

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

MARCH  
2004

The Homeless  
are  
**ATTACKED**  
in Fresno -

**Who** is Responsible?

(see the story on page 8)

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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 magazine 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.

**Editor: Mike Rhodes**

**Editorial Board:** Carol Bequette, The Rev. Floyd Harris, Rey Leon, Diane Scott, Janet Slagter, Richard Stone, Manuel Toledo, Pam Whalen

**Layout/Design & Printing:** Hume Printing & Lithograph

**Circulation and Advertising Director:** Vickie Fouts

**Copy Editor:** Barbara Price

**Proofreader:** Carol Bequette

To subscribe send \$35 (regular) or \$10 (low income) to:

**Community Alliance Magazine  
PO Box 5077  
Fresno, CA 93755**

**(559) 978-4502 (voice)**

**(559) 226-3962 (fax)**

**email: AllianceEditor@Comcast.net**

**website: www.fresnoalliance.com/home**

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**Page 2,4,8,9,10 by Mike Rhodes**

ended proposals is case attrition by expiration (death). But we will not go quietly. Those of us who have lived independently because of this valuable program deserve the right to do so, and we will do what it takes to win it.

The quality of any society is measured by how it treats the most disadvantaged members. Now is your chance to understand and prove that concept.

Sincerely

John A. Wilkins

Board of Directors

Center for Independent Living-Fresno



*John Wilkins speaks out for the 10,000+ home care workers in Fresno at a rally in front of the downtown Hall of Records.*

## Open Letter to Schwarzenegger

Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am a person who has lived with a degenerative form of muscular dystrophy my whole life. Despite my limitations, I was the first one in my family to graduate from college. I have spent the last twelve years working as a volunteer advocate for the Center for Independent Living-Fresno. Although the vast majority of my efforts were spent improving the homecare system, tens of thousands of disabled Californians like me are now facing the loss of our hard work in this area.

As a professional bodybuilder, I can't expect you to understand the limitations of a body that never developed properly and which is now in a rapid state of deterioration. As someone who spent the last quarter century living and working in the land of illusion, make believe, and virtual reality, I can't expect you to understand the true reality of the people with disabilities, seniors, and the poor who struggle to live independently. But as someone who deemed himself worthy to be leader of the most powerful state in the union, I would expect you to represent ALL the residents, not just those in your income bracket.

The presumption that the 75,000 people like me, who utilize the residual program of In-Home Supportive Services, will just figure out some way to survive is hopelessly naive. One cannot help but feel the desired outcome of such open-

**Need a bullhorn for your next event?  
The Community Alliance has one available - just call  
978-4502  
to make arrangements to use it.**



**Fresno  
Earth Day  
Festival**

**Sunday, April 25**

**Roeding Park**

**www.Fresnoearthday.org**

*Sponsored by: WHOLE FOODS MARKET, TABLE MOUNTAIN RANCHERIA, ADOPT-A-WATERSHED, CA. REGIONAL ENV. ED. COMMUNITY, Bingham Toyota, Chaffee Zoo Ed. Dept., Community Alliance, Fresno Center for Nonviolence, Fresno Parks and Recreation, Offline Solar, Tower Garden Supply, T&D Willey Farms, Vanguard Public Foundation, Intermountain Nursery*

# Peter Camejo vs. Norman Solomon:

## Two Progressives Wearing Different Shades of Green?

By Michael Feliciano

On Thursday, January 29, KVMR hosted a debate between 2003 Green Party gubernatorial candidate Peter Camejo, and Norman Solomon, political columnist and executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy (heard locally on KFCF 88.1 FM). The question posed was, Should the Green Party run a presidential candidate in 2004? The event was staged at Sacramento's Crest Theater, and attracted a crowd of about 75.

Peter Camejo spoke first, with a highly passionate introduction in which he aggressively summarized Norman Solomon's position as, "He wants to take away our freedom to choose." Solomon has been vocal with his position that the Green Party should *not* run a presidential candidate in 2004. Solomon's opening remarks highlighted "the critical nature of the historical moment that we are living in," referring to the dire national and global consequences of another four years with the Bush regime. According to Solomon, the only way to ensure that Bush is not reelected in 2004 is for the Green Party to renounce a candidacy and to urge avowed Greens to vote Democrat.

For those Greens who see running a presidential candidate as a means of eventually breaking the largely corrupt two-party system, Solomon's suggestion that a "strategy" to supplant Bush outweighs the urgency of growing the party is a difficult pill to swallow. Camejo urged that we could look beyond the "spoiler theory" that has plagued Green Party candidates—and indeed most third-party candidates—most notably Ralph Nader in the 2000 presidential election.

Unfortunately, on this night Camejo was constricted so tightly around the premise of his argument that, for much of the debate it seemed as if he was debating a different topic. He vigorously rebuked Solomon's emphasis on cooperative strategy. Solomon countered with a collected and balanced explanation of his position, painting a rosy picture of unity between Greens and Democrats. More than once, Camejo balked at the notion that legitimate cooperation could happen, offering examples of Democrats bending leftward to win votes, and the pattern of betrayals and sellouts that stifles progressive politics.

Solomon expressed concern that the Greens were actually degrading the vitality of the progressive movement by running candidates for high office, and he characterized the practice as a factionalized Napoleon complex. He expressed commitment to Green values, but insisted that the best way to build the Green Party is from the bottom up, by winning local offices, establishing a firm foundation at the community level. Camejo countered that local victories for Greens have resulted from the credibility and visibility generated by high-profile candidates like Ralph Nader. This logic is supported by the fact that the Green Party is the fastest growing political party in America. Camejo repeatedly buttressed his position by proclaiming that "the truth must be heard!" He highlighted the urgency of disempowering two parties equally dedicated to the military-industrial complex, and the dilapidated ethics of campaign finance that have left the common citizen with "only an illusion that we are participating in democracy." Norman Solomon disputed few of Camejo's comments, while Camejo never fully addressed Solomon's position, and so it was hard not to come away from this event with new conflicting feelings about the trajectory of our beloved Green Party. As a long-time Green Party member, I love Peter Camejo, but he disappointed me by not connecting his message more strongly with the topic at hand, and his fiery manner in this friendly environment could discredit him in a mainstream debate. Solomon's words provided a wake-up call about the risk of dividing the progressive movement and grinding Green Party credibility down to a nub.

There is no question that this coming election is an emergency. The daily injustices inflicted by George W. Bush and the angry white men in his posse sometimes fill me with the panic of being held under water. The morning before the debate, I had gone to the Secretary of State website and changed my party affiliation to "Decline to State" so I could vote for Dennis Kucinich in the Democratic primaries. Of course I would never actually register Democrat, and of course I will switch back after March! Like Kermit the frog used to sing, "It's not easy being Green."

An audio recording of the debate is available for download at <[www.kvmr.org](http://www.kvmr.org)>.



*Michael Feliciano is an artist, musician, and community activist, regularly published in Sacramento News & Review, and "Because People Matter." After living for five years in Fresno, he returned to Sacramento to be near his family. He is currently employed with the California Bicycle Coalition.*

## MEDIA DEMOCRACY

By Mike Rhodes



Media consolidation is a major problem in Fresno and throughout the country. When a handful of wealthy individuals and corporations controls the news and information most people receive, there is cause for concern. It is that concern that has been the motivation for a variety of media democracy projects in Fresno recently.

The Central Valley Indymedia project is an effort, by grassroots journalists throughout the Valley, to provide an alternative to the control of our news by corporate media moguls. "Be the Media" is the chant of Indymedia activists who are bypassing the corporate media and posting their stories directly to the Internet. Indymedia is an "open publishing" vehicle to post video, audio, pictures, and written stories. "Open publishing" means that anybody can post his or her news to the site and that anyone can respond with an instant comment (similar in nature to a "letter to the editor") on the news. You can visit the Central Valley Indymedia page at <[sfbay.indymedia.org/centralvalley](http://sfbay.indymedia.org/centralvalley)>.

There are already dozens of stories by grassroots journalists from Bakersfield to Sacramento posted. This website has the potential to be the progressive movement in the Central Valley's alternative news and information network. Central Valley Indymedia provides news and information updated daily and it gives you, the news consumer, the power to create and comment on any story on the site. Indymedia encourages you to Be the Media.

Another media democracy project that is just about to take off in the Fresno area is public access television. Since Fresno has not had public access TV, it is hard for most people to know what they are missing. Public access TV will provide the community with a channel on the cable (Comcast) network after a new franchise agreement is negotiated with the City of Fresno. The current agreement expires at the end of this year.

What media democracy activists expect in the new Comcast/City of Fresno agreement is a community media center where video production and editing equipment will be available; public, education, and government (PEG) channels; and an I-Net system, which will improve communications within the community. When every community group and individual with something to say is given free access and the tools to produce a TV program, television in this area will never be the same.

Progress on the cable access project may seem like it is moving slowly, but all indications are that Fresno will have a new franchise agreement within a year. There is even talk of implementing a government and education channel before the new agreement is signed. Community groups and media democracy activists will need to be vigilant, making sure that a public channel is included in the final agreement between Comcast and the City of Fresno.

This area is lucky also to have KFCF 88.1 FM, which rebroadcasts the Pacifica station KPFA in Berkeley. This station is an oasis of alternative news and information available 24 hours a day. KFCF broadcasts some local shows and is always looking for new volunteers to help at the station. Interested persons should call Vic Bedoian at (559) 233-2221.

*Also, volunteers are always needed to help write, distribute, and work on the Community Alliance magazine. If you would like to help, please call (559) 226-0477 or email [AllianceEditor@Comcast.net](mailto:AllianceEditor@Comcast.net).*

# THE INFILTRATION OF PEACE FRESNO

## What have we learned?

By Catherine Campbell

With expanded police powers under the U.S.A. Patriot Act, the F.B.I. can now compel librarians to turn over lists of the books we read. The Sheriff of Fresno County, pursuant to federal guidelines, can send an undercover Deputy to infiltrate, deceive and conduct surveillance on the members of Peace Fresno for six months as part of the War on Terror. Attorney General John Ashcroft draws the line at gun registration, however, insisting that gun registration records are private, covered by the Second Amendment, and are not available as part of the War on Terror.

### Are we feeling safe yet?

In January of last year, a thin young man with a goatee began to sit in on Peace Fresno meetings. He said he was interested in politics and was thinking over his position in relation to the war against Iraq. He took notes, listened quietly, and paid his Peace Fresno dues of \$12 in cash. He called himself "Aaron Stokes" and no one suspected his true identity. For six months, off and on, he maintained a relationship with Peace Fresno, coming to some demonstrations at the corner of Shaw and Blackstone, and on one occasion, traveling by bus to an anti-globalization rally in Sacramento with a spirited group of protesters. Strangely, he was not on the bus back to Fresno.

### Still, no one suspected.

Sanity depends on trust, trust in our family and friends, and - perhaps most important - trust in strangers. In 1987 I was driving on Highway 152 when a young man slid across the center divide and plowed head on into me at 60 miles per hour. My car flipped three or four times. For many months, the only way I could ride in a car was in the back seat curled in fetal position. I was incapable of believing in other drivers' commitment to the rules of the road.

On August 30 of last year, "Aaron Stokes" was driving his motorcycle through a residential neighborhood at a screeching speed when he was suddenly thrown and killed. An article in the Bee was followed by an obituary. Both revealed that Stokes was actually Aaron Kilner, a member of the Fresno Sheriff's Department anti-terrorism unit. Kilner had formerly been a vice cop whose targets were gay

men having sex in Roeding Park public bathrooms. Kilner's face was recognized by Peace Fresno members.

It was hard to believe. Most Peace Fresno members have lived here many years. They were known. They have jobs, relationships, ties that bind. The Sheriff of Fresno County actually thought they might be terrorists? It had never occurred to them that they would be deceived, lied to, investigated, and for months on end. What had Kilner written in those notes he took? Did he create files on the individual members? Who had the files? The Sheriff? The F.B.I.? Had they been followed? Had they been investigated personally? What other community groups in Fresno were infiltrated, and by whom?

### Who should they trust now?

In the months that followed the revelation that Peace Fresno was the subject of surveillance there has been much discussion of what it means. The story has been repeated in newspaper articles all over the country, most recently in an excellent piece in Salon.com of February 11, 2004. It is one of several examples of stepped up surveillance of peace and anti-war activism all over the country in the name of the War on Terrorism. Similar episodes of infiltration have occurred in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Boulder, Colorado. And these are the ones we know about because of strange, chance exposures. As the war in Iraq deteriorates, and as new rounds of protests in the U.S. occur, including antiwar demonstrations on March 20, and as the conventions convene and the elections approach, surveillance of those who dissent is likely to increase.

The collaboration of the federal government and local law enforcement in Joint Terrorism Task Forces (J.T.T.F.) has been the source of most of the new assault on dissent. Peace Fresno has obtained the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and the Federal Government that outlines their collaborative contractual relationship. Sheriff Pierce has admitted that Kilner was operating at his direction and under cover of law as part of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Such activity is forbidden under California law, but Pierce insists it is legally justified under federal law, and that he - presumably at the direction of the federal government - will continue to engage in surveillance of any community group that is open to the public. That means churches, schools, political organizations.

### That means you.

The United States has a long history of surveillance of dissident organizations. The infiltration of Peace Fresno is nothing new. The purpose is never to protect the public or to root out terrorists. Sheriff Pierce and the F.B.I. know that Peace Fresno doesn't harbor terrorists. Their purpose is to stifle dissent, to scare people away from groups like Peace Fresno, and to break down the trust people have in their neighbors, their community, and their local law enforcement. Those who persevere in their dissenting ways are fated to be fearful and vigilant. Those who conform will hand over their privacy, surrender their library data, and ask, "Why worry? I've done nothing wrong." The divide between the two will grow. Surveillance defines who is on the inside, and who is not, who is welcome here, and who is unwelcome.

We live in frightening times. Peace Fresno members are shaken by what has happened. They know surveillance and repression are conjoint twins, and that there is much reason for worry, particularly if you have tried to do what is right.

*Peace Fresno holds a press conference (Oct. 5, 2003) responding to the infiltration of the organization by a member of the Fresno County Sheriff's Department.*



P.O. Box 16133 • Fresno, CA 93755  
www.PeaceFresno.org • (559) 487-2515



## MARCH 20, 2004 • GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION

By Genie Baranoff, President, Peace Fresno

On March 20 people in cities around the world will join together to demand, "End the Occupation: Bring the Troops Home NOW!" We will demonstrate to support the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination; in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, including the right to return; to overturn the USA

Patriot Act, and to end the repression directed at Arab American, South Asian, Muslim, and immigrant communities; to call for money for jobs, housing, health care, and education, not for war and occupation; and to demand an end to US intervention, occupation, and threats against Korea, Colombia, Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Syria, the Philippines, Haiti, and everywhere. Only the people's movement offers hope that an effective challenge can be mounted to the Bush administration's war drive (from [www.internationalANSWER.org](http://www.internationalANSWER.org)).

How distressing to continue to hear President Bush perpetuating the falsehoods concerning weapons of mass destruction. So many of our sons and daughters have died because of this administration's lies. Those in the progressive and liberal community have been vindicated. We are truly the patriots for saying the destruction and occupation of Iraq had no justification, and that no pre-emptive strike was needed, as there was no imminent danger. Bush claims to have made the world a safer place when the exact opposite has occurred. The voracious greed of the military-industrial complex fronted by the neoconservatives has destabilized the world community.

It is critical to not become contaminated with mainstream, corporate-controlled news. After watching television's nightly newscast or reading the daily local newspaper, I have been driven to despair and rage at the deception continuously foisted on the American public and the murderous actions of this current occupying administration. After reading the *Community Alliance*, perusing progressive internet news sites and listening to KPFA/KFCF and finding out in depth about our local and global issues, my despairing rage turns to a fierce determination to make a difference. But what can one person do? One of my close friends has become immobilized with fear that if he makes a stand his name will be added to the list of people rounded up for the next concentration camps. Another of my friends in the Bay Area has turned to cynicism and states that it's hopeless to try to change anything. For some odd reason I cannot give in to fear or cynicism. Perhaps it's because years of serious protesting did bring about an end to the Vietnam War fiasco, and because I played a part in that. That personal participation has provided an empowering fuel that has lasted and continues today.

That is why I am asking you today, as you read this, to join us—Peace Fresno and cosponsoring and endorsing groups—in a global day of action on March 20, 2004. As you may know, there will be massive protests in San Francisco and Washington, DC, and perhaps you may be joining those marches and rallies. If you cannot journey that distance, please join us at noon that day at the Federal Building in downtown Fresno on O Street at Mariposa. We will stage the march in the plaza next to the Federal Building, and then walk south (3 blocks) to the Courthouse Park at Tulare and Van Ness, where there will be a rally with music

and speakers (on a solar-powered stage) starting at 1:00 PM.

As you know, Peace Fresno has been holding a protest to "Bring the Troops Home" on the first Friday night of each month. The positive response from community members as they drive by has been increasing hugely. People honk for peace and flash the peace sign (okay, so some folks flash other signs) and yell out "thanks" and other encouraging words. For any of the readership of this magazine who have stood in solidarity next to us and/or honked and waved while driving by: Thank you very, very much.

The big marches and rallies in San Francisco are exciting: it's energizing to be among that many people with similar sentiments, and something happens when so much personal energy is galvanized into a collective whole. I'm from the Bay Area and actually came to expect large masses of people to be gathered together to express a public voice for peace and justice. However after living in Fresno (two years this April) and participating with Peace Fresno, I felt very differently at the last large ANSWER march on October 25, 2003, in San Francisco (20,000 people). I missed Fresno. I missed being able to recognize most of the people with me. I missed feeling the importance of making our voices heard, our presence felt here in our town. Peace Fresno has been calling progressive groups in the area, asking them to join us in coalition to make this global action day of protest strong here in Fresno. Peace groups from Bakersfield, Visalia, Merced, and Modesto have been invited to join the protest in Fresno.

I'd like to ask you to participate in an informal survey. Please email [president@peacefresno.org](mailto:president@peacefresno.org) or call 487-2515 or drop a note to Peace Fresno/G. Baranoff at PO Box 16133, Fresno, CA 93755, with a response to the following questions:

- \* What is your opinion about peace marches, protests, and rallies here in Fresno?
- \* Do you feel that these events are effective?
- \* Do you or your group plan to join us that day?
- \* If not, why not? What are your concerns?

Thanks! And I look forward to seeing you on March 20!

Genie Baranoff, President of Peace Fresno

<[www.peacefresno.org](http://www.peacefresno.org)>

## GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION

ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE U.S. BOMBING AND INVASION OF IRAQ  
BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!  
END COLONIAL OCCUPATION  
from IRAQ to PALESTINE and EVERYWHERE!

### FRESNO March + Rally

12:00 noon, Federal Building:  
Gather together & march to the Courthouse Park  
1:00 PM: Speakers & music

## GOING TO SAN FRANCISCO FOR THE MARCH 20th, International A.N.S.W.E.R GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION?

If you're planning on going to the Global Day of Action in San Francisco on March 20, 2004 and have extra seats in your car, sign up with our informal carpool to help build a valley presence on the anniversary of the war in Iraq. Please e-mail [ndegraff@hotmail.com](mailto:ndegraff@hotmail.com) or call 559.213.2042



# Queer Eye . . .

By Dan Waterhouse

## First GLBT Domestic Violence Shelter in California

The only domestic violence shelter in California dedicated to serving the GLBT community is here, in North Fresno. The Central California Pride Network opened Rainbow Haven, a five-bedroom home that can house up to 10 clients at any one time, in July 2003.

According to CCPN program director Gail Carpenter, the only domestic violence shelter in Fresno is the Marjaree Mason Center, which serves primarily women and their children. "In Fresno County," Carpenter says, "male victims of domestic violence are housed in motels, which is not a good value for the dollar."

She relates that last July, CCPN was confronted with a number of men at the same time seeking help. "Charlotte Jenks (the head of CCPN) ran the numbers," Carpenter said, "and then called the California Endowment." Once funding was confirmed, CCPN went out and found a house. Rainbow Haven opened July 1.

According to Carpenter, the Haven hasn't lacked for clients since opening. Rainbow Haven clients can stay up to six months. Most services allow only for much shorter stays. In San Francisco, vouchers are provided for up to three days in a motel. CPN major focus is on family violence and its survivors. Carpenter says that family violence includes domestic violence as well as homophobic violence by other family members.

Carpenter explains that there are few if any studies on domestic violence in the GLBT community. "Based upon the statistics for straight women," she says, "one in four GLBT relationships is abusive." She said many clients were abused at home, and that crosses over into later relationships. Many have alcohol or drug issues. CCPN refers clients to appropriate community services as needed. "We'd love to close our doors due to a lack of a need for our services," Carpenter says. "But we don't see that happening anytime soon. CCPN also gathers information about hate crimes and provides services to victims.

The Pride against Crimes of Hate program provides counseling, advocacy, and case management to victims of hate crimes, including hate crimes perpetrated because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or age. This program also includes statistical collection and analysis. Data are collected using a questionnaire completed by clients as part of the intake process. From the information gathered, CCPN hopes to obtain a clearer picture as to whether there is adequate and appropriate law-enforcement response to victims of hate crimes and what areas of need victims feel are not being addressed.

If you'd like more information about CCPN and Rainbow Haven, visit their website at <ccpridenet.org> or call the office at 486-2216. CCPN is located at 930 N. Van Ness in the Tower District.

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Dan Waterhouse is a columnist for NewsLink, Central California's only gblt news source. He pens the monthly Waterhouse Report, which is far-ranging, occasionally provocative, and highly opinionated.

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# ANNOUNCING THE FCNV/WILPF VIDEO SERIES

The Fresno Center for Nonviolence and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom are proud to announce their video series project! The abundance of great videos that the FCNV has collected over the years will now be available to the public.

From one individual's home to another and from one community event to the next, the message of social justice can now be shared in the form of video. The FCNV/WILPF Video Series allows community members to borrow from the video library listed at <www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence>.

But wait—there's a bonus for the teachers! In an attempt to bring alternative education to students, we will bring the videos to your classes! Teachers can incorporate many great videos into their lesson plans, providing students a great opportunity to use their critical thinking skills.

Currently the FCNV/WILPF Video Series has already teamed up with members of Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition at Fresno State, which will present the video series twice a month on campus. Students at Fresno City College will also be arranging community viewings of the video series as well. Middle schools and high schools are encouraged to bring the video series to their campuses just as students at Fresno State and Fresno City have.

If you're an individual, a teacher, a student group, or a community group, you are encouraged to borrow from the FCNV/WILPF Video Series! We are here to give you access to the information and videos that corporate media won't give you.

Contact Catherine at cgaroupa@csufresno.edu or Ruth at ruthoj@csufresno.edu to become a part of the FCNV/WILPF Video Series.



## HOWARD'S HOPEFULS

[Editor's Note: This voting recommendation list is by Howard K. Watkins, a local attorney and active community member, who paid for this insert. He notes some of his choices are clear, others are close calls. Whether you agree with all of them or not, he urges you to vote in the March 2nd primary election.]

| STATE/FEDERAL RACES |                 | ST. PROPS. |           |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| President           | ----- KERRY     | 55         | ..... YES |
| U. S. Senate        | ----- BOXER     | 56         | ..... YES |
| 18th Congress       | ----- CARDOZA   | 57         | ..... NO  |
| 19th Congress       | ----- BUFFORD   | 58         | ..... YES |
| 20th Congress       | ----- QUIGLEY   |            |           |
| St. Assembly 29th   | ----- CROCKFORD |            |           |
| St. Assembly 30th   | ----- PARRA     |            |           |
| St. Assembly 31st   | ----- ARAMBULA  |            |           |

| FRESNO COUNTY RACES |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Supervisor 2nd      | ..... ANDERSON  |
| Supervisor 3rd      | ..... MOLINEAUX |
| Supervisor 5th      | ..... WATERSTON |

| FRESNO CITY RACES |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Mayor             | ..... SAIGAL   |
| City Council #2   | ..... KARBASSI |
| City Council #4   | ..... CASTILLO |
| City Council #6   | ..... KENNEDY  |
| CLOVIS MEASURE A  | ..... YES      |

(If helpful, you can take this when you vote.)

# City Council Profiles: Brian Calhoun

By Richard Stone

Given well-publicized political differences between Brian Calhoun and the *Community Alliance* constituency, I was surprised first by his ready agreement to an interview, and then again by his unhesitating welcome into his office and into his confidence.

Noticing the "Dr. Brian Calhoun" nameplate on his desk, I asked about his field of expertise, and learned that his Ph.D. is in educational administration. In fact, appropriately enough, I found that much of Calhoun's strength is in his understanding of how the parts of the City bureaucracy need to be coordinated to produce desired outcomes. Complementarily, he has a grasp of where he is best and least able to effect change, and the importance of time management. I was unexpectedly impressed by his organizational vision and his realization of his limitations.

In Calhoun's understanding, a council member's task is first to take care of the specific needs of his district, but also to work cooperatively with the rest of the council, the mayor, and the Board of Supervisors to address the major issues facing the whole region. I reflected to him that most of the other council members I've interviewed would be delighted to say (as he does) that the biggest issues in his district are traffic-related (reducing speeding, getting left-turn signals, etc.). He acknowledges the difference as a fact of life: He uses the freedom afforded him not to be so personally involved in immediate needs of constituents for income, housing, safety, health care and so on, to look at "the big picture."

He is, for example, convinced that county-wide planning supercedes city planning as a necessity of twenty-first century governance, and has taken the initiative to work on intergovernmental cooperation. He has also taken on directly the need to contain sprawl and focus on infill in existing urban areas. He was a key player in getting the new General Plan to allow only 15% of new development to occur outside of present city borders.

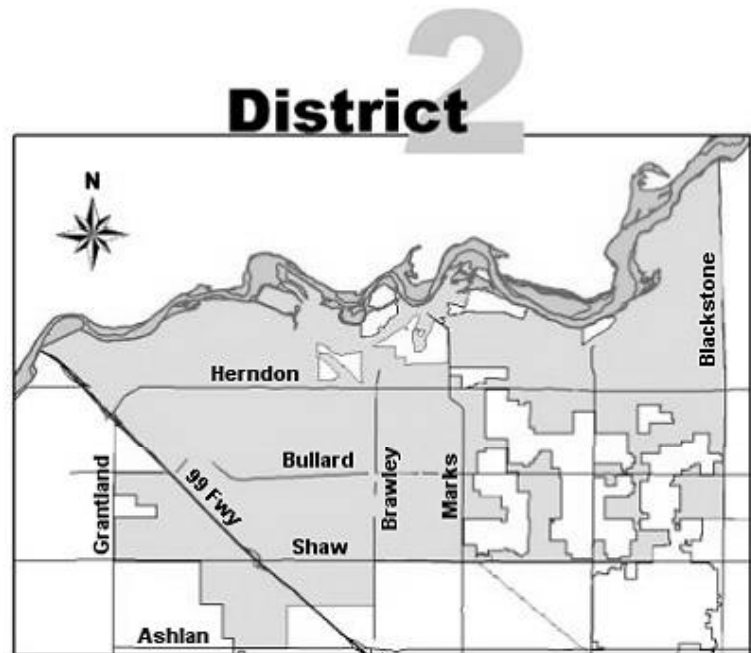
Similarly, while other council members spoke of struggling to find solutions for unemployment for current residents, Calhoun is able to focus on bringing productive workers to Fresno, notably via development of several business parks. (He has been a central figure in creating and overseeing the Economic Development Corporation's specific plan for growth.)

Calhoun also expressed serious concern with area-wide air pollution; and he is very pleased with the new fireplace regulations and the city's installation of solar panels in some facilities.

Calhoun says his guiding principle in life is "the golden rule," and he favors plain-spokenness over politic diplomacy. ("I guess that means I'll never be elected Council president," he says philosophically.) He views himself as willing to compromise to accommodate others' priorities, realizing that one rarely can get everything one wants in a complex society. For this reason he sees having a sense of perspective (and humor) as a crucial attribute.

He says previous political experience in Wisconsin prepared him well for his current position, and the biggest surprise has been the high level of expertise and professionalism in the city's top staff. He is proud of the amount of service the city provides, despite having one of the lowest tax rates among comparable cities. He says his most satisfying accomplishment so far is his work with Dan Ronquillo to initiate the development of a real downtown park around Eaton Plaza.

To potential council candidates, he says. "Go for it," seeing a real need for more citizen involvement at every level. "But", he adds, "know it ain't easy"—be prepared for life in a fishbowl, and for receiving a lot more blame than praise. Still, he says that knowing you're doing your best to put the city on a right track is ultimately satisfying.



## ISSUES

- Water meters—strong supporter (and they're a done deal)
- The homeless—believes the city is doing a good job funding shelters
- Downtown development—a must, especially adding housing to the mix. Is very supportive of plan to create a mixed residential district along Broadway with city subsidy.
- Independent Police Review—has seen no convincing need
- Living-wage ordinance—not needed, market will take care of it
- Privatization of city services—definitely not for "essential services" relating to safety and health. May be implemented carefully in other areas, but only gradually and with guarantee of continued city employment for displaced workers.
- City stand on social issues and state or federal policies—sees this as a personal call. He looks for issues where there is close, strong impact, such as the state's deal with PG&E (which he opposed), or the use of cell phones in cars. He currently keeps in touch with local representatives to state and federal office.



# HOMELESS ATTACKED IN FRESNO

By Mike Rhodes  
February 10, 2004



*The assault on the homeless begins.*

In a coordinated multi-agency attack on homeless encampments earlier this month, the City of Fresno destroyed tents and other shelters used by the homeless in this community. Reversing a policy implemented a couple of months ago, the Fresno Police Department (FPD) has returned to the tactic of not allowing the homeless to build any permanent structures. With thousands of homeless on the streets in Fresno, and homeless shelters able to provide only a couple hundred beds, a majority of the homeless have been turned into criminals. If you are homeless and can't get into a shelter, you are breaking the law if you try to sleep anywhere in this city. This new policy penalizes the homeless and criminalizes poverty.

This most recent attack on the homeless is part of an ongoing effort by the City of Fresno to harass the homeless and remove them from sight. Mayor Alan Autry recently pushed a plan to move the homeless social service agencies out of the downtown area. He wanted to provide land where the Poverello House and Rescue Mission could move, which is in an isolated industrial section south of downtown. There have also been public service announcements telling the community *not* to give money to the homeless, an ordinance that makes it illegal to panhandle, and constant harassment of the homeless in the downtown core.

What is going on here? Why are the poor and homeless being harassed and is there anything we can do about it? The most recent attack (Wednesday, February 4, 2004) took place amid considerable media coverage. Spokespersons for the FPD and the Poverello House explained that the homeless encampment on Santa Clara Street had gotten out of hand. The drugs, violence, and criminal activity had to be stopped. When the police suspect criminal activity is taking place in an area, whether it be the homeless encampment on Santa Clara Street or the upscale River Park shopping center, what is the first thing they ought to do? That's right, bring in the bulldozers. Everyone knows that the River Park shopping center in Fresno is a magnet for shoplifting and car theft, and that drugs have been sold on the premises, so naturally the response from the police ought to be similar: Raid the location, remove all the people, and bring in the bulldozers.

Although other tactics were chosen to deal with the crime problems at River Park, the police descended on the Santa Clara encampment shortly after daybreak on February 4, in a highly coordinated multi-agency attack. In a show of overwhelming force, the FPD arrived in squad cars, on bikes, and in plain clothes. After securing the area with road blocks, they brought in the Fire Department and extinguished the fires that provided the homeless with the only heat they had. Following the police and the fire departments were the sanitation workers wearing face masks, bright orange vests, and rubber gloves. Behind them was the bulldozer that lifted whole



*The Fresno Police Department led the assault on the homeless community*

tents, including all of the owners' possessions, and dropped the material into the waiting garbage trucks. It was an efficient and unstoppable operation. The few homeless people who tried to resist were descended upon by government agents, who forced them out of their tents.

One African American veteran in a wheelchair held out the longest. But he too was dragged out, and his tent was destroyed with all the rest. Members of the media were assured—and they dutifully reported—that all the homeless were not being left out in the cold on this freezing February day. The Poverello House, it was explained, had opened up a new facility that will house all of the homeless willing to follow their simple rules: no drugs, no alcohol, in by 5 PM, and out by 7 AM. The new tents at the Poverello House are surrounded by a chain-link fence; guards stand at the entrance, and residents are required to have a photo ID. Some of the homeless did not find the Poverello House solution to their liking. Dontae Johnson, who is homeless in downtown Fresno, said, "I think it's a control issue. They know that it scares you—you may have done time, had warrants, and they use that against you." Some of the homeless referred to the new facility as a pen or a concentration camp. In any event, the new Poverello House slept only 47 people on the first night. They might increase that to 75 in the near future. In the meantime, there are about 1,500 homeless people in downtown Fresno. You do the math.

But even if the City of Fresno did clear the homeless off of Santa Clara Street because of the crime, that would not explain why CalTrans swept a community of about 50 homeless people out of their encampment at the exact same time. The H Street encampment was clean, and drugs and criminal activity were not allowed. In many ways, this was a model community for the homeless. Erick Grove, a resident of the H Street encampment, said, "We can actually build another organization to take care of all the extras and give the people something they need. Some need mental health resources, some need a program, some just need housing. As families, we're sticking together to make it happen, the city has recognized it. They say



*Police on bicycles supplement patrol cars and undercover police*



*Undercover and uniformed officers negotiate with a homeless man who doesn't want to move*

they are coming down here to help, but they do the opposite. We've taken care of a crime. We've stopped a lot of crime in this area: it's about taking care of our brothers and sisters."

José L. Camarena, from the Caltrans Office of Public Information said that the clearing of the H Street encampment "was in conjunction with the City of Fresno, City of Fresno Police Department and the CHP. The City of Fresno was the lead agency in this exercise and was also involved with the simultaneous activities at the Santa Clara location." Camarena further explained that "many of these individuals were trespassing on state right-of-way, and the state could be liable in some circumstances for their actions and debris used as shelters."

A 2002 study showed that there are 16,000 homeless people in Fresno County. Some of the reasons for the large number of homeless people in this area are

- \* President Bush's economic policies
- \* chronic double-digit unemployment in the Central Valley
- \* rising housing prices
- \* untreated mental health issues
- \* drug and alcohol abuse
- \* lifestyle choices.

The reasons for the ongoing attacks against the homeless in Fresno are equally complex. The push by the mayor to move the homeless out of the downtown core is tied in with his effort to re-develop the area. That is why the FPD's policy has been to push the homeless south of Ventura Avenue. One theory is that the policy to allow the building of encampments on Santa Clara Street was to encourage the homeless to stay in that area and out of the redevelopment zone. The problem was that the encampment grew so big and the homeless became too visible—they became a political liability. Therefore, the encampment had to be destroyed before there was a community of thousands of people, possibly named Autryville.

Another theory is that this latest attack was instigated because the homeless agencies themselves want to be seen as the solution to the homeless problem. The federal government has just given \$4.4 million to local nonprofit groups working on homeless issues. If the homeless are organizing themselves into independent self-sufficient communities, there could be a problem with justifying future funding. Agencies sometimes have a self-perpetuating aspect that is not always in the best interest of their clients or the community at large. Did this dynamic lead the Poverello House to work hand in glove with the FPD to destroy the homeless encampments? Or, were the homeless removed because the encampments were bad for these groups' image? As one social service worker said: "The Poverello and the Mission don't exactly want them putting up the camps next door because it points out very clearly that those organizations are the draw for the homeless to congregate, which

flies in the face of their argument with the City that the Poverello and the Mission are the answer, not part of the problem."

There were meetings that occurred before the bulldozers moved in. These meetings, which consisted of representatives from the Poverello House, FPD, the City of Fresno, and possibly other groups, made the decision about clearing the homeless from their encampments. As one (anonymous) homeless advocate said to me, "Yeah, I know about this and [our organization] was NOT invited in on this. This is a Poverello/City of Fresno/ Fresno PD group with a few homeless (maybe) thrown in. I think this is the city's attempt to 'deal with' poor folk (get rid of 'em, cage 'em up) with Poverello being the 'official' agency to carry out the wishes of the city 'fathers' (the haves). It is all too conspiratorial for me."

Edie Jessup, who works for Fresno Metro Ministry, says that "there is money out there to address the homeless issue. What is needed is a comprehensive, 24-hour supervised shelter for both single adults and families with all the wraparound services to get folks into permanent housing. That would include medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment services, and job training. There should be a separate medical detox available. What we have is far from what we need in Fresno. Now is when we need to mobilize the solution and garner the resources to provide a continuum of services for the homeless."



*Sanitation workers dressed in bright orange vests, rubber gloves, and masks move in behind police*

She fears that the funding available is being poorly used. Jessup said, "Fresno County has run out of FEMA money in September for the last three years. FEMA emergency shelter funds are mostly all distributed through the Salvation Army for rent/mortgage to keep people in their housing before they lose it, and very little is spent on 'emergency shelter' for those on the street already, because there isn't enough. Meanwhile, the city-county and some community-based organizations spend shelter money by putting people up in ratty-appearing hotel rooms for four nights, at the nearly the cost of a whole month's rent, further expending money only to support bad housing at exorbitant cost, far from services that might help people get back on their feet or feed their kids."

Jessup continues, "It is a shameful way for a large metropolis to handle few resources. Part of the problem, in addition to others, is that all services for the homeless shouldn't be 'faith-based'; there needs to be a variety of services addressing the needs of the homeless, not tied to a particular faith path, and based on best practices from around the nation. . . . The existing shelters do good but limited work, and it results in turf wars. That people have to leave shelter during the day and line up nightly for a bed, and then be turned away without a place to go, makes tent cities emerge. To engage the police and criminalize the homeless is the worst. Exposing the lack of appropriate services for such a huge number of people is right



*Dontae Johnson would like to know why they don't open up some of the vacant buildings in the downtown area*

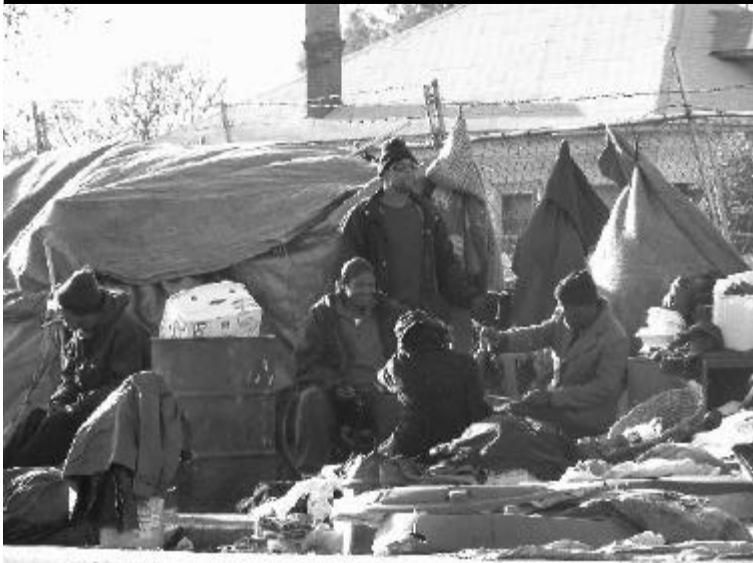
*Continued on page 10*



*This is the housing provided by the Poverello House as an alternative to the encampment on Santa Clara Street*



*CalTrans destroys H Street encampment*



*Santa Clara Street homeless encampment several days before it was destroyed*

Homeless continued from page 9

teous. Fresno should be ashamed. Perhaps Amnesty International should swoop in? Or, we should get serious now, and create the best shelter system that creates the services that will result in good health and the highest degree of independence possible for the homeless in Fresno. We should act like the big city we are, and solve this with dignity for our homeless neighbors, while respecting their rights, and use available federal funds to accomplish this *now*."

The reasons that the homeless are under attack right now are complex, and there are no easy solutions. One thing for sure is that the homeless are an easy target because they don't have political strength and are not organized to defend their interests. When their encampments were destroyed, all that the homeless could do was move on and try to keep out of sight. If the progressive community in Fresno had risen up and stood with the homeless, it is unlikely that the FPD would have destroyed the encampment. Another strategy would have been to pack up the encampment the night before it was scheduled to be destroyed and march to City Hall. The tent city could have been reconstructed on the lawn in front of the mayor's office. If that had been done, the plight of the homeless in this community would have been impossible to ignore.

The homeless in this community need to be treated with dignity and respect. They deserve adequate social services to treat their drug and alcohol addiction problems. Health professionals need to treat those homeless people afflicted with mental illness, and shelter must be provided for those in need. Housing and health care is a human right, not a privilege for the wealthy.

**Grassroots Community Groups working on the homeless issue in Fresno:**

**Food Not Bombs**

2925 N Jackson • Fresno, CA 93703  
(559) 266-5305 or 452-0277 (ask for Dallas)  
fresnofnb@yahoo.com  
www.fresnoalliance.com/FNB

**The Sleeping Bag Project**

727 W. Yale Ave. • Fresno, CA 93705  
(559) 441-1787  
imajean2@hotmail.com

**St. Benedict Catholic Worker**

4022 N Cheryl • Fresno, CA 93705  
(559) 229-6410  
PaxOSB@aol.com  
<http://www.stbencatholicworker.org>



*In the latest twist on the attack against the homeless in Fresno, the Fresno Rescue Mission and the Police Department want to build an outdoor drunk tank on this site.*



# Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Vickie M. Fouts, Guest Newsletter Editor, contact at 559.658.8260 or email at [vmfout1@sti.net](mailto:vmfout1@sti.net)

## WILPF DATES:

**Wednesday, March 3, noon: Women In Black, Fresno County Courthouse breezeway.**

**Monday, March 8, 7 PM: WILPF Board Meeting. 985 N Van Ness Ave.**

**Saturday, March 13, 1–3 PM: Peace Camp Reunion, CSUF Ed Bldg, Rm 215. Former and future campers, families, and volunteers are invited.**

**Saturday, March 20, noon: Global Day of Action. (See below.)**

**Sunday, March 21, 3 PM: Fresh Food Access Assessment Training. (See below.)**

**Wednesday, March 24, 3:30 PM: Stir It Up WILPF Style, on KFCF 88.1.**

**Saturday, March 27 10 AM: WILPF Book Club. (See below.)**

Global Day of Action: On Saturday, March 20, we will proudly carry the WILPF banner in a public stand against the war and occupation in Iraq. On the streets of Fresno we will join millions worldwide in saying NO to the madness in Iraq and NO MORE to George Bush and his deadly policies. Our heroes Gandhi, King, and Chavez were men of action. We will follow in their footsteps as we proclaim our commitment to peace and freedom for all. Bring your friends and family. It will be a day to remember!

March 20 is a Global Day of Action on the first anniversary of the US bombing and invasion of Iraq. Meet at the Federal Building, at O and Mariposa at noon. March to Courthouse Park, Van Ness and Tulare. Rally at Courthouse Park at 1 PM. Come for part or for all.

WILPF Volunteers Needed: Volunteers needed for Metro Ministry's Fresh Food Access Assessment. Training will be Sunday, March 21, 3–4 PM at CSUF, USU Rm 314. Get to know your neighbors, conduct surveys, and help us get the research needed to change Fresno's food policies! RSVP to Catherine Garoupa: [cgaroupa@csufresno.edu](mailto:cgaroupa@csufresno.edu) or 448-9635.

Book Club, Saturday, March 27, 10 AM, Fresno Chamber of Commerce, 2331 Fresno St. A meeting with Black Women Organized for Political Action (Alice Smith Corvo, President). Read *The Color of Water: a Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* by James McBride. We will discuss it for two hours and have a catered lunch at noon. Please call to make lunch reservations (\$10): 291-4948 or 229-9807. Make an effort to attend. We held a similar joint meeting and discussion two years ago and found it most stimulating and enjoyable.

Lauralee Carbone and Family Moving to Washington: WILPF member Lauralee Carbone and family moved to Bellingham, Washington, in February. We'll miss you all: your presence at peace demos, your work as treasurer and Stir it Up MC, your hard work at the craft fair, your creative spirit, your willingness to volunteer for what was needed: to star in Vagina Monologues, to host our retreat, with a smile on your face and a baby in your sling. Love and joy and immense health to you all. You can write Lauralee at: 2212 40th St., Bellingham, WA 98229-3381.

Bill Baird Memorial Donation: Thanks to Lindell Cross for the \$50 donation in memory of her friend, Bill Baird. Bill's father served in WWI and returned home with a commitment against war. He urged Bill to join the merchant service during

WWII instead of the armed service. Bill saw lots of action in the South Pacific and later in Vietnam. Lindell felt WILPF was the group Bill would have preferred to support.

WILPF Challenges the President and Candidates to Fulfill the Values of Peace, Justice, and Human Rights for All: WILPF, US Section, considers dissent an essential component of democracy. The primary season and the State of the Union Address provide opportunities to question the present priorities and policies of our government. It is telling that the candidates leading in recent primaries are those willing to challenge Bush Administration policies.

Last year President Bush told the world a preemptive attack on Iraq was necessary for immediate defense of the US. Since then the rationale for going to war without United Nations support and over the opposition of world opinion has been revealed to be based on incomplete or deceptive information. WILPF has called for a Congressional investigation of US intelligence and its manipulation in the lead-up to the war.

The President never confronted the high price for his unilateral war: more than 500 US military dead, thousands of Iraqis dead and uncounted by US forces, destruction still unrepaired in Iraq—on top of years of economic sanctions. The president did not mention his false claims about Iraqi uranium purchases in Africa and still unsubstantiated claims about imminent risk from Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The wider casualty of this war is the loss of international credibility and support to the US. International institutions that previous administrations worked to strengthen have been shattered without regard to consequences. The impact on the present and future "state of the union" is all too real.

Although terrorism is a genuine threat, it is not the issue defining the lives of most Americans. The president's speech made no mention of the environment or the AIDS epidemic, or real solutions for unemployment. The traditional critics of federal government intervention are now calling for unprecedented interference in our personal lives. He states that we must "help [families] raise healthy, responsible children," yet promoting heterosexual marriage eclipses any mention of health care for more than 12 million uninsured children in this country. This administration cut funding of its No Child Left Behind education plan and promotes testing as a cure-all for public schools. Neither did the president address the staggering unemployment rate which has a devastating impact on raising healthy, responsible children.

Mr. Bush announced plans for costly initiatives in abstinence education, drug-testing in schools, and faith-based social service, also calling on Congress to make permanent the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans despite leading this country into the largest budget deficit in history. WILPF asks that Congress look instead at the soaring US military budget, already the world's highest, to cut wasteful spending.

President Bush stated that "different threats require different strategies." WILPF agrees that current policies of empire-building, war, and greed are a unique threat to the sustainability of our planet, our civil liberties, and the health and safety of the citizens of the world, and we must come together to find different strategies to defeat them. We call on all people to speak up for policies that fulfill the values of peace, justice, and human rights for all.

# CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

**NEW HOME:** The Center is relocating to 1554 N Van Ness, just south of McKinley, across from City College. We have elected to sacrifice the beauty of our original home for the sake of visibility and access to FCC. *We need to grow and diversify.* (Plus our upstairs neighbors were not compatible with our business.)

This is a big and challenging step for us. Our "usual suspects" have already been alerted, and many have already pledged additional support. But a lot is required to make this move a success—commitments of money, material, and time are all needed. See the accompanying "wish list," and please help us where you are best able.

Also, plan to come to our Open House on Saturday, April 24, to celebrate the launching of our new era.

## WISH LIST

- Pledges to help with rent differential (\$30 a year, for two years—or more if possible.)
- Help on moving days (March 27 & 28)—call Vincent at the Center with approximate times of availability. Trucks especially welcome.
- 9' x 12' area rug (attractive and in good shape please)
- Refrigerator
- Newish computer; functioning printer
- Microwave
- Functional, attractive chairs and/or tables and/or bookshelves
- Coffee urn

**PEACE CENTERS CONFERENCE:** To be held in "beautiful downtown Santa Cruz" April 16–18. Anyone interested in attending please let us know by March 26.

**THE PAIRS PROJECT:** We are proposing a project in conjunction with the White Privilege Group. We are looking for individuals who'd like to be paired with someone across a significant boundary line—such as race, religion, class, or political affiliation. The assignment will be for partners to spend six months getting to know each other. They will do this in whatever way and to whatever degree is right for them. After six months they will be interviewed about their experience. If you are interested, leave your name, number, and mail or email address at the Center; or call Richard at 266–2559 for an application form.

**ACTION OF THE MONTH:** The Women's Edge Coalition, a nonpartisan organization, was created in 1998 to advocate for the needs of millions of women and poor people around the world left destitute and desperate by unfair trade policies. Women's lack of participation in economic and trade policies stunts economies, holds back countries, and makes ending poverty nearly impossible. The Coalition offers positive alternatives to current policies and pushes for innovative aid programs to ensure that women around the world are not forgotten and in fact given access to the trade negotiation process. By revising the process of economic and trade negotiations, both trade promoters and the world's poorest women and people benefit. To learn more see <[www.womensedge.org](http://www.womensedge.org)>.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
1554 N Van Ness • Fresno, CA 93728  
Ph. (559) 237-3223 • [fcnv2@juno.com](mailto:fcnv2@juno.com)  
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence>

## THE WELCH REPORT

By Jack H. Welch

### THE US MILITARY

Despite the change in the nature of threats—from war between superpowers to terrorism—the trends in spending and force strength between the US and the rest of the world continue largely as they have since end of the Cold War. The US is even increasing its massive superiority in conventional military capabilities.

The primary threat to US security is no longer massed Soviet forces, but rather small numbers of attackers who do not require large military forces to wreak their havoc. "Countering these attackers may require strengthening the diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, and informational tools of national security as much as massive funding of conventional military tools."

President Bush's emphasis on overthrowing the "state sponsors" of terrorism does require large military forces, but the administration's reliance on "preventive war," with its unilateral approach, has provoked opposition, mistrust, and more hatred around the world, adding fuel to the terrorists' cause.

### SPENDING TRENDS

The administration has raised the level of funding for military forces from high "peacetime" levels during the Cold War to the higher levels of the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. The US maintains massive superiority of conventional capabilities, compared with the capabilities of countries accused of supporting terrorism. US capabilities are unrivaled in communications, targeting, intelligence gathering, logistics, training and global mobility.

US military spending in 2002 was at \$349 billion, whereas total military spending that year by six countries, including Iran and N Korea, which have "poor relations" with us, was \$15 billion! Total interest on the federal debt in fiscal year 2003 was

approximately \$328 billion, the military-related share of which amounts to at least \$100 billion.

### MILITARY AND NONMILITARY SPENDING

Military spending now accounts for about half of all discretionary spending. The federal government spent approximately \$2.2 trillion in fiscal year 2003, including "discretionary" and "mandatory" spending. Discretionary spending pays for such government programs as building roads, protecting the environment, and enforcing the law. Mandatory spending includes payments to individuals, such as Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, and federal pensions, and also interest payments on the national debt.

The four top items of US discretionary spending for fiscal year 2003 were national defense, \$425 billion; transportation, \$61 billion; education, \$52 billion; and health, \$44 billion. The largest of the US weapons programs, the Ballistic Missile Defense (which has yet to prove it can work), cost an estimated \$744 billion in 2003.

The three largest US military contractors in fiscal year 2002 were Lockheed Martin Corp. with DoD contract values of \$17 billion; Boeing Co., with \$16.6 billion; and Northrup Grumman Corp. with \$8.7 billion. Cost of the top 10 weapon programs is more than \$1.3 trillion, some of which funding may now need to be switched to other security means that more directly address the threat posed by small groups of terrorists. "Reallocating resources will remain difficult, however, as long as the large contributions to politicians from weapon manufacturers continue." (Source: Defense Monitor, Center for Defense Info., Washington DC Nov/Dec '03.)

### WORDS OF WISDOM?

"The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." Donald Rumsfeld articulating his frustration at the Coalition's inability to find Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. Also: "Death has a tendency to encourage a depressing view of war"—again the Secretary of Defense, when questioned as to why the Pentagon refuses to provide kill figures for enemy combatants!

# March Take Action Report

By Vickie Fouts

**Gang Prevention & Effective Deterrence Act (S1735):** Senators Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., have introduced the Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act of 2003, a measure that includes dangerous provisions that would expand the use of the death penalty to additional crimes and create additional federal "gang" crimes that lack clear definition. Under this proposed legislation, people could be convicted and sentenced to death for ill-defined illegal "participation" in a "gang," which could be as few as three people. The law's loose definitions and expansion of the death penalty would increase the probability that people are wrongly convicted and possibly even executed. This legislation would interfere with the right to a fair trial and should not be allowed to pass. Send our senators a fax from <[www.aclu.org/CriminalJustice/CriminalJustice.cfm?ID=14925&c=15](http://www.aclu.org/CriminalJustice/CriminalJustice.cfm?ID=14925&c=15)>.

**Protect Clean Transportation:** The Senate is on the verge of a crucial vote on a bill (S1072) that reauthorizes America's transportation programs. However, the current bill threatens public health by limiting the review process for new projects and by diverting funds from vehicle pollution reduction programs. Furthermore, Senator Kit Bond, R-Mo., is trying to eliminate funds that protect our waterways from highway runoff, and Pete Domenici, R-N.M., is attempting to amend this legislation with dangerous provisions from the failed national energy bill. Please urge your senators to oppose any transportation bill provisions or amendments that threaten the environment or public health. Send a letter to our senators at <[www.ucsaction.org/action](http://www.ucsaction.org/action)>.

**Friends Committee on National Legislation:** FCNL has a new Election 2004 page, which offers easy access to information on the candidates and elections in 2004. It includes information on presidential, congressional, state-wide, and state legislature elections, as well as general voting information. Check it out at <[capwiz.com/fconl/e4/?](http://capwiz.com/fconl/e4/?)>.

**National Priorities Project:** *The President's Budget: Impact on the States* shows the total amount each state stand to lose in federal funding under the proposed budget and breaks down the cuts into four categories: housing assistance, Title I education assistance, community development, and clean water funds. It also shows state numbers for the job gap, the rise in personal bankruptcies, and the cost of the \$521 billion deficit for the average taxpayer if the budget were to be balanced this year. The state impact is shown in the context of President Bush's priorities to make his tax cuts permanent and to significantly increase the military budget. This is part of NPP's continuing effort to make a \$2.4 trillion federal budget something people can begin to understand in real terms. Check it out at <[www.nationalpriorities.org/impact04/index.html?em](http://www.nationalpriorities.org/impact04/index.html?em)>.

**Sign the Open Letter to Halliburton CEO David Lesar:** With each passing week, new scandals emerge involving Halliburton's mismanagement and questionable corporate behavior. Over the past several months, Common Cause has monitored Halliburton's no-bid contract for reconstruction in Iraq, documented kickbacks to Halliburton personnel, and witnessed overcharging for gas imported from Kuwait. Common Cause supporters have petitioned Congress to increase its oversight of the reconstruction of Iraq and specifically the role played by Halliburton. We are now asking CEO David Lesar to pledge to the American people that Halliburton will improve its stewardship of the \$1.2 billion contract to rebuild Iraq. We are also asking that Halliburton close its offshore subsidiaries that allow it to skirt paying its fair share of taxes and to trade with nations under US sanctions. Sign the letter at <[causet.commoncause.org/](http://causet.commoncause.org/)>.

# Israel-Palestine Dispute at CSUF

By Stan Poss

As many *Community Alliance* readers know, the Middle East Forums at CSUF and in particular the Palestine Day event last November have been attacked by an "Israel-First" contingent on the faculty and in *FrontPageMagazine.com* on the grounds of anti-Israel/pro-Palestine bias. Vida Samiian, Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities, has been singled out as a target by the campus Israel lobby.

Supported unobtrusively but firmly by her dean Luis Costa, Samiian has responded forthrightly, vigorously, and rationally to these efforts to infringe on her First Amendment rights. She's more than capable of defending herself and is not at the moment requesting formal support from the Fresno progressive community.

Nonetheless, she informed some interested persons of a meeting with President John Welty and Provost Jeronima Echeverria to discuss the charges of bias. Representatives of the Harnish Lectures Committee, WILPF, the Fresno Free College Foundation, Peace Fresno, the Center for Nonviolence, Channel 49, the Campus Peace and Civil Liberties Coalition, and the Reedley Peace and Justice Committee attended a meeting with Samiian and the administrators on January 22, 2004, at CSUF.

The meeting was well-mannered and the administrators attentive. They are well-disposed to the forums, evidently, and show no signs of caving in to pressure from a vocal minority of the faculty and from right-wing outsiders who object to any favorable presentation of the Palestinian cause.

This vocal minority had met with President Welty following the Palestine Day event to complain of "lack of balance" and to attack Samiian and others involved: the late Edward Said, Columbia University, Department of Comparative Literature; Illan Pappé, University of Haifa Department of History; and Mohammed Bakri, producer-director of the documentary film *Jenin, Jenin*, also recently deceased (at the hands of the IDF).

As to the right-wing outsiders, *FrontPageMagazine.com* for December 8, 2003, carries a venomous attack by Lee Kaplan called "Cal State Palestine," filled with savage ad hominem attacks against Said, Pappé, Samiian, the National Lawyers Guild ("a legal group established and funded in the 1910s by Josef Stalin to protect the Communist movement in the US"), WILPF (organizes trips to Cuba), Women in Black (well-known as supporters of the PLO and thus putatively closet terrorists), and the "Marxists and anti-capitalists" at the Center for Nonviolence. There's more—but that should give you the picture.

President Welty and Provost Echeverria see clearly the free-speech issues involved. They listened carefully as representatives spoke about the fact that Israel gets approximately 95% favorable media mention relative to Palestine, about the University sponsoring a presentation by the racist anti-Palestinian Daniel Pipes, and about the attempt at intimidation and silencing of minority voices. Gerry Bill, Ellie Bluestein, Paul Buxman, and Richard Stone, among many others, spoke eloquently on these and allied topics. We should be grateful to the University administration for its principled defense of free speech and academic freedom at CSUF. If you wish to support these administrators, email President Welty at [johnw@csufresno.edu](mailto:johnw@csufresno.edu). Vida Samiian's email is [vida\\_samiian@csufresno.edu](mailto:vida_samiian@csufresno.edu).



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# HIV/AIDS GROUP ON THE MOVE

By Jean Kennedy

Californian HIV/AIDS Advocacy Network Grassroots Evolution (CHAANGE) will be sharing office space with FCNV and will be having an open house on March 27 along with FCNV. Anyone interested in donating old movie videotapes or DVDs, or a TV, VCR and/or DVD player to CHAANGE, please contact Jean Kennedy or Gary Denise at (559) 237-3223. Many of our CHAANGE advocates cannot afford to rent tapes and we would like to provide them a social setting during training meetings. We are also inviting those who know someone living with HIV or AIDS to our Lobby Day Dinner in March. In April, we will be taking a group of HIV/AIDS advocates to Sacramento to meet with their legislators to discuss funding for those infected with, affected by, and at risk for HIV/AIDS. For more information regarding our upcoming Lobby Day Dinner, our trip to Sacramento, or donations, please call 237-3223.

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## Expression Not Suppression 2004

A Conference for LGBTQI and Straight Ally Youth Ages 14-23  
Saturday, March 20, 1 PM-10 PM  
Pace Academy in Manchester Mall

Free workshops, entertainment, dancing, dinner, and safe space for LGBTQI and straight ally youth! Come and be a part of Expression Not Suppression 2004!

This year's second annual youth empowerment conference sponsored by Gay-Straight Alliance Network in coalition with Planned Parenthood Mar Monte's Destination Out will be held on Saturday, March 20, at the Pace Academy in Manchester Mall. The event drew 100 students last year and promises to be even bigger this year.

The conference is aimed at empowering youth through education, networking, and community-building, and features an array of workshops including "Coming Out: The Never-Ending Story"; "All about the T in LGBT"; "How to Start and Run GSAs"; "Queen for a Day: History, Hype, and How to Do Drag"; "Local Pride History: Know Your Roots"; and "Fighting For Your Life: Battling Depression And Suicide." In most cases workshops will be youth-designed and youth-led.

Attendance at two workshops gains participants free entrance into dinner and the Expression Not Suppression Show, which features performances of spoken word, original music, and drag. The evening concludes at 10 PM with a dance.

This year's conference kicks off on Friday March 19 at 8 PM with a special showing of the film CAMP at the Tower Theatre. Conference registrants receive a free ticket for this event made possible by Fresno Reel Pride. To see a trailer of this film, go to <[www.ifcfilms.com/camp](http://www.ifcfilms.com/camp)>.

On-site registration begins at noon on the day of the event, or you may register online at <[www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)>. For more information contact the GSA Network office 453-9040 or [diana@gsanetwork.org](mailto:diana@gsanetwork.org) This is a clean and sober event.

Expression Not Suppression 2004 is made possible through the generous support of Fresno Reel Pride, American Friends Service Committee-San Francisco, AFSC-Pan Valley Institute, AFSC-Proyecto Campesino-Visalia, Westcare, and the Imperial Dove Court de Fresno/Madera.

GSA Network is very grateful for the ongoing support of our work by community organizations and individual allies. There are currently 31 GSAs in the Central Valley, and we continue to grow! Thank you for your support, which makes events such as these possible.

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# THE VALLEY PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT WANTS YOU TO KNOW THE BIG PICTURE

- The prison population is 75% people of color that is more than 2/3 the prison population,
- Criminalization of our communities and a growing legislation push to punish non violent crimes.
- Prison incarceration is 72% non-violent i.e. drug users, repeated *non violent felony offenders*
- Our youth - Fresno County added 1000 more beds to juvenile incarceration complexes.
- More money goes into building and managing prisons than education: prisons receive 4.3 billion dollars and schools receive 3.5 billion dollars
- Toxic waste dumps and prisons are located in small rural poor communities like Mendota

Ask yourself why are they putting more money into prisons than education? Why do they target communities of color and the poor?

### The Local picture

1. Fact: the FBOP (federal bureau of prisons) makes promises to elected officials to boost their community with jobs, economic growth in businesses and property values.
2. Fact: everywhere prisons have been built, property values have dropped after completion of a prison.
3. Fact: Delano's unemployment rate actually rose from 26% to 29% after completion of the prison. The community is more impoverished now than before the prison.
4. Fact :97% OF Mendota is Spanish speaking. It is a blatant insult to the Latino community that they (FBOP) did not (and has refused) to hold hearings in Spanish or allow for a Spanish interpreter to be part of the hearings.

### WE DEMAND

1. A new environmental report in spanish and in english laymen's terms be developed and distributed.
2. That the current march 8, 2004 deadline for write in comments be held off 45 days upon completion of new environmental impact reports (eir) reports as stated above.
3. That a new public hearing be held in Spanish and/or provide Spanish interpreters for the residents of Mendota.
4. Money for prison development be directed to education and job training.

Since 1998 the prison industry complex began focusing on the central valley for prison construction we have been the target of reports which have been filed and published reflecting the absence of the real the environmental impact on our valley communities including but not limited to racism and toxic wastes in its crudest forms.

For more information about the valley prison moratorium project call 444-2188.

## THE ROGUE FESTIVAL

The Rogue Performance Festival offers two weekends of deliciously varied entertainment. The next time anyone tells you there's no support for the arts in Fresno, just say three words: Rogue Performance Festival. The five-day festival in March will offer more than 80 performances of amazingly diverse entertainment. The theme of the Rogue Performance Festival is choice—both for the audience and the performers. For the audience, there's a choice of multiple simultaneous performances from genres as diverse as belly-dancing and found object puppetry, as well as theater, music, film, dance, storytelling, and visual art.

For the performers, there's the choice of offering whatever performance they choose in a non-juried festival. "We don't censor what performers can present, we don't dictate what's good and what's bad, we don't give out prizes," said Marcel Nunis, managing director of the festival. "We think the audience can decide for itself what it likes." Audiences seem to like the Rogue Festival. Now in its third year, the annual festival has seen its audience double every year. Nunis hopes for a turnout of at least 4,000 for the 2004 Rogue Festival. The Rogue Performance Festival will take place March 5, 6, 7, 12, and 13 at six different locations in the Tower District: the-



ater, dance, and music at Starline, Club Fred, Veni Vidi Vici; visual art at Ashtree Studio (1035 North Fulton), Salon 637 (637 East Olive), and Recycrom Galley, (604 Olive); and film at the Rogue Film Venue (641 East Pine).



*One of the performers at this year's Rogue Festival will be the musical group Rondalla Nuevo Mundo - New World Acoustic Ensemble*

Performances will happen simultaneously at all venues, so patrons will have a constant choice of what to see. All the venues are within convenient, safe walking distance from each other, and shows will rotate rapidly, with no more than a 30-minute gap between performances. "It's all about choice. If you don't like one show, stick around. You'll see something else that's completely different," said Nunis. "And in between shows, the venues are places where you can have a drink, get something to eat, and discuss what you've seen with your friends." On most days of the five-day festival, the earliest show will start at 1:00 PM and the latest show will happen at 11:30 PM. For a full schedule of performances, check the Rogue Performance Festival website ([www.roguefestival.com](http://www.roguefestival.com)), or get a Rogue Map, a complete guide to the festival, from any Rogue venue or other arts-friendly businesses.

The Rogue Map and the Rogue website also list movie-style G to R ratings for the performances. Not all shows at the Rogue are suitable for all ages, so you should check ratings before bringing young people. Tickets to individual performances will range from \$2 to \$6. Tickets will be sold only at the venue 30 minutes before the show. However, you can buy a \$50 Rogue Ready Pass good for 12 shows at any Rogue venue. All proceeds from Rogue ticket sales go directly to the performing groups.

For more information contact Jaguar:  
[Bennettjagbennett@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Bennettjagbennett@sbcglobal.net) or (559) 261-4746.