol building. "What do we want?" Mark yelled. "Clean air!" we shouted. "When do we want it?" "Now!" we yelled, as pictures were snapped of our large group. I was proud like the others to be a part of making air cleaner and healthier in the Central Valley.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AIR QUALITY ISSUES, CONTACT:

CENTRAL VALLEY AIR QUALITY COALITION

<HTTP://CALCLEANAIR.ORG>

(559) 485-1416 MARK & CAROLINA CAROLINA@FRESNOMETMIN.ORG



OR



FRESNO METRO MINISTRY

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<HTTP://WWW.FRESNOMETMIN.ORG/>

COMMUNITY ACTION

Calendar Of Events

Thursday, June 2 7 PM

Prisoner support group meeting. This is a support group for families and friends of prisoners and Death Penalty Focus and will be held at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N Van Ness, Fresno (just south of McKinley). For further info contact Maria at 255-9492 or Donna at 456-4974.

Saturday, June 4 10 AM

The 15th annual Fresno Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade and Festival in the Tower District. The parade will start at Palm & Olive at 10 AM and end at Olive & Maroa. The festival will open at Olive & Fulton at 11 AM. For more information contact Fresno Rainbow Pride at (559) 486-3464 or email ClinkInc@aol.com.

Sunday, June 5 5:30 PM

The Carl and Esther Robinson Award for the Outstanding Advocate for the Common Good. The inaugural honoree will be Ellie Bluestein. The award is named in honor of Carl and Esther Robinson, long-time activists for peace and justice.

The event is going to be a dinner and program at Hope Lutheran Church. The cost is \$35/person and we are also raising money to give some scholarships for those unable to afford this charge (the number of scholarships depends upon how much we can raise). For more information <www.robinsoncommongood.org>.

Wednesday, June 8 7:30 PM

The documentary Hotel Palestine will be shown at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N Van Ness (southeast corner Van Ness and McKinley). This film follows a year-long investigation of the April 2003 killing of two foreign journalists in Baghdad's Hotel Palestine by the infantry of the US Army. The purpose of the film is to counter the Army's claim that the tank had fired on the hotel in self-defense, and that the deaths were accidental. This claim is clearly contradicted by the footage by Jose Couso, a Spanish cameraman and journalist. 50 minutes long. Discussion follows.

Friday, June 10 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents Machuca at the Tower Theatre. A coming-of-age story set in Chile during the 1973 coup, the film presents a poignant view of class struggle from a child's perspective. In Spanish, with English subtitles. Tickets can be purchased at the Tower Theatre Box Office, 815 E Olive; The Movies, 1435 N Van Ness; the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village; and at the door for \$10; \$8, for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, 221-0755, or go to <www.fresnofilmworks.org>.

Friday, June 10 6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker Michael Kunz, professor at Fresno Pacific University: "The Controversy over Evolution and Intelligent Design." Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 PM. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on L St between 12th and 13th Streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen at dfriesen@telis.org.

Saturday, June 11 10:30 AM-3 PM

CVPPAC Picnic
Friendship, Music, Fun, Food
Roeding Park—Cedar Grove
(Near the Olive Avenue entrance)

The Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee invites you to attend the CVPPAC Oak Grove Picnic in Roeding Park, celebrating CVPPAC's first year of activism to improve the Central Valley. The potluck-style picnic will feature music by Jemmy Bluestein and fabulous foods prepared by the most progressive cooks! Renew your friendship, community involvement, and share a fun-filled day with us. For more information visit our Web site <http://cvppac.org> or call (559) 444-2204.

Thursday, June 16 7:30-9:30 AM

Community Health Care Roundtable at the Trinity Lutheran Church, 3973 N Cedar. Sponsored by Fresno Metropolitan Ministry. For more information call (559) 485-1416 or e-mail metromin@fresnometmin.org. Also see <www.fresnometroministry.org>.

Thursday, June 16 5:30-7:30 PM

Ida B. Wells Reception, at the home of Gail and Everett Gaston, 2058 E Pinedale (559) 325-0540. This event is hosted by National Women's Political Caucus of Fresno County and admission is \$25; students \$10. Shirley Chisholm will also be honored and special honorees will be Juanita Stevenson and Jack Noldon. Call Carol Bequette (229-9661) for reservations or mail your check to: NWPC-Fresno, PO Box 389, Fresno, CA 93708.

Friday, June 17 6:30-8:30 PM

The Reedley Peace Center presents speaker: Aurelio De Los Santos Ortiz from Reedley Social Services. Border Issues: The Arizona Minutemen. Light potluck at 6:30. Program begins at 7 PM. This event is sponsored by the Reedley Peace Center and will be held at the Fellowship Hall of First Mennonite Church, on L St between 12th and 13th Streets in Reedley. Admission is free. Contact Don Friesen at dfriesen@telis.org.

Saturday, June 18 1-4 PM

What is the role of a photographer in the alternative/independent media movement? Learn about photojournalism, how to get good pictures at demonstrations and other social/economic justice events. Learn about lighting, cameras, and digital editing. This workshop will be led by David Bacon and is sponsored by the Community Alliance newspaper. For more information call (559) 978-4502 or e-mail AllianceEditor@Comcast.net.

Sunday, June 19 6 PM

Jay Kishor concert. Jay is a master of surbahar, sitar, and dozen of other instruments, was groomed in the traditional master-disciple tradition from renowned masters like Mrs. Annapurna Devi, Pandit Brij Bhusab Kabra, and Dr. Bhan Singh Thakursaheb. Jay has collaborated with the likes of Michael Hedges, Grammy award winner Stanley Jordan, and many more. The Hindu Observer and Baltimore Sun stated, "Jay Kishor is a sitar and surbahar virtuoso" while the City Paper adds, "Jay Kishor's simple, stark, sitar ragas speak to God." Sharada Sangeet Sadadn of Fresno is proud to present Jay in an afternoon and evening of ragas, at the First Congregational Church of Fresno, 2131 Van Ness. Tickets are \$17 general and \$10 for students. Call for info at (559) 486-6665 or Perfect Balance Yoga at (559) 222-6212.

Sunday, June 19 7:30 PM

Preston Reed, drop-your-jaw master of the acoustic guitar, Father's Day Concert at the Fresno Art Museum. Sponsored by the Fresno Folklore Society. \$15 advance; \$20 at the door. Check him out <www.prestonreed.com>. Alan Kunze, concert manager :435-7374

Sunday, June 26 3-5 PM

Give Peace a Dance! The Fresno Center for Nonviolence is celebrating their anniversary. This event will be held at the Hudson Barn. There will be a Fine Arts Raffle and Way of Peace Awards.

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Every Sunday 12:30 PM; 3 PM

Food Not Bombs serves free food to anyone who is hungry. Anyone who'd like to help call Mar Miriam at (559) 442-0966 to arrange to help him and other volunteers prepare lunch at 12:30 PM at his home in the Tower District. Lunch is served 3 PM at Courthouse Park near the Martin Luther King, Jr. statue. Donations of plates, bowls, spoons, and forks made of recyclable material are greatly appreciated.

Every Monday 1 PM

Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition wants you to find a voice and get active! Join our weekly group meetings at the Women's Resource Center, or stop by our table in the Free Speech Area, Mon/Wed/Fri, 11 AM-1 PM. Be a part of the planning, the action, and the fun of activism!

Every Tuesday 6:30-8:30 PM

The Fresno River Zen group meets in Horsley Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno. This group welcomes all who wish to seek clarity, compassion, and harmony with oneself and the world through mindful meditation. Emphasis is on bringing peaceful actions from personal experience in meditation to healing the world. Teaching and practice in the spirit of the Suzuki Roshi Lineage is led by Grace Schireson, an ordained Zen priest. For more information, call Grace at (559) 877-2400 or e-mail her at grace@emptynestzendo.org.

Every Tuesday and Thursday 7-9 PM

The St. Benedict Catholic Worker serves a meal to the homeless, working poor, and visitors and released inmates in front of Fresno County Jail (corner of Fresno and M streets). Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the meals. For more information contact Liza Apper at (559) 229-6410 or liza.apper@sbcw.org ; or visit their Web site: < www.sbcw.org >.

Every Tuesday 7 PM

Peace Fresno meets at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. If you want to help stop Bush's endless war against the world, come to this meeting! For an up-to-the-minute listing of all peace actions in the Fresno area, call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at (559) 23PEACE (237-3223). For more information about Peace Fresno, call 487-2515 or visit their Web site at www.peacefresno.org.

Every other Wednesday 3 and 7 PM

Video Series at CSU Fresno sponsored by Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition and Peace Fresno. Will include videos on the Iraq war, women's rights, and Mother Earth, among others. There will be two showings, one at 3 PM in the Student Union Rm. 309, the other at 7 PM in McLaine 161. Showings are free and open to the public. For more information call Shawn or Khara: 224-1218.

Every Friday 7 PM

Reedley Peace Center holds its weekly peace meeting at the Fellowship Hall at Reedley's First Mennonite Church, 1208 L Street, Reedley. Programs vary, but the fo-

cus is always on peace issues: local, state, national, international. The contact is Carol Krehbiel: (559) 637-9098 or krehbiel@cvip.net. The meeting is free, open to the public, and accessible to the handicapped.

Every Saturday 1-2 PM

Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. The location for cooking on Saturday is at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E Barstow, between First and Cedar, starting at 9 AM. They are always in need of servers at the park. For more information call Dallas: 452-0277, or e-mail fresnofnb@yahoo.com. Visit the Food Not Bombs Web site at <www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB/>.

Every Saturday 1 PM until the last patient is served

Medical clinic for the homeless, actively injecting drug users, and prostitutes. You can find them near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park. Staffed by Dr. Marc Lasher and volunteers. Accepting financial donations. Contact: 266-0444.

Every Saturday 1-3 PM

Fresno Free Bicycle Repair Clinic. Most Saturdays. Donations of bicycle parts, inner tubes, and blinky lights welcome. Volunteers needed to help with minor repairs. The bicycle clinic is near the Olive Ave entrance to Roeding Park, beside Food Not Bombs. For more info and to arrange donations, e-mail fresnofreebikeclinic@yahoo.com.

ONGOING MONTHLY ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

1st Sunday of every month 1-3 PM

The South Valley Peace Center <http://www.svpc.info/> has peace demonstrations at the northwest corner of Mooney and Walnut in Visalia. Come out and demonstrate for peace. Bring a sign with your favorite peace message.

2nd and 4th Sunday of every month 1 PM

South Valley Peace Center meets at the Visalia Friends Meeting House, 17208 Ave. 296, Visalia. Contact: info@svpc.info http://www.svpc.info

2nd Sunday of every month 3-5 PM

Fresno Stonewall Democrats meeting at Java Wava, 1940 North Echo across from Fresno High is open to the public. Stonewall Democrats' focus is on social and political issues of interest to progressives in general and progressive and liberal Democrats in particular. For more information contact

Jay Hubbell at (559) 292-4905, e-mail <fresnostonewall@mangen.com >, or visit the Web site<www.mangen.com/stonewall/ >.

3rd Sunday of every month
10 AM-12 Noon

World Meditation Day is observed to promote peace within oneself and harmony in the world. Held at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Program includes guided meditation followed by discussion and light refreshments. Call Veena Kapoor, (559) 435-2212, for more information.

3rd Sunday of every month
1 PM

Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley meet at Horsley Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N Millbrook. For info call June: 645-1719, or visit their Web site at <fresno.humanists.net>

2nd Monday of every month
5:30 PM

The Living Wage Committee will meet at the SEIU 250 office, 1279 N Wishon. Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (CAFE) is taking the lead in this effort. We are in the research and planning stages of development. Further information contact Frances Sivak: (559) 222-5240 or fsivak@msn.com.

4th Monday of every month
7 PM

FresCAMP (Fresno Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) meets at the Barn at Margaret Hudson's house, 4230 N Arthur. For more information e-mail ilsasso2003@yahoo.com, call (559) 227-6134, or visit the Californians for Pesticide Reform Web site at <www.1000friendsoffresno.org/pesticides.html>.

1st Tuesday of every month
6 PM

The San Joaquin Valley Coalition for Immigrant Rights meeting at 328 N Fresno Street. For more information call (559) 498-6033.

3rd Tuesday of every month
12:30 - 2 PM

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) a progressive coalition of community, church and labor organizations have their monthly meeting at the Fresno Senior Resource Center lo-

cated at 2085 E. Dakota in Fresno. It is an open meeting to all with concerns on local, state & federal issues that matter to seniors, voters, taxpayers....call Gene Roza at 559-905-3521 for information.

3rd Tuesday of every month
7 PM

The Fresno Free College Foundation (owner and operator of KFCF 88.1 FM) Board of Directors meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno. The public is invited. For more information call (559) 233-2221, e-mail kfcf@kfcf.org , or visit www.kfcf.org.

1st Wednesday of every month
12 Noon-1 PM

Women in Black- Silent Vigil at the Fresno County Courthouse entrance. Show your support for PEACE and for negotiated settlements of US current military actions! Meet downtown at the Fresno courthouse, and stand silently, advocating for PEACE. For more info, call 278-7140 or 225-2850.

1st Wednesday of every month
7 PM

The Fresno County Democratic Central Committee meetings are held in the State Building Assembly Room. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave. Call Steve Haze, Chair - 855-8844 stevehaze@psnw.com or Jay Hubbell, Secretary - 292-4905 / jayhubbell@comcast.net for more information.

1st Wednesday of every month
7:30 PM

Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N Millbrook, Fresno.

2nd Thursday of every month
5 PM

The Human Relations Commission meetings are open to the public. Regular meetings are usually scheduled on the second Thursday

of each month in Meeting Room 2165N of City Hall. Any person who wants to place an issue before the Commission should first contact the HRC staff at 621-7770.

2nd Thursday of every month
7 PM

Monthly meeting of the Fresno County Green Party, County Council, at the California State Building in downtown Fresno. The address is 2550 Mariposa Ave., and is located between O and P streets and Fresno and Tulare. Enter through the main door along the pedestrian mall just off P Street. Call (559) 265-3647 or go to www.cagreens.org/fresno for more information.

2nd Thursday of every month
7 PM

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting, 1584 N Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information e-mail socialjustice@sti.net.

3rd Thursday of every month
6-8 PM

Fresno County Bicycle Coalition, monthly meetings to provide a forum for bicyclists to organize, discuss common concerns, and influence public policy. If you are interested in helping Fresno County become more bike-friendly, you are invited to join this group. We meet at the Revue Café, 620 E Olive (at Lucerne) in the Tower District. Please call (559) 444-2065 for more information.

3rd Thursday of every month
6:30 PM

Central California Criminal Justice Committee is meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1564 North Van Ness (Southeast corner of McKinley and Van Ness).

3rd Thursday of every month
7 PM

Families & Friends of Prisoners

Support Group. Affiliated With the Fresno Coalition for Prison Reform And Abolition of the Death Penalty. Unitarian-Universalist Church of Fresno, 4144 N. Millbrook (1/2 block south of Ashlan). Everyone Welcome

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF PRISONERS - FORMER PRISONERS

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Come and share your concerns with us in a safe, supportive & confidential environment Individual Peer Counseling Available by Appointment Completely Free - No Dues or Fees

A project of the UUCF Social Justice Committee For Information Call: Donna 456-4974 Maria 255-9492 Patty 299-8194

1st Friday of every month
4:30-6:30 PM

Peace Fresno is at Shaw and Blackstone Avenues to protest the occupation of Iraq and other harmful domestic and foreign policies of the Bush administration. Peace Fresno advocates alternatives to war and social and environmental justice. For more information go to <www.peacefresno.org>.

1st Friday of every month
7-9 PM

Dances of Universal Peace. Sacred Circle Dances from Around the World at the First Congregational Church, Van Ness and Yale.

1st Saturday of every month
3-5 PM

Women of Spirit—a gathering of women rediscovering their own spirituality and enabling others to do the same. You are invited to join the circle of women the first Saturday of each month, at 7319 N Fourth St, Fresno. Beginning and closing meditation, discussion and activity, light refreshments after closing. The event is free. Both men and women are welcome. Contact: Veena Kapoor, (559) 435-2212.

2nd Saturday of every month
9:30 AM

Fresno Center for Nonviolence monthly meeting at 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information about the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, see their Web site <www.centerfornonviolence.org> or call 559-23PEACE (237-3223).

2nd and 4th Saturday of every month
3:30 - 5 PM

General meeting of the Central Valley Progressive PAC. The meeting will take place at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence which is located at 1584 North Van Ness (at McKinley Ave.), All are welcome. For more information see www.cvppac.org

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