

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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Cyclists (and Those Interested in Clean Air and Alternative Transit) GEAR UP FOR BIKE WEEK

By Gene Richards

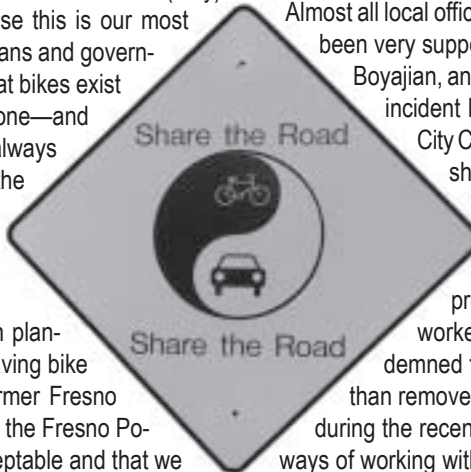
The Fresno County Bicycle Coalition (FCBC) has been meeting over the past few weeks with local elected and administrative officials in the cities of Fresno and Clovis and in Fresno County. We usually do this before Bike Month (May) and Bike to Work Week (BtWW, May 17–21). Because this is our most visible and active time of year, we like to remind politicians and government staff, not to mention the general driving public, that bikes exist and sharing the road with them makes it safer for everyone—and besides, it's the law. And of course, our position has always been that having bikes on the street, pedestrians on the sidewalks, and cars driving slowly and sensibly on the roads, makes a neighborhood more livable, more human, and more humane.

I got interested in the political aspect of transportation planning when Critical Mass riders were ticketed for not having bike licenses (yes, no bike licenses!). With the help of former Fresno Councilman Garry Bredefeld, we set up a meeting with the Fresno Police Department and made it clear that this was unacceptable and that we wanted a better relationship with them. We met some concerned police, who helped us later when the FCBC was formed, and this experience gave me a taste of what was possible with the right amount of outrage and civic concern.

About two years ago, we met with Mayor Autry and his staff and received his and many other officials' support for our first BtWW. Last year, the City of Fresno also approved a Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), which has been meeting regularly for about six months at City Hall. The bottom line: many more bike lanes exist today, although many more are still needed to achieve our goal of safe cycling. And bike lanes, just simple stripes and some signs on the street, go a long way toward alerting motorists that bikes do exist and need to be accommodated. Our goal now is to have long, complete corridors throughout our cities. We're also actively working on or supporting the creation or use of multi-purpose trails (no cars allowed), bike parking facilities, bike detectors at intersections, and fun rides for all the happy cyclists in Fresno County. By the way, thanks at least partly to requests from the FCBC, all FAX buses will begin to have *three-bike racks* on their front, replacing the current two-bike racks.

Of course, it's easy for the politicians to be in support of bicycles when all they have to do is go on a ride occasionally. What will they do when conflicts arise, if residents or businesses complain about the loss of on-street parking? The easy bike-lane projects have mostly been completed, and future projects are going to result in much more controversy, as parking prohibitions and traffic-lane reductions become necessary. It will be especially important to make Fresno's down-

town bike-friendly, but this will require much more work. We hope to take up these issues in our meetings this year.



Almost all local officials have been sympathetic to our goals, and some have been very supportive. Fresno City Council members Brad Castillo, Tom Boyajian, and Henry Perea have always been strongly supportive. An incident last year illustrates our position with the current Fresno City Council. Councilman Mike Dages went on the Ray Appleton show on KMJ to criticize the development of a bicycle transportation plan for Fresno. Later he requested that a bike lane in front of a child-care center in his district be removed, and got the full Council to approve. However, preferring a more low-key approach, Councilman Castillo worked with his residents as conflicts arose, but was condemned for asking a church to put in extra on-site parking rather than remove the bike lane. He took a lot of heat for this, on KMJ and during the recent campaign. Actually, most of the politicians have found ways of working with residents rather than making political hay out of these disagreements. However, Dages has called bike lanes "anti-business" and has managed not only to get some fellow City Council members to agree, but also to block the appropriation of money to begin installing bike lanes in downtown

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Standing up for choice and reproductive freedom, supporters gather on the corner of Blackstone and Shaw in Fresno on April 25, 2004 - over one million demonstrated in Washington D.C.

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.

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Photo Credits:

Page 2 & 5 Bradley Allen • Page 3 Jordan Burns (photo of Ken)

Page 1, 3, 10, & 11 Mike Rhodes

Page 7 Fresno Stonewall Democrats

Page 8 John Richau • Page 20 Dallas Blanchard

Letter to the Editor

I find it interesting that Republicans are helping to fund Nader's candidacy. Nader says he wants nothing more than to get "Bush and company" out of the White House, but taking Republican money is dubious at best, since some of these donors are stalwart Bush supporters. I think Nader needs to see the bigger picture here. He should start by heeding his own advice: "Your best teacher is your last mistake."

Debbie Reyes

Your April issue of *Community Alliance* has to be put up there with the finest I have read. The variety of informative articles (elections, Jerry Duncan, CHANGE, Haiti, cable access, healer, grand jury) were exceptional and well written. This is the kind of information that the progressive community needs to hear from those who are on the front lines. I also liked the cover with Amy Goodman's appearance in Fresno on April 14. Keep up the fine work for all of us out here who need to hear the other side of the issues.

Ray Ensher

Thanks for the recent article on Grand Juries as "harassment of choice". It is informative, and (hopefully not) useful. Usually obscure - I'm glad you gave it some spotlight!

Diane Marks

A Parent's Perspective

By Laura Talkington

My son is incarcerated in the California Youth Authority (CYA). He has been there for the past four years. I would never have been able to predict the horrors that have happened since the day he was sent to CYA. Last week, when I saw the videotaped guard beating of two youth in the CYA, tears streamed down my face. "How can this keep on happening?" It was disgusting and painful. Sadly, it was also not surprising to me. I have seen what CYA does. My own son has repeatedly appeared in the visiting room at CYA with cuts, choke marks on his neck, and bruises. He has been attacked by other youth or staff more than 40 times. What the CYA calls rehabilitation, the rest of us call torturous abuse.

California must act immediately to replace the ten massive CYA prisons with real rehabilitation. We need community-based programs and rehabilitation facilities that can provide youth with help instead of harm. This can no longer wait.

Before the CYA, my son was a happy and goofy kid, full of energy. When he was in the first grade, he was classified as ADHD. Doctors placed him on medications and he entered special education. Later, a neurologist diagnosed him as suffering from petit mal seizures and prescribed Neurontin. The medication made him aggressive and stressed out. He began having difficulty controlling his emotions. As much as I wanted to help, I could not afford a special treatment program.



Loreto Arizpe's mother Simona rallied for her son and all youth in prison.

A police officer told me that if my son was arrested, he would get help in the juvenile justice system. So, the next time my son got aggressive toward me, I called the police. I had my son arrested twice. I did not know what else to do. He was placed in a group home that offered no help. When it didn't work, he came back home to live with me. Months later, my son was playing with lighter fluid and accidentally caught a couch on fire. He ran out of the apartment, pulled the fire alarm, and told people to evacuate. The building was partially burned and one person was slightly injured by smoke inhalation. My son was arrested for arson. I urged my son to take re-

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Community Alliance Volunteers Needed:

We need two volunteers to deliver issues of the *Community Alliance*. One delivery is 125 issues in the downtown area, and the other is 125 issues at CSUF. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Vickie Fouts at vmfoul@sti.net or (559) 658-8260.

Peace Fresno Leader Arrested

By Mike Rhodes

Ken Hudson was arrested at the Global Day of Action to "Bring the Troops Home NOW!" which was held March 20 in downtown Fresno. Ken is the mild mannered secretary and a long time activist in the local anti-war group - Peace Fresno. He was arrested as he held a permit for the march and rally in Courthouse Park. The drama began earlier as Hudson was setting up for the rally protesting the occupation of Iraq.

As Ken worked at Courthouse Park, about 200 protestors were on their way from a march that had started at the Federal Building. While he was setting up he noticed someone in the park that he recognized as a member of the Free Republic. The Free Republic is a right wing group that counter-protests at many Peace Fresno events.

John Kaza (AKA At Bay), who Ken had seen at several of these counter-protests, was interfering with the crew's effort to set up for the rally, trying to instigate fights by absurdly getting in a person's face and repeatedly shouting personal insults like, "You're old!" Hudson advised Kaza that Peace Fresno had a permit for the rally and that if his behavior continued, police would be notified. When Kaza indicated that he had no intention of stopping his disruptive behavior, Hudson looked around for the police. There are always police at a peace rally, right?

For some reason, there were no police at the rally. Realizing that something had to be done to prevent a confrontation and possible violence, Ken called the sheriff's department. The sheriff's department sent Deputy Garringer to protect Peace Fresno's right to peacefully assemble. As Deputy Garringer talked to Ken about the situation, Kaza repeatedly tried to interfere with their conversation. Garringer told Kaza several times to "back off" in order to allow him to finish his conversation with Hudson.

After talking with Hudson, Garringer walked to where he had instructed Kaza to wait and then talked to him about the situation. They chose to stand in front of the Peace Fresno banner right next to the main stage. Some time later the marchers arrived at Courthouse Park, signaling the start of the rally. Ken, accompanied by Garringer's partners, approached Garringer and asked him if he and Kaza could move so they could start the rally. Garringer told Hudson to "Back off," and as Hudson was taking three steps back, holding up the permit for the event so the officer could see that they were authorized to hold the rally, he was told he was under arrest. Garringer did not tell Hudson to take four steps back, leave the park, or get out of town. He just told him to back off. He gave no

warning that an arrest was imminent. He simply gave the one directive, and as Ken immediately complied, he was arrested. Ken maintained his calm composure before, during, and after the arrest—even when told that his eleven-year-old daughter, who was present at the rally, would be placed in the custody of Child Protective Services (CPS). (Ken's daughter was eventually allowed to be taken to family members rather than CPS.)

Garringer's partner announced to the crowd that the arrest had been a citizen's arrest, then changed his story a few minutes later to say that it had been an arrest by the officer. Ken was booked and held in the county jail for the three hours of the rally.

Here is what Peace Fresno's secretary was cited for:

Resisting, Delaying, or Obstructing an Officer 148. (a) (1) Every person who willfully resists, delays, or obstructs any public officer, peace officer, or an emergency medical technician, as defined in Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code, in the discharge or attempt to discharge any duty of his or her office or employment, when no other punishment is prescribed, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or by imprisonment in a county jail not to exceed one year, or by both that fine and imprisonment.

After Hudson was arrested and taken for booking, Kaza was seen talking to sheriff's officers, shaking their hands, and returning to the crowd of anti-war activists. Several people at the rally identified Kaza as the freeper who groped a young woman at a demonstration in Fresno a few months ago when activists were protesting George Bush's appearance in this community. Several people confronted him after the incident and it is reported that he made an obscene gesture to one of the women.

Some members of the progressive community have suggested that the circumstances of Hudson's arrest were unusual. Some have even suggested that there was a conspiracy to violate Hudson's rights, intimidate the anti-war community, and embolden the Free Republic to harass peace activists.

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COUNCIL PROFILES

By Richard Stone

[Brad Castillo twice refused the offer of an interview—once several months before the election, and again after. Might there be a correlation between inaccessibility and electoral defeat? Anyway, his successor did consent, with the following result.]

It seemed auspicious that Council Member-elect Larry Westerlund suggested we meet at Javawava, a cafe across from Fresno High with a Tower District ambience. Then, even though I am several years his senior, I was surprised by the respectful greeting I received. In fact, our time together felt more like a conversation than an interview, a frank exchange of ideas and opinions.

Mr. Westerlund's "in-waiting" status changed somewhat the focus of my questions, to elicit perceptions and tendencies rather than experiences of office. We began with what prompted Westerlund to run, and he gave a three-part answer: (1) a long-held commitment to public service, nurtured by stints with Tony Coelho and Jim Costa, the Navy, and the Tulare D.A.'s office; (2) a belief that he has skills and knowledge that can raise the level of the Council's performance; (3) his determination that the incumbent he opposed was unresponsive to the needs (and direct requests) of district residents.

As he prepares to assume office, Westerlund is particularly concerned about the effects of the State budget crisis on local affairs, notably funding for the Fire Department, for basic infrastructure, and for the zoo. He also would like to help make City government more user-friendly for everyday people.

Westerlund understands that his is an older and poorer district, with special needs to be negotiated for. But he feels equipped to do that while maintaining a citywide, or even regional, perspective on issues such as air quality, employment and growth. Questioned about his beliefs and philosophy, Westerlund spoke about a Christian faith that engenders service, truthfulness, and respect for others despite differences, rather than judgmental superiority. He professed an optimistic trust in the power of collegial partnerships to find creative approaches to situations involving conflicting interests. He also defined himself as a proponent of market solutions to economic problems.

We discussed my misgivings about some of the institutions he puts trust in, and I found him both sincere in his beliefs and able (as he put it) to "think," that is, to take in additional information and competing perspectives without becoming defensive. So while his stance on some of the issues I've asked about in this series (see box) seem to be familiar libertarian positions, I felt with him the possibility for constructive dialogue.



Council Member-elect Larry Westerlund

Westerlund, to paraphrase the old ads, is bullish on Fresno, believing that important steps have been taken in the right direction: downtown redevelopment, limitation on northward expansion, improved freeway connections throughout the city, and the new medical facilities being built. And all this, he says, has occurred with, to say the least, inconsistent City leadership. I took leave with a sense that Larry Westerlund will take his job seriously and act humanely.



ISSUES BOX

- water meters—not a proponent, but accepts reality
- independent police review—feels there aren't systematic problems needing an auditor, but accepts there are breakdowns in police conduct that should be better addressed
- downtown—redevelopment needs to include affordable housing
- homelessness—looks to faith-based solutions to supplement existing programs
- living-wage ordinance—believes market does better than government, but aware that there isn't always a "level playing field"
- use of CDBG funds—strongly believes they should be used to augment services to blighted areas, not to pay for basic City services like code enforcement
- privatization of City services—believes it can be an effective tool for using City dollars well
- at-large Council seats—thinks it probably has insuperable legal obstacles, but is willing to consider

This concludes the series of profiles of members of Fresno City Council. It has been suggested that a similar series on the County Supervisors would be valuable. This writer, however, feels insufficiently knowledgeable about County politics to assume such an assignment. Is there someone out there ready to take it on? Contact the editor if interested.



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Lets Make Democracy Work

By Mike Rhodes

A progressive Political Action Committee (PAC) is forming in Fresno. The goal of the PAC will be to get progressive candidates elected to City Council, Board of Supervisors, and School Board positions. The candidates supported by this PAC will support issues like:

- * A living wage for all workers
- * Clean air
- * Affordable housing
- * Adequate public transportation and bike paths
- * Police accountability
- * Stop the privatization of government services
- * Food security
- * Health care for all
- * Improved Public Education

Many people in Fresno are tired of the builders and developers running local government and even determining which candidates have the money to run viable campaigns. The progressive PAC will change that by raising money, supporting voter registration, and get out the vote campaigns.

Did you know that only 26% of the eligible voters bothered to vote in the last election? Did you know that builders and developers contributed 1/2 of the money to political candidates in that election? Here is how we are going to take back our local government: The progressive PAC could take automatic deductions of \$10 a month from 1,000 members. That \$120,000 a year would allow the PAC to provide funding for several candidates in the 2006 elections.

Think of the progressive PAC as a three legged stool. The first leg is the money. The second leg on this stool is having a good candidates to run. The way things are right now, progressives don't want to run for political office because there is no support system for them as candidates. Having a progressive PAC in place will encourage good candidates to run. The third leg is the get out the vote campaign. The Republicans run this town right now because they are able to get 15% of the eligible voters to the voting booth. A targeted voter registration and get out the vote campaign in poor and working class neighborhoods will dramatically increase voter participation. Combine the get out the vote campaign with a viable candidate who can articulate a progressive agenda and we will win by a landslide. Politics in Fresno will never be the same. We will have elected officials who are elected by and held accountable to the progressive community.

While all of the details of the PAC have not been worked out yet, it is anticipated that members of the PAC will vote, after a public candidate forum, on who to support. There will be a democratic decision making process developed that encourages community participation. If you would like to be a part of this historic movement to reclaim our local government you are encouraged to become involved in the organization.

The first public meeting of the Progressive PAC will be held on Saturday, May 1 at 2 PM - Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information call (559) 978-4502 or email MikeRhodes@Comcast.net.

Parent's Perspective continued from page 2

sponsibility for his actions and he did. He pled guilty and, because he already had a juvenile court record, the judge sent him to the California Youth Authority where he has been incarcerated for four years of his six-year sentence.

Now, my son sits in a cell by himself for 23 hours a day, just wasting away. They call it protective custody. He can't go to church because he is in protective custody, can't go to school or vocational classes because he is in protective custody. Meanwhile he has been jumped and beaten up four times while he has been in protective custody. What do they think they are protecting him from?

If I beat my kid like my son has been beaten while in CYA, I would be sitting in prison. If I didn't provide education, or food, or adequate services, I would be facing child endangerment charges. Yet, this is how the CYA operates every day. This is CYA-style programming.

Over time, my son has become hard and afraid. He doesn't trust anybody anymore. He told me that he is afraid to come home because it's going to take a long time for him to deal with society again. He's afraid he won't know how to act around people anymore. I am terrified for him and for what his future holds when he gets out. The reality is, when he's released, my son will have to be rehabilitated from the CYA. And it won't be easy. They have been trying to break him for the past four years.

A new department head or elimination of the worst CYA practices won't be enough. The fundamental problem is clear: California fulfills its obligation to rehabilitate troubled youth by putting them in large warehouses that are no different than prison. Let's face it: prisons are never going to be able to help youth. The CYA must transform its whole approach. We need community programs that work with families to help youth. Youth who need to be in secure environments should be placed in rehabilitation facilities that offer counseling, training, and support.

My son has already lost his own youth to the system. As a mother, the only thing I can do is fight for my son's future and fight to stop this madness. I won't stop organizing until what my son and I have been through never happens again.



Community members in Santa Cruz, CA stressed the need for youth education as opposed to imprisonment.

Who Wants to Be on the School Board?

Did you know that there are three seats on the Fresno Unified School Board that will be chosen at the General Election on November 2? And did you know that there is no filing fee or signatures required to become a candidate?

The following positions on the FUSD Board of Trustees are up for grabs:

Roosevelt High Trustee Area #2 (current office holder: Manuel Nunez)
Fresno High Trustee Area #5 (current office holder: David D. Wright)
Hoover High Trustee Area #6 (current office holder: Michael O'Hare)

Filing for these positions begins on July 12, 2004, and ends on August 6, 2004.

THE STATE OF OUR PLATES

By Diane Scott

According to statistics from last year, some 35 million Americans experienced hunger or were “food-insecure,” our government’s new term for hungry. It refers to “a diet not nutritious enough to keep a child healthy.” More than 40% of these food-insecure persons are children. Last year 83,000 Fresno County residents were identified as hungry or food-insecure. And there were 260,000 other household members living with the 83,000 adults. Hunger doesn’t affect just one person in the home. It affects the whole family. Hunger is not just a one-time-a-year thing. It affects families over eight or more months of the year. Even though more than 45% of these households had incomes greater than 130% of the federal poverty level, that income disqualified them from participating in the Food Stamp Program.

In 2003 the federal poverty level for a family of three was \$15,260 annual income and for a family of four it was \$18,400. However, the cost of living for a single-parent household is \$39,044 per year; a two-parent family with one parent working needs \$34,659 to live on; and a family with two working parents needs \$48,303 per year. Meanwhile, the state minimum wage is \$6.75/hour or \$14,040/year. Even a median wage of \$14.06/hour, or \$29,245/year isn’t enough to meet minimum expenses. (A 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, is used as a basis for calculating annual income.)

Studies have shown that people usually pay the rent first and then the utilities. Third in line is medical expenses, and food is the last on the list—supposing, of course, there is still money. So, what happens when there’s no more food, and there are still six or seven days in the month? One mother said she drank glass after glass of water to fill up herself and gave the food to the children. Another mother said she couldn’t take her children with her when she shopped because they kept wanting things she couldn’t afford, like fruits and vegetables.

What happens to children if they don’t get proper nutrition? And how does that affect the rest of us? Children’s physical growth is stunted; they have impaired cognitive functioning and diminished capacity to learn. When they come to school hungry they can’t concentrate. This results in lower test scores which, in turn, lowers the overall school achievement level. These children are more likely to repeat a grade, have increased school absences, tardiness, and school suspension.

Hungry children exhibit higher levels of aggression, hyperactivity, and anxiety, and they have difficulty getting along with other children. They can’t sit still, they fight with their schoolmates, they talk back to their teachers, and they make it impossible for any children to learn.

Schools have found that if the school serves breakfast, the children behave better, and they learn much better. With better education, they grow up, get jobs, work very hard. They aren’t as likely to steal from their neighbors, run around in gangs, and end up in jail.

What are some of the answers to resolving these problems? Obviously, number one is to see that all children are fed properly and regularly. There is government money to fund many programs designed to stamp out hunger in children. A big problem, though, is that these programs need people, volunteers, to do much of the day-to-day work that keeps them viable. Schools have the money to give every student a free breakfast. But maybe they need mothers or grandmothers or other volunteers to help with the serving and the clean-up.

Many schools in this area, due to the poverty of the residents, have a large enough percentage of poverty-level students that they qualify for free lunches and snacks for every child. You could help make sure all the parents and caretakers of the children know this. Could you help by going door to door, handing out flyers or explaining the programs?

These programs really help children throughout the school year, but what about

summer? Not all schools conduct summer school classes that include free summer lunches to all neighborhood children, ages 1 or 2 to 18. Can you organize a summer lunch program at your child’s school? It is not difficult, and it’s a great opportunity to get to know neighborhood children and their families. Call your school’s principal to see if they are doing a free summer lunch program and, if not, would they like for you to do one for them.

Many churches have a give-away day for poor neighborhood families. They get the food (some of which is government-funded, some of which comes from donations) from Community Food Banks,

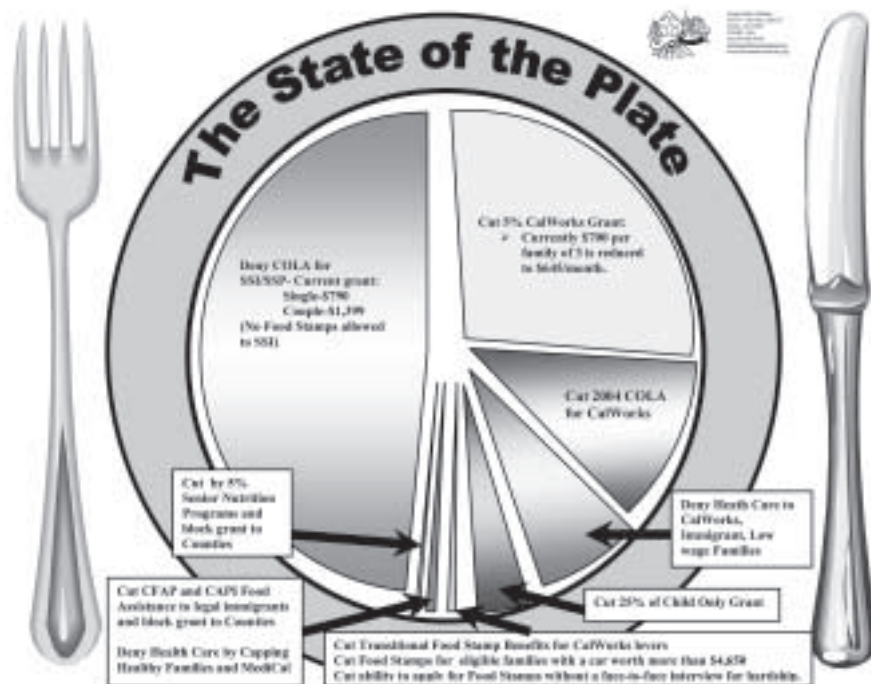
which delivers it to the churches on the day it is to be given out. The churches need volunteers to make up boxes or bags of the different food items and give these out to the people who come. See if a church in your neighborhood participates in this program and, if not, find out why not. And also the Food Banks need volunteers to help sort and box the food they receive.

There is “Plant a Row for the Needy” if you plant a garden, and a gleaners program is being talked about. Perhaps you’d like to help with that.

There is, of course, the Food Stamp program, but the governor wants to cut benefits and, quite possibly, close down the program, which is government funded and brings a lot of extra money into the state. Get into or organize a group that keeps watch on the state government to keep hunger and poverty programs going. There are also Senior Nutrition programs that are in danger of being cut or closed.

If you think you can help with any of these programs or, if you have a new program you’d like to get started or just want some more information, call Edie Jessup at MetroMinistry, (559) 485-1416, or Diane Scott at (559) 222-6135.

We all need to work together to give all the children a chance!



Queer Eye . . .

By Dan Waterhouse

Fresno's 14th annual Gay Pride Parade is set for Saturday, June 5. Floats and marchers will take over Olive Avenue in the Tower District in mid-morning.

"We urge our straight allies to get involved," says Pride organizer Jeff Robinson, the CEO of Community Link. "Sponsorships, donations, or volunteering."

For the last 14 years, Pride marchers have taken over Olive Avenue the first weekend in June.

In 1991, Queer Nation and ACT-UP activists decided it was about time to bring Pride out of the closet and ramrodded the establishment of a working group of community leaders.

Those activists and community leaders did the unthinkable—they paraded the community's Pride down the center of Fresno.

The Fresno Gay and Lesbian Pride Committee, made up of activists and members of Community Link and the Imperial Dove Court, organized the parade for the next six years. After the 1997 parade, the committee decided to focus their efforts on OUTFest at Fresno State, and the Stonewall Project put the parade together in 1998, 1999, and 2000.

In 2001, United Pride Coalition hosted the parade for the first time. They also hosted in 2002. Last year, six weeks before Pride, several United Pride Coalition board members approached Community Link. United Pride Coalition was no longer functioning, and the board members asked if Community Link would put the parade on.

After a very hectic six weeks of work, many participants described it as one of the best Fresno Pride events ever.

Prior to the 1991 parade, Pride events were held at the gay clubs. Local elders say the first Pride "parade" was at the Metro Station, a gay bar in downtown Fresno, in 1984.

"We want to 'grow' this event," Community Link's Robinson says.



To that end, Community Link is looking at having a larger, after-parade festival this year. Due to the opening of the Dollar Tree store on Olive, parking around the old festival site at Wishon and Olive has become more difficult. So, the festival will be held on the large vacant lot on Van Ness just south of Olive.

"We're planning the festival to be a family event," Robinson said. "There'll be a kids' play area. We're planning on having some really great entertainment, lots of booths, and there'll be a beer garden."

Parade organizers hold meetings every Tuesday night, beginning at 6 PM. The meetings are at the Central California Pride Network offices at 930 N Van Ness, just south of the canal between Belmont and Olive avenues. Anyone interested in finding out what's going on or wanting to get involved is welcome to come.

Robinson says he's anticipating needing to raise an additional \$10,000 this year due to the change in the festival site and the growth in participation. "Last year we squeezed out every usable inch of space, and there is just not any space left to expand" at the parking lot across from the Tower Theatre.

Donations should be sent to Community Link, P.O. Box 4959, Fresno, CA 93744, and they should be marked for the Parade.

"We're also looking for sponsors," Robinson says. "We've have some wonderful ones over the years, and we'd like to expand that. We would like to see our straight allies get more involved with the parade—marching, helping with putting it together, and with sponsorships."

This year's theme for the parade and festival is "The Pride! The Parade! The Party!"

Fresno's REELPride film festival will be screening one of their Night Out film series presentations that evening at 8 PM at the Tower Theatre.

Want more information? Want to get involved? Please call Community Link at (559) 486-3464, or e-mail at ClinkInc@aol.com.

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.



Bike Week continued from page 1

Fresno and to block appointments of new members to the BPAC. This is very unfortunate, as it has sent a chill through the entire City process and slowed the already glacial pace of bike lane additions.

We were particularly interested in talking to Council member Jerry Duncan because he has sometimes voted against bike lane projects. His concern is that the City notify affected residents and owners before money is allocated to bike projects. But he agreed to allow the BPAC to have a role in this and has also worked with property owners to get bike lanes completed. Fresno Councilman Brian Calhoun has also been supportive, and though he originally disagreed with the need for a BPAC, he has supported it since it began operations within the City.

County Supervisors have also been generally supportive, and many will be riding with us or attending to show support for our Bike to Work Ride on the morning of Friday, May 21. This ride from Manchester Center to Kern Street Coffee Company caps off BtWW. Early this same morning, several high schools have organized rides to school.

Check with the enclosed calendar for details. Want to help out by volunteering at any of these events? Join the FCBC. We love to see new members and get new ideas and energy. As we are all fond of saying, there's a lot more work to do than bodies to do it.

We understand that all these activities, while largely symbolic, nevertheless have an effect on cycling and influence alternative transportation decisions and land-use planning. As engaged citizens, we encourage you to bring up related issues in public forums. Connect with us and enjoy being on a bike. The Fresno County Bicycle Coalition can be contacted by e-mail at fresnocobike@aol.com and by phone (559) 444-2065.

Gene Richards rides a bike to save the air, to keep healthy and for the greater good, here and when he's teaching in China. He can be reached at gene1@cvip.net.



Discussing bike lane projects with Jerry Duncan



Fresno Bike Week 2004 ...and More!

Join us in celebrating:

- National Bike Month
- California Bike Commute Week
- California Bike to Work Day

Sunday May 2

- Meet at the Tower Theatre (corner of Olive and Wishon) to ride with us to the Grizzlies game for Asthma Day – free tickets to first 25 on bikes
- Watch the Tower District Criterium races sponsored by Central Valley Cycling (www.cvcycling.org) and stop by the FCBC booth!

Thursday May 6

- Join us for 'Bike Hop' (our version of Art Hop) for a ride to local art galleries – ride leaves at 6 pm from Javawava Coffee House at 1940 N. Echo (across from Fresno High) and ends at Kern St Coffee Co. downtown at 2134 Kern St about 8 pm (live music!)

Wednesday May 12

- Join California State University Fresno Commuter Services for their Bike Commute Week event at CSUF

Saturday May 15

- Roll along in the first ever historic Saroyan Bike Ride as part of the Saroyan Festival – the 2 hour ride leaves at 10 am from the Saroyan Theatre 700 M St

Sunday May 16

- Visit participating local bike shops for a free bike check

Monday May 17

- Bike Week proclamation at Clovis City Council meeting 7 pm at 1033 5th St in Clovis

Tuesday May 18

- Bike Week proclamation at Fresno City Council meeting 8:30 am at 2600 Fresno St
- Bike Week proclamation at Fresno County Board of Supervisors meeting 9 am at 2281 Tulare, Room 301

Thursday May 20

- Celebrate at the Santa Fe Basque restaurant from 6 to 9 pm at 3110 N. Maroa for our annual Bike Bash!

Friday May 21

- Commute to work for Bike to Work Day – meet at Manchester Center at 8 am, ride leaves promptly at 8:30 am and ends at Kern St Coffee Co. downtown
- Several local high schools will ride to school earlier in the morning

For more information call (559) 444-2065 or email fresnocobike@aol.com

Arrest continued from page 3

A few weeks prior to the arrest, Peace Fresno had filed a tort claim with the County of Fresno regarding the Sheriff Department's six-months-long infiltration and surveillance of Peace Fresno (see www.peacefresno.org).

- Why did law enforcement not protect Peace Fresno's right to peaceful assembly?
- Was law enforcement working with members of the Free Republic to violate our civil liberties?
- What message does Hudson's arrest send to the progressive community? That if you complain about being harassed by right wing thugs, that you are the one who will get arrested?

Ken Hudson has good legal representation but will need our support in the coming months. After all, if found guilty, he is facing one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine. His first court date, the arraignment, is June 15 and we should all be prepared to join him as he stands before the judge.

Equally important is the need to defend our basic civil rights. We have the right to hold a peaceful protest march and rally. We have the right to stop thugs from harassing the people that attend those events. Law enforcement does not have the right to arbitrarily arrest and detain us when we are engaged in Constitutionally protected activities. Defending our civil liberties is patriotic and an essential part of our work in the progressive community.

The Community Alliance magazine will follow this story with great interest and will inform our readers of how they can support Ken in the months ahead.

The Battle of Algiers

Playing May 7, 2004 at 5 and 8 p.m. at the Tower Theater, presented by Fresno Filmworks, Inc., a non-profit dedicated to alternative film for Fresno. The film will be introduced by Christopher Sheer, author of *Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq*. The author will be available to sell and sign copies of his book after the movie.

Review of *The Battle of Algiers*
by: Catherine Campbell, board member, Fresno Filmworks

A popular insurgency against an occupying force erupts in an Arab country, and the local population takes advantage of intricate urban alleyways to - in the short term - foil the occupier in a series of brutal battles.

The story of Iraq?

No, the story of Algeria. But the story of Iraq nonetheless. And the story of the French, who occupied Algeria, and of the United States, which presently occupies Iraq.

So similar, in fact, that the movie was screened last year for the Pentagon's Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict Special Operations Department, presumably because our soldiers have something to learn from the Algerian insurrection, portrayed with exacting verisimilitude in *The Battle of Algiers*. The e-mail the Pentagon sent out said: "How to win a battle against terrorism and lose the war of ideas. Children shoot soldiers at point blank range. Women plant bombs in cafes. Soon the en-

tire Arab population builds to a mad fervor. Sound familiar? The French have a plan. It succeeds tactically, but fails strategically. To understand why, come to a rare showing of *The Battle of Algiers*."

The Battle of Algiers is more than allegory, and it is more than a military lesson plan for neocon strategists. It is also a brilliant documentary-style black and white account of the violent uprising of Algeria's National Liberation Front in the 1950s, and the bloody French response, and it plays on our hearts with steady control. Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo has been compared to the great early Soviet filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Aleksandr Dovzhenko.

Only one professional actor is in the cast. Brahim Haggai portrays the rebel leader Ali La Point, who rose from petty criminal to committed revolutionary mentored by El-hadi Jaffar, who is portrayed in the film by Saadi Yacef, a veteran of the Algerian uprising and the author of the book on which the film is based.

The conflict begins between the poor Algerians, living in despair in the Casbah, and the French, whose lives are insulated by police and military guards. There is an assassination, there is retaliation. Then there is vengeance, and in one powerful scene, three Algerian women disguise themselves as French women to infiltrate a protected zone to set off three bombs. There is even the erection of a barbed-wire wall with armed checkpoints between Algier's Muslim and French quarters. Revenge follows vengeance, and torture follows death.

History, all over again.

Interestingly, the violence does not feel inflicted upon the audience. The violence has a point, the point is made. This film makes a concise and rational argument for the kind of low-intensity, urban guerilla warfare that the powerful call terrorism. If any film made us uncomfortably aware of the difficulty the poor and dispossessed have fighting to have their own neighborhoods back, this is that film.

It is a historical irrelevancy that the Algerians lost the battle of Algiers. They won the war, as seekers of liberation and independency continue to win wars all over the world, and as the Iraqis will win their war. The French pulled out of Algeria in 1962.

Some have called *The Battle of Algiers* the greatest political movie of all time. Perhaps it is because it tells the story of ordinary people who suddenly, with the press of destruction upon them, must act as political beings until the press lifts, and then they return to their lives. This is their politics and this is our politics now, for the press is upon us.

The Battle of Algiers: Political drama first released in 1965, newly re-mastered. Italian-Algerian co-production directed by Gillo Pontecorvo. Written by Franci Solinas, based on the book by Saadi Yacef. With Brahim Haggai, Jean Martin, Saadi Yacef. (Not rated. 123 minutes.)

The Battle of Algiers was the winner of the Golden Lion at the 1965 Venice Film Festival in addition to being Oscar nominated for Best Foreign Language Film, Best Director and Best Screenplay. The new 35mm prints being re-released into theaters contain footage frequently cut from television airings as well as new subtitles which more accurately translate the French and Arabic dialogue.





Amy Goodman speaking at event organized by KFCF 88.1 FM in Fresno and asks why the corporate media does not interview more peace activists.

The Exception to the Rulers Tour

By Mike Rhodes

Amy Goodman, host of *Democracy Now!*, kicked off her *Exception to the Rulers* tour in New York on April 13. Her next stop was in Fresno, California, where she was greeted by a wildly enthusiastic crowd. At the “meet and greet” reception, hosted by KFCF 88.1 FM, she signed at least 150 copies of her new book.

KFCF is the local community radio station that broadcasts the Pacifica network signal from KPFA in Berkeley into the Central Valley. It is also the station that helped keep *Democracy Now!* on the air during the conflict with the Pacifica board of directors.

Following the reception, a much larger crowd (estimated at more than 1000 people) filled the California State University-Fresno Satellite Student Union. There were so many people who wanted to hear Amy that the audience was told that, according to the fire marshal, those standing anywhere but against the walls would have to leave. In a shocking display of civil disobedience, the crowd refused to disperse. Instead, many of them joined Amy onstage—apparently the fire marshals don’t interfere with how many “performers” can be onstage.

Amy Goodman is on a 70-city tour to promote her new book *The Exception to the Rulers*. Academy Award–winning director Michael Moore says, “Pick up this book, shake your head in disbelief and disgust as you read it, and then . . . go raise some hell!” Actor Danny Glover says, “Amy Goodman continues the quest for global justice and awareness by bringing us stories and a perspective that we don’t normally get from the mainstream media.” *The Exception to the Rulers* is a 350+ page expose. Part first-person, on-the-ground reporting, part old-fashioned muckraking, the book chronicles the struggles of what Goodman calls “the silenced majority.”

In her talk to the overflow crowd at Fresno State, Amy Goodman spoke about media democracy and the importance of grassroots journalism. She praised KFCF for its work to provide a voice to the voiceless and to keep free speech alive. The danger of viewing the world only through the lens of the corporate media was an ongoing theme in her talk. Ironically illustrating this point, the Fresno Bee did not assign a reporter to cover the talk, and there was no story in the following day’s newspaper. In addition, no reporters from corporate TV or

radio stations covered the event. The alternative press was, however, covering the story. The *Community Alliance* magazine, Eduardo Stanley (who is writing articles for Spanish-language publications in the Central Valley), Elfie Ballis from SunMt, Jim Grant from Channel 49 (TV worth watching), Comcast’s Channel 14 (the precursor to public access), and a video crew from CSUF were all there to get the message out that Amy had come to town. Without the alternative media, there would have been almost no coverage at all.

The video *Independent Media in a Time of War* was shown at the beginning of the program. The message was clear: We can’t depend on corporate media to provide us a “fair and balanced” presentation of the news. They represent corporate interests that rarely allow the voice of opposition to be heard. With embedded reporters in the US military in Iraq, and generals on all of the news stations, Amy Goodman asks why the corporate media do not interview peace activists. In addition to military experts on news channels, why not also have doctors, who can explain what happens when a cluster bomb enters a person’s body or when shrapnel blows off someone’s foot? In a study conducted in the week leading up to Colin Powell’s visit to the UN for authorization to go to war and the week immediately after, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) found that out of 393 interviews on CBS, NBC, ABC, and PBS about the war, only 3 were conducted with people who were opposed to the US invasion.

In a different study, conducted shortly after the war, it was found that 60% of Americans believed one of the following:

- Evidence of links between Iraq and al-Qaeda had been found.
- Weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq.
- World public opinion favored the United States going to war with Iraq.

This ignorance played into the Bush administration’s plans for war. The study, conducted by researchers at the Program on International Policy Attitudes, discovered that “among those with just one of the misperceptions, 53% supported the war—rising to 78% for two of the misperceptions and to 86% for those with all three.” On the other hand, among those “with none of the three misperceptions,” 77% opposed the war. Fully 80% of the respondents who had one of these misperceptions watched Fox News as their primary news source. In contrast, only 23% of those getting their news from NPR/PBS held one misperception and only 3% held all three. This is evidence that the more you watch Fox News, the more misinformed you are.

Amy Goodman’s talk in Fresno was inspirational and a big boost for the local

Continued on page 11



An over flow crowd applauds at the conclusion of Amy Goodman’s presentation on the need for alternative media.

Exception to the Rulers continued from page 10

alternative media movement. If she inspired you to look beyond corporate media, here are a few places to start:

The Community Alliance magazine 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, and economic justice; immigrant rights; and a living wage for all working people. The magazine seeks to expose social and political injustices, and to link the diverse network of activists working in our community. <www.fresnoalliance.com/home>

KFCF 88.1 FM provides extraordinary coverage of issues. There are short news reports most hours and longer news programs at 3 and 6 PM. You can listen on the Internet at <www.kfcf.org>. Also available on their Web site is an archive of shows heard over the last 24 hours.

Democracy Now! heard on KFCF 88.1 FM at 6 and 9 AM. Democracy Now! is also on Free Speech TV Channel 9415 on Dish Network, Monday through Friday at 5 AM, 9 AM, 4 PM, and 9 PM.

Air America Radio with Al Franken is on the Web at <www.airamericaradio.com> and on XM satellite radio, Channel 167, 12 noon–3 PM.

The Central Valley has a Web page on **Indymedia** at <www.sfbay.indymedia.org/centralvalley/>

Sun Mountain has video and commentary of many of the events in the progressive community that happen in the Fresno area: <www.sunmt.org/intro.html>

Common Dreams News Center: <www.commondreams.org>

Truth Out: <www.truthout.org>

MoveOn.org: <www.moveon.org>



Amy Goodman and her brother David sign copies of their new book.



Amy Goodman arrives at the CSUF satellite student union for Exception to the Rulers talk.



Amy Goodman leaves the stage with a bouquet of flowers.

COMMUNITY JOURNALISTS WANTED

Are you tired of corporate media moguls ignoring stories that are important to you? Don't hate the media: Become the media! Join others in the Central Valley and help create an independent media and news organization.

Indymedia is a collective of independent media organizations, ordinary citizens, and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, noncorporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the news that corporate media neglects.

Post your article, pictures, video, or audio to:
<www.indybay.org/centralvalley/>.

KFCF  **88.1**
FREE SPEECH RADIO

May 2004

May is Bike Month, and the week of May 17–21 is Bike to Work Week (BtWW). May will also feature a Saroyan Ride (to all his old haunts), details to follow. Sunday, May 2, is Asthma Day at the Grizzlies, and some will ride their bikes from the Tower Theatre to the game. BtWW will include a bike to school or work day (Friday, May 21) too. More details on statewide events: <www.bikelink.com/calendar.htm>.

Saturday, May 1 • All Day

International Workers' Day commemorates the successful struggle for the eight-hour day and honors the working class throughout the world.

Saturday, May 1 • 2 PM

The first public meeting of the Progressive PAC will be held on Saturday, May 1 at 2 PM - Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness, south of McKinley. For more information call (559) 978-4502 or email MikeRhodes@Comcast.net. See story on page 5

Saturday, May 1 • 8:30 AM–3 PM

The Economics of Peace and Justice, a conference sponsored by the Mennonite Peacemakers, will be held at the Mennonite Community Church (on the corner of Olive and Willow in Fresno). For more information call (559) 291–3344 or go to <www.peacemaking.com/mennos/>.

Sunday, May 2 • 2:30 PM

Through the Eyes of Youth, 2nd Annual Digital Film Festival at Roosevelt High School Auditorium, 4250 E Tulare Ave in Fresno. For more information go to <www.yesfresno.org/Welcometothe%20Digital%20Arts%20Partnership%20Film%20Festival.htm>.

Wednesday, May 5 • 5 PM, festival; 6 PM, march

United for Human Rights! Festival and march at Fulton Mall, Fresno. Stop the education funding budget cuts; stop the new Proposition 187; safe highways for everyone; legalization of and driver's licenses for immigrants! For more information: (559) 497–0206, (559) 266–9942, (559) 498–6033. Organizers: Comité No Nos Vamos, Unión de Exbraceros, Comité Central Menonita, Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional, MAPA del Valle, PAN Valley Institute, Proyecto Campesino, Reedley Social Services, Carpenters Union Local 701, Iglesia Católica de Fowler, Centro Bellas Artes, Arte del Pueblo, Comité PRO-UNO, Comité Consejero de la Educación, Californianos por Justicia, MEChA.

Thursday, May 6 • 1 PM

CSUF Campus Peace & Civil Liberties Coalition meeting at CSUF room USU 311. For more information contact ruthoj@csufresno.edu.

Thursday May 6 • 6–8 PM

Californians for Justice will host a spring reception at 2014 Tulare Avenue at their new office in the TW Patterson Building, Suite 718 (Tulare and Fulton, downtown). Come learn about our campaign for quality education and hear about some exciting work happening over the next year. Food and refreshments provided; RSVP to George Loomis at (559) 449–1394, (559) 709–5878, or george@caljustice.org.

Thursday, May 6 • 7:30 PM

Fresno Poets Association: Peter Everwine will be reading from his new book at the Bonner Auditorium of the Fresno Art Museum. A reception and book signing will follow the reading. Information: Charles Hanzlicek, (559) 226–1528.

Friday, May 7 • 5 PM and 8 PM

Fresno Filmworks presents *The Battle of Algiers* at the Tower Theatre. Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo's landmark film about the Algerian struggle for independence has been re-released in a new print and with new subtitles. Shot in gripping, documentary style, the film was hailed by Pauline Kael as "the most emotionally stirring revolutionary epic since Eisenstein's *Potemkin*." Christopher Scheer, co-author of the *The 5 Biggest Lies Bush Told Us about Iraq*, will introduce the film and be available for book-signing between shows. 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. Tickets are \$9.00; \$7.00 for students and seniors. For more information call the FFW info line, (559) 221–0755, or go to <www.fresnofilmworks.org>.



Friday, May 7 • 7–9 PM

Dances of Universal Peace. Guest Dance Leader from Bay Area: Sierra Lynn White. First Congregational Church, Yale and Van Ness. For more info, call Pat at (559) 438–4486.

Friday, May 7 • 8 PM

The Fresno Folklore Society presents Paul Geremiah, who has built a reputation as a first-rate bluesman, a songwriter, a scholar of early jazz and blues, and one of the best country blues fingerpickers ever with his tools: six- and twelve-string guitars, harmonica, piano, and a husky soulful voice. With an innate sense of the humor as well as the drama of the music, he keeps traditional blues fresh and alive with his performances. Fresno Art Museum, \$12 and \$15. Information: (559) 431–3653.



Saturday, May 8 • 2 PM

The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us about Iraq. Author Christopher Scheer, alterNet staff writer, will be at Barnes & Noble, 7849 N Blackstone, to promote his new book with a presentation and book-signing.

Saturday, May 8 • 2 - 4 PM

Arianna Huffington will make an exclusive appearance in Fresno to sign her new book, "Fanatics and Fools: The Game Plan For Winning Back America." [Hardcover \$23.95/Miramax Books] The Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village at Palm and Shaw avenues will host the event. Call 226-1845 for more information.

Sunday, May 9 • 3 PM

"Sweet Herbs & Roses," Mother's Day Weekend at the Squaw Valley Herb Gardens. Make memories together celebrating in a beautiful, fragrant, foothill garden. Food, fun, flowers, and folklore as Rosemary weaves the stories of the plants with lively demonstrations and delicious refreshments. Music, art, herb plants, and gift shop. \$15. Make reservations at (559) 332–2909 or online at <www.SquawValleyHerbGardens.com>.

Wednesday, May 12

Hunger Action Day Bus Trip to Sacramento: We will visit our legislators, discuss how we can get access to healthy foods, and advocate for full use of federal nutrition programs like Food Stamps, School Meals, WIC, and Senior Nutrition Programs. Call Fresno Metro Ministry if you want to go and talk with your legislator: (559) 485–1416. There is no charge for this full-day event, which will include advocacy training on the way up, and a rally on the Capitol steps. Join us for "No Empty Plates in the State!" Comments from last year are available at <www.fresnometroministry.org>.

Thursday, May 13 • 5 - 6 PM

Recognition ceremony for participants in Peace Challenge for Youth. Peace Challenge is a project of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and is supported by the Whitney Foundation. Ceremony will be hosted by the Human Relations Commission and held in the lobby of Fresno City Hall, and it will include presentations by youth groups about their work. Refreshments will be served. Free and open to the public

Thursday, May 13 • 5 - 8 PM

California Rural Legal Assistance will host a reception at Arte Americas, located at 1630 Van Ness, Fresno, in celebration of CRLA's mission and photographer Rick Nahmias's powerful and poignant exhibit, "The Migrant Project: Contemporary California Farm Workers." Admission to the reception and exhibit are free, although donations to benefit CRLA would be much appreciated. CRLA's executive director Jose Padilla, photographer Rick Nahmias, celebrated author and poet Gary Soto, and members of CRLA's local staff, community advisory committee, and supporters will be in attendance. For more information on CRLA and its services: <www.crla.org>. For information regarding the reception: jhofer@crla.org or (559) 445–4166.

Thursday, May 13 • 6 PM

Fresno County Democratic Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Committee meets at the Democratic Party Office, 255 N. Fulton, #104. Information: (559) 486–5422. Activists are encouraged to get involved in this worthwhile effort. Volunteers are needed!

Friday, May 14 • 4–5:30 PM

Fresno Metro Ministry, the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, and other nonprofit groups in the community are sponsoring an "Introduction to Socially Responsible Investing" seminar at College Community Congregational Church, 5550 N Fresno, Fresno. Presenters will be Certified Financial Planner Lincoln Pain and his associate David Dobkin, of Cambridge Investment Research, Inc., in Berkeley. As members of the First Affirmative Financial Network, they specialize in socially and environmentally responsible investing, portfolio management, financial planning, and insurance. The presentation will be information only (no sales) for those interested in learning more about sound financial management with a social conscience. In order to be responsive to their Fresno audience, the presenters encourage submitting questions in advance. To reserve a place at the free seminar and to submit questions, please contact Carmen Pauls Wiens at Fresno Metro Ministry: (559) 485–1416 or carmen@fresnometmin.org.

Friday, May 14 • 8 PM

Leo Kottke, a true American original and guitar virtuoso at the Tower Theatre. For more information call (559) 485-9050.

Saturday, May 15

Deadline for articles and calendar items to the June *Community Alliance* magazine. Send information to AllianceEditor@comcast.net.

Saturday, May 15 • 1–3 PM, MEChA Alumni “Tardeada and Niños Fiesta”

6:30–9 PM, 35th Anniversary Celebration Program • 9–11 PM Dance

MEChA's 35th Anniversary Celebration at CSU Fresno. For more information contact Lucia at (559) 230-0700, or e-mail the planning committee: MEChA35AC@aol.com.

Saturday, May 15 • 12 Noon–3 PM

Know your rights when confronted by police officers. Learn about your rights when confronted by the Fresno Police Department; how to file a complaint against the Fresno Police Department; the locations to receive a complaint form; what your community is doing to organize for independent police investigation. Sponsored by the California State Chapter of the National Action Network, Central California Criminal Justice Committee, and El Comité No Nos Vamos. For more information call (559) 268-7475.

Saturday, May 15 • 3 - 6 PM

REEL Pride in the Arts is a student film contest that allows high school and college students to submit film shorts (20min in length or less) to be judged for a possible cash award of up to \$1000. On May 15 they will be showing the top films submitted and announcing the high school and college student winner. They will also have a guest speaker from Los Angeles talking to the audience about the film industry.

The event will be held at Fresno State in UC 200 - everyone is invited and the event will be free of charge. For more information contact speechadvice@yahoo.com or 559-730-3833.

Sunday, May 16 • 2 PM

The Merced–Somoto (Nicaragua) Sister City Committee will meet at Scout Hut in Applegate Park in Merced.

Friday, May 21 • 7:30 PM

A premiere showing of the new documentary film, *Thirst*, revealing plans by multinational corporations to privatize the world's supply of drinking water, including privatization plans for cities in the San Joaquin Valley. Showing at the Bonner Auditorium along with the award-winning documentary *Tales of the San Joaquin*, which agribusiness and some local politicians have attempted to suppress. For tickets or information call KFCF at (559) 233-2221. You can get the picture of the flyer at www.thirstthemovie.org.

Friday, May 21 • 8 PM

The Spine of Califas: A poetic road trip weaves the poetry of various writers from throughout the state into one dynamic show, blurring the borders between regions, geography, and artistic media while maintaining each writer's own distinct style. The show is a seamless multimedia production, which includes live music, video projection, and stage props. Featured performers include critically acclaimed author and poet Marisela Norte Adolfo Guzman Lopez (formerly of the Taco Shop Poets), Fresno poet Tim Z. Hernandez ,plus the legendary pachuko punk sounds of Los Illegals and more. This is a damn good show! It packed the house at L.A.'s Getty Center, and is coming to Fresno for one night only. A high turnout is anticipated so get there early! Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness, Fresno. Admission: \$10 general, \$8 members and students. Doors open at 7:30 PM. For more info: (559) 266-2623 or www.arteamerica.org.

Saturday, May 22 • 12 Noon

Rally and peace march in West Fresno! Join the Rev. Floyd D. Harris Jr., California State President of the National Action Network, who will be leading a rally and peace march in West Fresno, with local and state organizations. The rally will start at the Emmanuel Church of the Nazarene, 245 W Myers, between Kearney and California off Thorne. There will be free food and games for all ages.

Tuesday, May 25 • 7 PM

"Whites Looking at White Privilege," seventh in a series of discussions in which whites will be challenged to examine the benefits received from centuries of racism. *Note the change in meeting day.* Fresno City College, Room SO-110. For more information contact Richard Stone to enroll: (559) 266-2559. Contact Gerry Bill for parking permit: (559) 227-2133, or (559) 442-4600, ext. 8348.

Wednesday, May 26 • 7 PM

The motion for the forth great Oxford Fresno debate will be "the time has arrived for a national policy supporting gay marriages." Location to be announced. For more information call Vince Lavery 455-0821.

For up-to-the-minute information about what is happening in Fresno's progressive community, join the Community Alliance email alert network. We send out an updated calendar of events once a week and alert you when there is an emergency rally or demonstration. This is a free service. You can join by sending your email address to: <AllianceEditor@comcast.net> and say you would like to subscribe to this service.

Join California Rural Legal Assistance at a May 13 Reception at Arte Americas

By Jose R. Padilla, Executive Director
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

Each year, more than half a million farm workers pick California's fruits and vegetables—the produce that accounts for more than half of our nation's daily consumption. Still, farm workers rank among the state's poorest and most poorly housed residents; they disproportionately suffer from health and safety hazards at home and at work, and they face obstacles to accessing services due to cultural, linguistic, and economic differences from their neighbors. They are California's invisible population.

For 38 years, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) has fought to empower this farm worker community, to bring hope, to build confidence, and to ensure justice for California's rural poor. In 1966, CRLA was created as a state-wide, nonprofit legal-services and social-justice organization to address the inequities of laws affecting farm workers and other rural, low-income California residents. Since then, CRLA, through its 21 regional offices, has provided free, quality civil legal services to low-income Californians in the areas of labor, education, civil rights, housing, family security, and public benefits. Throughout its history, CRLA has served as a powerful voice in the courtrooms, classrooms, fields, and legislative halls on behalf of the rural poor to ensure their health, their safety, and their rights to equal access to the laws and protections guaranteed—on paper—to all.

As reported in local newspapers recently, CRLA continues to be vigorously audited by the Federal government. In 2002 and 2003, CRLA went through the most extensive audit conducted by the Legal Services Corporation's (LSC) Office of Inspector General (OIG) to date. LSC provides CRLA with an annual grant of \$6.8 million. The OIG audit was a 30-month ordeal, costing CRLA nearly 5000 hours of work and more than \$125,000. The December 2003 OIG report found, among other things, that CRLA had "subsidized" an independent organization in the amount of \$511 by failing to charge interest on late rent payments. In an \$18 million period of operations, this \$511 is immaterial; yet, it became a subject of national and media attention. Less obvious was the interference by the dairy industry that led to multiple audits, to a call for CRLA defunding, and to the involvement of rural Congressmen on the industry's behalf—Congressmen William Thomas, Calvin Dooley, and Devin Nunes. The audit is still in process, but the politics evolved to a point where CRLA was asked to present testimony before a Congressional House Subcommittee on April 31, 2004. We did so successfully. In the end, CRLA must continue to aggressively defend the interests of rural and working poor against any industry that fails to respect the existing rights and well-being of hard-working people whose labor creates the profit enjoyed by these industries.

On Thursday, May 13, 5–8 PM, CRLA will host a reception at Arte Americas, located at 1630 Van Ness Avenue in Fresno, in celebration of CRLA's mission and photographer Rick Nahmias's powerful and poignant exhibit, "The Migrant Project: Contemporary California Farm Workers." Admission to the reception and exhibit are free, although donations to benefit CRLA, Inc., would be much appreciated. CRLA's executive director Jose Padilla, photographer Rick Nahmias, celebrated author and poet Gary Soto, and members of CRLA's local staff, community advisory committee, and supporters will be in attendance. For more information on CRLA and its services, visit www.crla.org. For information regarding the May 13 reception, contact jhofer@crla.org or (559) 445-4166.



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 socialjustice@sti.net

WILPF Dates:

Wednesday, May 5, Noon: Women in Black, Fresno County Courthouse breezeway

Monday, May 10, 7 PM: WILPF Membership Meeting, 1584 N Van Ness. All members are invited to attend.

Saturday, May 15, 1–3 PM: WILPF DISARM Campaign: Protest for Peace at Vandenberg Space Command. Contact Vickie for details.

Sunday, May 16, 10 AM–3PM: WILPF DISARM Campaign: West coast organizing meeting about Vandenberg Space Command in Santa Maria, California. Contact Vickie for details.

Saturday, May 22: Northern California WILPF Cluster Meeting in San Jose. Contact Vickie for details.

Thank You: Fund Raising—Thank you to the 19 members who donated to Fresno WILPF in honor of Women's Herstory Month. So far we have received \$840. This will greatly help us continue our excellent programs and educate others at tabling events. Donating money is as important, if not more so, than donating woman hours. **Tax Day**—Muchas Gracias to our members and friends who leafletted the postoffice on Tax Day: Nancy Waidtlow, Alan Cheah, Nicholas DeGraff, Diane Scott, Joan Poss, Terry Winant, Meta Schettler, Lydia Flores, Matilda Rangel, Carolyn Mathers, Judy Michaels, Gail Gaston. People seemed to accept the information without too much surprise, many of them saying they already knew where their tax dollars were going. It's hard to believe that the city maintenance department would be stupid enough to oil the road in front of the postoffice on tax day, thereby totally closing off both entries to the post office area. Surely they did it to thwart us. But of course we're much more clever and resilient than to be thwarted by their diabolical plots. One leafleter stayed at Cardwell to catch those managing to find their way to the postoffice. Others went to leaflet at the Tower District station. That way we distributed about twice as many flyers as we had expected to. By 1:00 p.m. Traffic to and from the Cardwell station had been allowed to return. **Earth Day**—Thanks to all who helped us table at Earth Day. What a wonderful way to spread the word about *peace and freedom*.

Board Member Nominations: Ellie Bluestein and Joan Poss are putting together a nomination committee for officers to be voted on at our June meeting. If you are interested in being on the committee or have names to nominate please contact them.

Women's Spirituality: The last Women's Spirituality panel was a great success. About 30 women attended, of which I knew only a couple. It seems like we have found something of interest for those who are not active in the progressive movement in Fresno. Many heard about it from the *Fresno Bee's* Faith & Values section or from the KFCF calendar. When listening to the women you got an impression that we have more in common across our faiths than we may have realized; that we share many core values and that our spirituality empowers us as women. I see this as a major step for helping women work together for world peace. There was a sense among the group that we should continue holding the event. I will be meeting with the panelist soon to determine where we should go from here. At our last WILPF meeting it was agreed this is something we would like to do as a way of outreach for new members and to bring our message of *peace and freedom* to more women, not just a program for WILPF members, as we only had one WILPF member in the audience and two on the panel. If you are interested in being involved, contact Vickie.

This page is paid for by WILPF, who has complete editorial control of the content.

CA 14

Women's Book Club: The book discussion on *The Color of Water* was an eye-opening event even though it was only attended by five WILPF members and one member of BWOPA. Continuing the book club alone or as part of the Women's Spirituality program can be a way of building sisterhood, understanding, and peace among women of different faiths and cultures in Fresno. We are working on a book discussion on *The Resurgent Voice of Muslim Women* by Rasha al-Disuqi, Ph.D. I bought the book last year when Dr. al-Disuqi was at CSUF for the Middle East Forums. She is a very powerful woman, and I feel her book would be an excellent way for non-Muslim women to learn about Muslim women as a way to honor our commonalities and our uniqueness. If you wish to help with this project, contact Vickie.

Oxford Debate: At our last meeting we again discussed whether Fresno WILPF should co-sponsor the Oxford Debates. We took turns talking with a talking stick to help with the emotions involved with the discussion. It was decided that we would continue requesting WILPF members to attend in order to experience the debate firsthand and to continue with our discussion until we can reach consensus. We also want to thank WILPF member Lynn Jacobsson for doing a wonderful job regarding health care at the last debate.

Community Alliance: As you may know, WILPF pays the *Community Alliance* \$150 per month to put this page in the magazine. Another part of our agreement is for a WILPF member to help with the collating and mailing of the magazine, noon to 4 PM, the end of each month. Carol Bequette has been the WILPF volunteer for ages. It is time for her to take a break. To volunteer, contact Vickie.

Yard Sale: We are thinking of having another fundraiser yard sale in June as part of the large yearly neighborhood sale on Harvard Avenue. People usually make tons of money at this event and we want to share in the wealth. Last year we didn't make enough money for all the work that went into it, so we need to spread the work and be more selective if we want to do this. We want to focus on large items in good condition, which seem to sell better than little knick-knack types of things. In order to make this a reality, we need three or four dedicated volunteers to work on a committee to organize and run the yard sale. Any takers? If interested, contact Vickie.

Bylaws and Consensus Decision Making Committee: At our last meeting we decided to look at our bylaws and maybe change our decision-making method to consensus, along with some consensus training. Since we don't usually have a July meeting, we thought this would be a great time for people to volunteer for a committee to work on this. If interested, contact Vickie.

Peace Camp. Below is a pre-registration form for Peace Camp June 14-18. Only 15 positions are being held for WILPF member's children/grandchildren so be sure to get your forms in ASAP. Committee volunteers are greatly needed.

Camper Pre-Registration for Peace Camp 2004

(Please Print)

Child's Name _____

Age _____ M _____ F _____ Ethnicity _____

Parent's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

We would like to apply for financial assistance: Yes _____ No _____

Pre-Registration is due by May 15

Mail to:

WILPF PEACE CAMP 2004

P. O. Box 5114 • Fresno, CA 93755

For questions, contact Vickie Fouts at vmfout1@sti.net or 658-8260.

CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

PEACE HEADQUARTERS, FRESNO: We are not yet completely installed, but we are at home in the new Center at 1584 N. Van Ness. Thanks to all who made the move possible: those who supplied muscle and vehicles; those who donated and located furnishings (especially the Eacocks); those who have pledged to “the lease fund”; and those who made extra gifts to cover the expenses of relocation; thanks to Michael Parola who designed our new sign; thanks to Bill Bonaker who built custom bookcases; thanks to our Moving Committee (guided by Angela and Gerry), who planned and coordinated the transition. Job well done! If you haven’t come yet to see our new digs, please drop by. Open hours are Monday–Friday, 11 AM–3 PM.

THE PAIRS PROJECT: We are now accepting applications for the Pairs Project, by which dyads will be established across significant boundaries (e.g. religion, ethnicity, political persuasion, sexual orientation.) The object is for the pair to spend six months learning about each other in whatever ways they see fit. (Structured activities will be made available but are optional.) After six months, the pairs will be interviewed for written and/or video documentation of the experience. Explanatory material and registration forms are available at the Center, can be found at our Web site linked to the Pairs Project, or can be requested by calling Richard at the Center, (559) 237–3223, or at (559) 266–2559.

VOLUNTEER “OPPORTUNITIES”: We still need people willing to take a weekly (or bi-weekly . . . or monthly) shift during our open hours. We hope to have two people assigned to each shift, for companionship and back-up for those already staffing the Monday–Friday slots; but we have yet to find any volunteers for the Saturday 10–noon slot we had announced (and which is therefore not being implemented). We also seek people willing to be “on call” for emergencies. If interested leave your name and number at the Center.

PEACE CHALLENGE RECOGNITION: The City’s Human Relations Commission will host a reception on Thursday, May 13, for participants in our 2004 Peace Chal-

lenge for Youth. Three groups received grants this year: The U Street Clean-up Project, led by Rev. Henry Oputa; a “sister school project” involving Ann McGowan’s fourth-grade class at Mountain View Elementary in Clovis and an elementary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and a Neighborhood Paint & Plant Tire Clean-up Project at the Discovery Center, directed by Theresa Kieman. The youngsters will be recognized for their participation, and may be awarded bonus money for successful accomplishment. The public is invited for the ceremonies and refreshments, 5–6 PM in the lobby of Fresno City Hall.

If you know of any youth groups that might benefit from participating next year . . . or for that matter if you’d like to help recruit and “liaise with” participant groups . . . please leave word for Richard at the Center.

Action of the Month: For more than 35 years, since the famous Richard Nixon “southern strategy” in 1968, whether by language, actions, or positions taken, racism has been a conscious and deliberate part of presidential election campaigns, as well as local and state campaigns. **2004 Racism Watch** is an effort to get organized and prepared for similar developments this year. 2004 can be the year that we make visible an explicitly multicultural network of activists who understand the obligation to confront racism whenever and wherever we find it. We can put those who use racism for divisive and destructive ends on the defensive and help to get better candidates elected. Learn more at <www.racismwatch.org>.

Fresno Center for Nonviolence
1584 N Van Ness • Fresno, CA 93728
Ph. (559) 237-3223 • fcnv2@juno.com
<http://www.fresnoalliance.com/centerfornonviolence>

THE WELCH REPORT

April 10, 2004
Jack H. Welch, M.D.



Back in the 1960s it was my pleasure to have been part of a golf foursome, made up of another internist (incidentally, an excellent golfer), a psychiatrist, a nonmedical friend of his, and myself. We had many spirited discussions as we played, sometimes on the topic of medicine and medical care, including the question whether access to medical care is a privilege or a right. I recall our strong feeling then that medical care should be a right for all people in the United States, not just a privilege for those who could afford it.

HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

Health care is emerging as a hot-button issue in the 2004 presidential election. In an extensive ABC News/Washington Post poll, Americans by a 2-1 margin prefer a universal health insurance program over the current employer-based system. (I personally support a single-payer health care system, like Canada’s plan, providing universal coverage.)

Health care is rapidly growing more expensive; currently, national health care spending, as a percentage of gross domestic product, is approximately 15 percent. While part of this increase in costs is due to better technology and better treatment, as reflected by increasing longevity and quality of life, there are alarming inequities in our system.

The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not guarantee access to medical care to its citizens. More than 43 million Americans have no health care coverage. More than 18,000 Americans die prematurely every year because they cannot afford private health care insurance—they lack preventive services, a timely diagnosis, or appropriate care.

Few Americans have sufficient health insurance to cover the costs of serious illness or hospitalization. Although the US spends more than \$5000 on health care per

person, and although it is ranked the best in the world in treating disease, it ranks thirty-seventh in the world for health outcomes, with relatively high rates of infant mortality and uneven life expectancy rates among different population groups. Now in a bold attempt to privatize Medicare, the oldest and only national health care insurance program for seniors, the current administration’s plans to reform this program under the guise of saving money threaten to erode the health care safety net for seniors.

THE MEDICARE ACT OF 2003

In December 2003 President Bush signed into law the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003, which includes sweeping changes in the Medicare program. It will provide Medicare beneficiaries with limited assistance in paying for prescription drugs. The legislation extends some programs while beginning others. However, the Medicare Act of 2003 also includes major restructuring of the traditional Medicare program, relying heavily on private insurance for the delivery of benefits; also it increases beneficiary cost-sharing responsibilities.

The Medicare Act of 2003 does not include the prescription drug benefit within the Medicare program itself, but requires people who choose the voluntary drug benefit to select and enroll in a private plan to obtain prescription drug coverage. Prescription drug costs are the fastest growing component of health care spending; the cost of medications has more than doubled over the last decade. Big drug companies spend about 11% of revenue on research and development, and more than three times that much (34%) on marketing, and they do not acknowledge that generic drugs are equally effective and are much less expensive.

We can do health care advocacy by calling or writing our legislators; and voting, of course, is critically important.

(Source: Justice and Witness, United Church of Christ, April-June 2004)

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CHAANGE Our World

California HIV/AIDS Advocacy Network Grassroots Evolution (CHAANGE) for the San Joaquin Valley has come a long way in the last few months. With our successful Advocacy Day Dinner at Fresno City College on April 1, 2004, community members felt comfortable about expressing their anguish about the HIV epidemic; they feel they don't have to fight this battle alone. CHAANGE has provided a venue where people infected and affected can come together to provide support for each other and unite in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Central Valley.

Our Dinner and Advocacy Day Training on April 16 leads up to the big event, Advocacy Day on April 19, 2004, where we go to Sacramento to meet our representatives! The community, organizations, and clients all participate in an all-day event: a press-conference lunch, education, and meetings with our State leaders. Our purpose for being there is to oppose the proposed enrollment caps on the ADAP (AIDS Drug Assistance Program), which provides life-saving HIV/AIDS medication to the working-class poor. We also seek to stop the projected education and prevention cuts amounting to \$3-4 million. For every \$1 million not spent for education and prevention, we will spend \$2.7 million in treating a preventable disease!

CHAANGE is in the process of creating new programs and events for the community. We are developing a drug and alcohol education group, an upcoming news letter, education and prevention through media, and continued advocacy training for clients, community, and organi-

zations. We invite all to come see us and share your ideas at our new location: 1584 N Van Ness, across from the Fresno City College. We are privileged enough to have office space with the Center for Non-violence.

For further information or to join CHAANGE, please contact Gary Dennis at our new phone number (559) 268-1969 or at gary.dennis@CHAANGE.org. You can even visit us on the web at www.chaange.org.

Boycott Taco Bell

<http://www.ciw-online.org/>



POETRY CORNER

I hope it's not considered favoritism to select a poem by a fellow editorial board member. Diane Scott is the writer in question, and what follows is one of several quality poems she submitted. It seems to me like a small time capsule, preserving the recollection of an era, pre-9/11, that held, if anything, a greater sense of disaster in the offing.

June 30, 1946, BIKINI ATOLL

*"And I stood upon the sand of the sea
and saw a beast rise up out of the sea . . ."*
Revelation 13:1

I went to war Sunday afternoons at the Sooner Theater.
Veronica Lake died on Luzon at the hands
of the ravening Japs. Van Johnson
captained a bomb run over the Home Islands
in his B-25. Tokyo burned in black and white.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki vaporized
in silent mushrooms with dubbed-in sounds of
"Nothing can stop the Army Air Corps."

Now that the world was saved for Democracy,
bored generals aspired to blow up the ocean.

Radio WKY, Oklahoma City, quoted Nostradamus;
ministers preached Revelation; scientists predicted
Earth-ending submarine shock waves with
hell hatching from coral-ringed
radiation-laced waters.

On the last day of the world, Mama
went to the laundry, Daddy practiced
his swing on the golf course,
and I sat on the living room sofa, holding my little sister close in my arms,
listened to the live radio broadcast
and waited for doomsday.

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- 5/02 • "Every War Has Two Losers" by Rev. Bryan Jessup
- 5/09 • "Motherhood and the Holy Grail" by Rev. Bryan Jessup
- 5/16 • "AIDS Is Still With Us" by Rev. Bryan Jessup
- 5/23 • (Intergenerational) Aubree Smith, coordinating
- 5/30 • "The World of Fear: The Spirit of Diversity" by Rev. Diana Bohn

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www.caljustice.org

California Latino Civil Rights Network
2115 Kern Street, Suite 103
Fresno, CA 93721
Ph. (559) 498-7000
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Grassroots Evolution
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<http://www.chaange.org/>

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(559) 241-6563 (Fax)
Email:
http://www.lif.org

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http://fresno.ca.lwvnet.org/

League of Mexican American Women
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Fresno, CA 93712-0686

The Living Room
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Fresno Chapter
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Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
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**Need a bullhorn for
your next event?
The Community Alliance has
one available - just call
978-4502
to make arrangements
to use it.**

May Take-Action Report

By Vickie Fouts

Making Cosmetics Safer for Californians: AB 2025, authored by Assemblywoman Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park) and sponsored by the National Environmental Trust, the Breast Cancer Fund and Breast Cancer Action, requires full ingredient disclosure for personal care products and removes carcinogens and reproductive toxicants from cosmetics unless a safe-use determination can be made. Urgent action is needed. Send letters of support in today! Letters can be faxed at (415) 863-1356 to Nick Guroff with the National Environmental Trust. Call (415) 863-8934 ext. 109, or e-mail nickguroff@earthlink.net for more information.

Demand Straight Answers about Iraq: President Bush's press conference on April 13 continued the long series of evasions, misstatements, and distortions that have characterized the president's mishandling of the war in Iraq. The president spoke directly to the American people, but said nothing. After more than a year of steady violence, America deserves honest answers to legitimate questions regarding the handling of the situation in Iraq, how the administration intends to turn power over to the Iraqis, and why we invaded in the first place. Send him an e-mail from www.clw.org.

Take Our Money Back from the HMOs: Tell Congress to take back the \$46 billion dollars of taxpayers' money that was secretly promised to HMOs and use it instead to strengthen Medicare and bring down the price of prescriptions. Send Congress members an e-mail from www.ourfuture.org.

Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act: S486 would close loopholes in federal law by requiring group health plans to stop using arbitrary limits on mental health parity benefits, which are different from those used with medical and surgical benefits. Senate leaders have reneged on their commitment and are blocking the bill from a vote on the floor of the Senate. Tell our representatives to honor the promises made last year. Send a letter to our senators at www.workingforchange.com/activism/.

Keeping Youth Safe

By Richard Stone

A video conference, "Keeping Youth Safe," will be held on June 3 at the Fresno Convention Center from 9 AM until noon. Organized by i.e. communications of San Francisco, the conference will feature remarks by Governor Schwarzenegger and Bill Lockyer, as well as brief addresses by politicians, social service officials, academics, and grass-roots organizers about the importance of funding violence-prevention programs for youth.

After the live video segment, to be seen statewide, each locality will have its own mini-conference highlighting the issues it has deemed most important. The Fresno planning group decided to focus on two areas:

- (1) The need to redirect funds from the "after-school initiative" back to high schools. (The appropriations shifted from violence prevention to academic enhancement for elementary schools due to the pressures of mandatory testing.)
- (2) The need for programs that connect youth with productive activities in the community, especially, but not exclusively, jobs.

As a participant in the planning meeting, I acquiesced to the goals established for the conference. However I felt impelled to declare (again) that the "lack of funding" issue cannot be truthfully addressed without taking on the issue of a national budget in which more than 50% of discretionary spending is for the military; and that a discussion of "violence reduction" is peripheral without challenging the national ethos of "my ends justify my means." Two years ago at a similar meeting my remarks were completely ignored. This year two people seconded them. I guess that's progress.

For information about the conference, go to www.preventviolence.org.

A march honoring the life of labor leader Cesar Chavez was held in Fresno on March 27, 2004. Participants marched to demand justice for the farmworkers who harvest our crops.

