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Fault Lines

NEWSPAPER OF THE SF BAY AREA INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

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Free

OAKLAND'S SCHOOLS IN TROUBLE: what must be done?

BY BEN DITCH

February 16 was the date of the first community meeting of what has been tentatively named "Higher Expectations for Oakland's Public Schools". If you haven't been keeping up with current events in the East Bay, Oakland's schools are in a state of crisis. State-imposed Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) administrator Randolph Ward wants to close 13 schools in the city's poorest neighborhoods. Eight of these schools, under rules of the No Child Left Behind Act, are slated to be reopened as charter schools, which in many cases are nothing more than quasi-private schools that screen students and are often largely segregated.

"Our elders fought very hard for the right to vote, for the right to be heard, in Oakland and a lot of other cities around the country, so we don't take it lightly when someone takes away our representation," said local school board member Greg Hodge as he addressed the crowd of parents, teachers, labor organizers and concerned citizens who had gathered at Cox elementary school on a dreary Wednesday evening to discuss what action should be taken to stop these state-imposed shut-downs. Many parents feel like their voices are being ignored due to the placement of a state-imposed administrator as the head of the OUSD who cannot be voted out. Now that he is making decisions that are going to displace children and their teachers, these parents are getting angry.

As it stands now, Higher Expectations for Oakland's Public Schools has four objectives. People who attended the meeting were encouraged to add to this agenda and even the organization's name was put before the public for approval. Some thought that a more hard-hitting name was needed such as Save Oakland's Schools, but the main question of the night was how to make the following demands a reality:

1) Genuine democratic control of Oakland schools, by means of restoring full control back to the elected school board and making sure that teachers, parents, staff and students are fully empowered to make decisions that affect the course of their schools.

TASERS, BEATINGS, & SYSTEMIC ABUSE an inside look at SAN JOSE POLICE BRUTALITY

BY PETER MAIDEN

Law enforcement in San Jose is taking heat for putting its citizens at serious risk. Between 1990 and 2000 San Jose had a higher ratio of killings by police to the overall homicide rate than any other of the largest 50 U.S. cities. In the wake of the killing of a young woman, shot for waving a vegetable peeler in her kitchen, tasers were brought into use by the San Jose Police Department, theoretically in order to lower the rate of use of deadly force.

A report soon to be issued by the Coalition for Justice and Accountability says that since tasers were introduced, the rate of killings by the SJP, instead of decreasing, showed a dramatic increase. Additionally, from April until September of last year, tasers—which are potentially lethal—were used 90 times. Tasers were used on mentally ill people in situations that then escalated, ending up in two deaths at the hands of police.

In addition, an undercover agent, Michael Walker, is now on trial for the killing of Rudy Cardenas, who was unarmed when Walker shot him in the back in downtown San Jose a year ago.

The San Jose Main Jail, meanwhile, which houses 4,000 inmates, is a murky world of violence and abuse. For a glimpse at what goes on behind the locked

doors of the Main Jail, *Fault Lines* acquired interviews with a former staff member, Nancy Rutherford, and a former inmate, Martín Rodriguez.

Nancy Rutherford has been a licensed vocational nurse for 38 years. She worked for two months at the San Jose Main Jail where she said there is a "wall of silence." Her job was dispensing medications to two to three hundred inmates every shift. "They give a lot of psychiatric medication," she said. "My take on it is that they're chemically controlling a lot of people. Years ago they had rehab; now they're more controlled, I think, by the psychiatric drugs. These drugs have a lot of side effects. They have to be monitored well and I question sometimes if they're being

monitored properly."

She said psychiatric clients who are arrested face a "terrible experience."

"From what I heard the police and corrections officers are pretty brutal when suspects are booked and received in the jail. These people, imagine, they come off the streets, maybe they drank on top of their other meds, and they don't know which end is up. Then if you're kind of brutalized and shoved around or whatever, it's a pretty bad experience."

"I think there could be a better way. Some of the corrections officers can be very condescending, abusive, isolating these people, putting them in solitary confinement; some of it to me is going overboard. You might almost get them into a partial psychotic state, being alone and treated like this."

Rutherford told of helping one inmate when things went wrong: "One of my colleagues told me there was an inmate who needed attention. She said 'Boy! They really hit him in the eye!'" Rutherford went to the inmate's cell with ice, where she ran into some corrections officers. She was angry and she asked to "see the inmate that was assaulted?" "What do you mean assaulted?!" an officer said. She went in.

See San Jose: Continued on page 3...



photo: Peter Maiden

Martín Rodriguez (right) alleges that he was abused in the San Jose Main Jail

2) Provide necessary building blocks for quality education including smaller class sizes, salaries and benefits that will retain quality teachers and staff, and measuring student progress through authentic, ongoing measurements and not simply test scores, which are deemed the sole important factor under the illnamed No Child Left Behind Act.

3) Fully funded public education in California by maintaining Prop 98, the minimum school funding guarantee approved by California voters and opposed by Governor Schwarzenegger and Senator

Parata taxing corporate wealth, raising taxes on California's wealthy, and cutting California's prison budget by incarcerating fewer people.

4) Keep Oakland's schools unified. Many who attended the meeting expressed their opinion that the only way to achieve these demands is through direct action. In the February 2 *Bay View*, Kali Akuno, who spoke at the Cox elementary meeting, wrote: "The only way the occupation of OUSD can be stopped and overturned is through the concerted direct action of a strategic alliance between the unions, stu-

dents, parents and community to totally disrupt the operation of the district and bring all business pertaining to its standard conduct to an absolute halt". He goes on to say that "the necessary direct action tactics are student walkouts, staff work stoppages, school takeovers by the community and an OUSD general strike".

Although these proposed tactics were discussed at the community meeting, a solid plan for direct action has yet to be agreed upon.

See Oakland: Continued on page 4...



**FROM THE POOR NEWS NETWORK:
HONORING OUR COVENANT
OF COMPASSION** PAGE 10

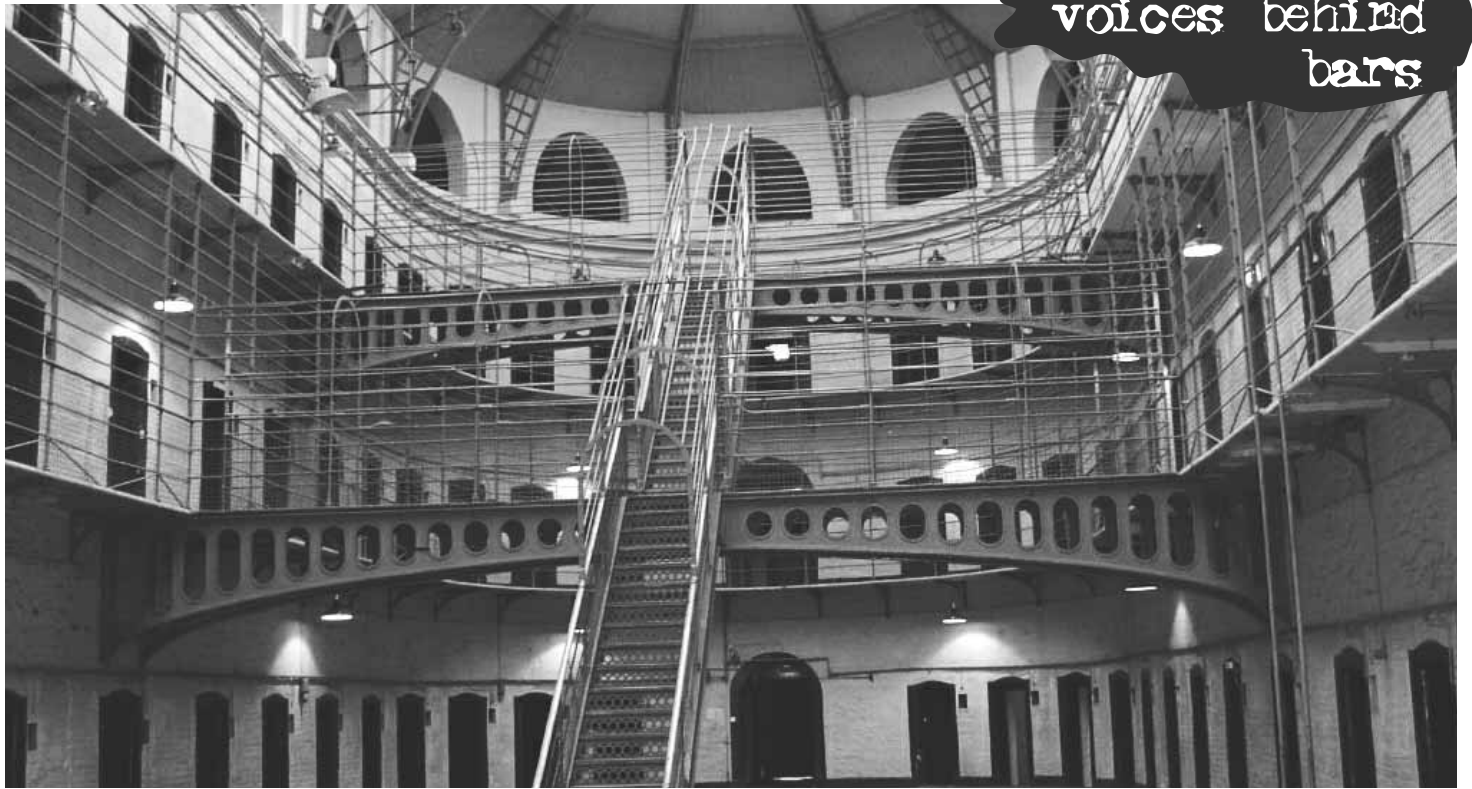
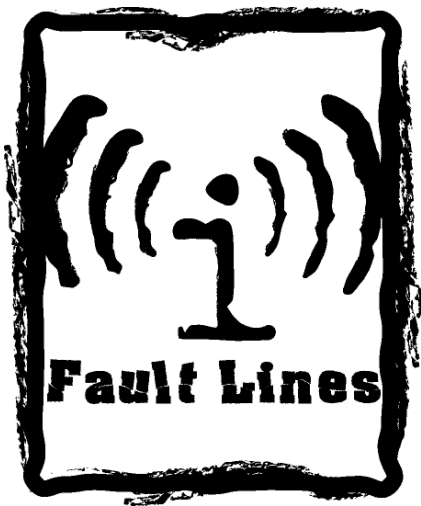
**CITIES, FIRE, DEATH, & SILENCE:
ICONS OF THE WAR ON TERROR**

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About Indybay

The San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center is a non-commercial, democratic collective of Bay Area independent media makers and media outlets, and serves as the local organizing unit of the global Indymedia network.

**Fault Lines
Mission Statement**

Fault Lines, the newspaper of the San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center, aims to give all communities the opportunity to actively participate in a collective process of media production and distribution. By operating with transparency, this newspaper hopes to achieve the goal of allowing the public, not corporate conglomerations, to set the agenda for news coverage. Our mission is to train and empower marginalized voices. This publication was created to be used as a tool for radical change in our communities by exposing the stories and raising the issues that the media plutocracy seeks to suppress. We are the people, we are the media and we are dissenting from the ground up.

Get Involved

The IMC has an open door. You can write for Fault Lines, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print working group reserves the right to edit articles and letters for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

Fault Lines Volunteers

Kerul Trogan, Liam O'Donoghue, Ali Tonak, Kelah Bott, jankyHellface, Jamie Hurlbut, David Morse, Sakura Saunders, Gabriela Reardon, Carwil James, Christian Roselund, Bradley Allen, Kimber Hall, Devin Ross, Lisa Turner, Adyam Gutierrez, Tim Simons, Ben Ditch

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We'd also like to thank everyone who has donated to Fault Lines, those who have subscribed, and the organizations and small businesses that have advertised within these pages. Your support helps make this happen.

I am a living piece of property: I am a prisoner in the custody of the Arizona Department of Corrections. I am a teeny-weeny ingredient in an ever-expanding pie whose pastry contains ground human fodder. I am a meal for multitudinous parasites who are profiteering from my slow motion torture.

Don't misunderstand me: A healthy society needs law and order personnel to function properly. However, a closer examination of the reasons causing America to have the highest incarceration rate in the world reveals a shocking story.

First, the 13th amendment abolished slavery except for convicted prisoners. Writing in the New York Globe in 1883, an editor and leading African-American journalist wrote "...the penitentiary system of the South, with its famous chain-gang...the object being to...furnish victims for contractors, who purchase the labor of these wretches from the state for a song."

Nowadays, this loophole is being exploited not only to provide a slave labor force working for free or for pittance, but also to transfer billions of dollars of tax revenue to profiteers operating under the guise of law and order and the pretend shibboleth of being tough on crime. Yet crime continues to flourish because the underlying causes remain unaddressed and the prisons-colleges of crime- do not rehabilitate inmates as proven by the high rates of recidivism. Prisons weave young men into criminal patchworks where violence and intravenous drug use are esteemed by their peers. Prisoners graduate with Bachelors of Arts in committing felonies and some with the honors of Hepatitis C.

The profiteers lobby for the status quo; to feed their insatiable appetites for value accretion the legislators have introduced a plethora of new laws and stiffer penalties in order to widen the dragnet that traps victims as it trawls through society.

The prison-industrial complex and the legal profession are two of the main cancer-causing organisms. There are now over one million legal vampires in the US- a modern

day gold rush- and applicants for law examinations are at record levels. US citizens mock the Mexican police for accepting \$20 bribes, yet the cost of a defense in America may cost a person's entire life savings, and then some- the remainder being billed to the taxpayers.

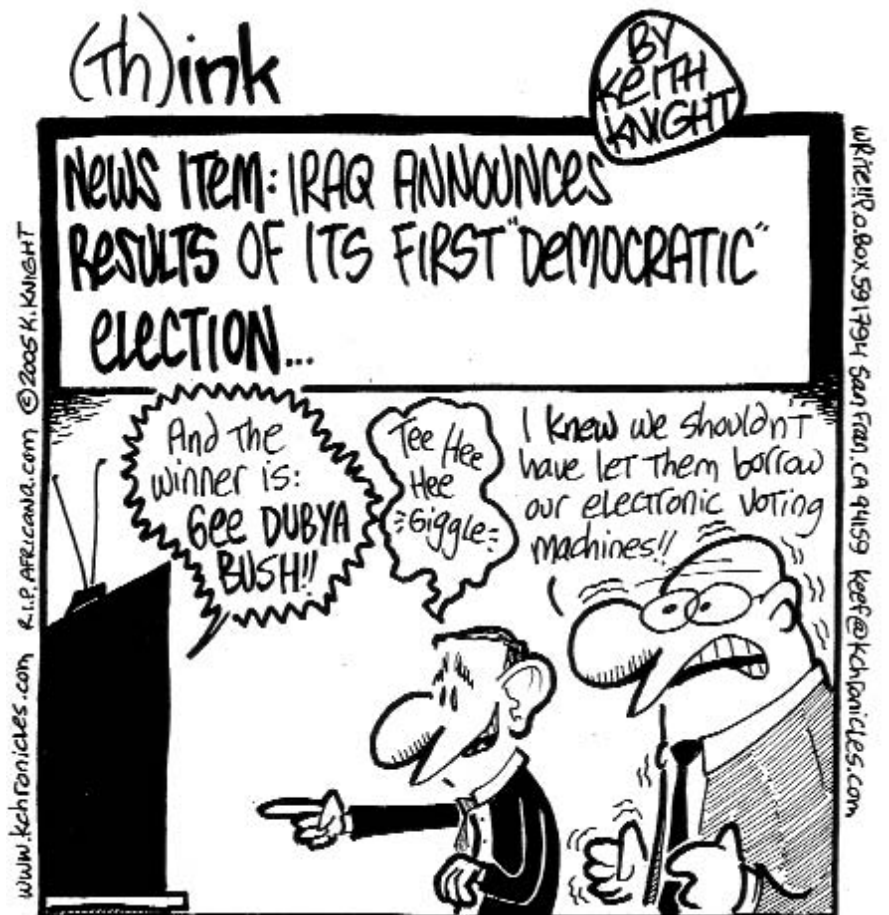
For the current growth rates to be maintained, soon, everyone is going to have a family member or friend gobbled up by the system- a system supposedly operating for the benefit of the people.

Edmund Burke wrote that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing". It is time to stop this disease from spreading. It is time to stop the mighty profits for few occurring at the expense of a seven digit prison population. It is time for the public to reign over their leaders. If the oppression is not stopped now the vestigial democracy will

be swallowed by totalitarianism. In order to educate the public, expose what is occurring, and to rally the troops, I have authored a weblog. I never imagined that it would be widely read, but interest in it has snowballed and it has made the news around the world. People can read the blog and post comments at: www.jonsjailjournal.blogspot.com

The public, who is footing the bill for the existing pyramid scheme, needs to put sufficient pressure on the vote-hungry politicians and legislators to abandon the failing policies and introduce new policies emphasizing prisoner education and rehabilitation; it is the only humane option for an enlightened society. Together we can put a stop to the tyranny.

Jon (nom de plume)
writeinside@hotmail.com



Contribute to Fault Lines

Fault Lines encourages our readers and members of the community to get involved in making media. Our goal is to train and empower marginalized voices to reclaim our lines of communication and speak truth to power. If you want to write an article, review, or news blurb for Fault Lines, please contact the editors at editorial@faultlines.org to begin a collaboration and get our submission guidelines. Submissions of relevant and timely photos and artwork are encouraged as well. Your feedback about what we are (or are not) covering is necessary in creating a news source that truly is a voice of the people. Suggestions regarding our design and readability are also greatly appreciated. In an age when information and news are so tightly managed and con-

trolled by the corporate media, industry and government, a free, independent and alternative press is essential for any hope of creating a just world.

You can reach us at: info@faultlines.org
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Keep the articles in Fault Lines alive by posting your comments at www.indybay.org/FaultLines

Forest Activists Brutally Murdered in Brazil

Two brutal murders in Brazil have sparked investigations into land theft, violence and fraud. Dorothy Stang, a 74-year-old American nun who lived in Brazil and worked to defend the rain forests for decades, was shot to death on February twelfth by several contracted hit men. Dionisio Ribeiro Filho, a 59-year-old Brazilian man known for protecting palm tree groves, was murdered ten days later.

The American nun's death has brought long-simmering tensions to the international media stage, bolstering years-long efforts to preserve nearly 19,900 square miles of Amazon land. Logging has been suspended in many key areas.

The Brazilian government also launched an unprecedented investigation into the murder of Sr. Stang. Police have arrested three men and are investigating a local rancher who allegedly paid \$19,000 for Stang's murder. Reports just hours after Filho's death also indicate that he was assassinated by a hired killer, paid for by local business interests. Now activists connected to Filho have asked for federal protection for their safety.



Funeral procession for murdered nun, Dorothy Stang.

Well-known as a dangerous place for activists working with landless peasants and forest ecosystems, the Amazon and its people continue to face grave threats from loggers, ranchers and soybean farmers.

The 2001 launch of a program called "Avanca Brasil" outlined a \$40 billion budget for new dams, highways, power lines, ports, mines, oil fields and gas con-

cessions. According to Greenpeace International, these massive infrastructure projects could destroy up to a third of the few ecosystems that remain intact, forcing even more small farmers from their land.

The strongest motivations for industrial development are the illegal export of mahogany and other woods, as well as cattle ranching and now soybean farming. These profit-seeking interests have acquired massive swaths of land illegally and with brutal force. The industrial crusade in the Amazon mimics the nineteenth-century razing of forests in the western United States by giant timber and railroad interests.

Land-grabbing has become so prominent in some areas of Brazil that it is no longer clear which land is owned by the state and which land is privately owned. Illicit landowners and corporations continue to use bribery, violence and fraud to ensure that farmers and environmentalists are silenced.

Brazilians even have a name for this conspiracy: grileiro, which comes from the Portuguese word for cricket. The term derives from the common practice of placing fake deeds for land ownership in a drawer with crickets, and waiting for droppings to make the papers appear aged.

SF and Comcast to Restructure Contract

The American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) has rated Comcast for the second year in a row with the lowest satisfaction index of any company or organization—even lower than the IRS.

For the first time in forty years, San Francisco and Comcast will re-negotiate the details of the cable and Internet services provided to city residents. Local activists are organizing to fight for an agreement that will serve the needs of the community.

Their demands include:

- CHEAPER CABLE RATES for seniors and low-income households,
- FREE CABLE & INTERNET access in government offices and nonprofits,
- MONEY for media production in local neighborhoods,
- MORE MONEY for Public, Education, and Government channels,
- FREE WIRELESS Internet access in public spaces,
- STRONG CONSUMER PROTECTIONS regarding rates, privacy, and service, and
- WORKER'S RIGHTS to collective bargaining & prevailing wage standards.

As the largest cable operator and high-speed broadband Internet provider in the country, Comcast can afford to meet San Francisco part-way to help meet the communication and information needs of the community. The company reported 2004 revenues of 20 billion dollars.

For more information:

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<http://www.media-alliance.org>

IMPRISONED YOUTH AWAIT SERVICES



age and suffering from illnesses such as depression and schizophrenia – are routinely locked up while waiting for an opening in mental hospitals or residential facilities. The report also found that of the forty-three California juvenile detention centers surveyed, over half of held children had committed no crime. The *NewStandard News*, an online alternative news site, reports that in the facilities holding youth awaiting proper services, 70% report suicide attempts and another 74% report that these children attack others.

In addition to the obvious danger, the House Committee's report states that this crisis is costing the California Department of Youth Authority some \$10.8 million each year. In the meantime, 2004 legislation has slashed the agency's budget from an annual \$20 million down to just \$350,000. However, in November voters approved a new progressive tax with \$800 million earmarked annually to fund state mental health programs by taxing personal income over \$1 million by 1 percent. It remains to be seen if these funds are used effectively and whether the funds will improve conditions for the jailed mentally ill youth.

On any given day, 250 California youth await mental health services in juvenile detention centers due to a lack of public funding, according to a report commissioned by the U.S. House Committee on Government Reform. The January 2005 report states that the detained children — some as young as eight years of

ITASERS, BEATINGS, AND SYSTEMIC ABUSE

San Jose: *Continued from page 1...*

"There was a young fellow who had a Southern accent. He looked pretty together. He said, 'Ma'am, they hit me, and I was handcuffed,'" Rutherford recalled.

The corrections officers reported Rutherford to their commander. According to Rutherford, the commander told her, "We have to maintain a certain form of discipline here, you don't want the prisoners to hear about dissention among the staff. You really have to watch what you say, because the news media may be around."

Shortly afterwards, it all came together for Rutherford. "I walked out of there, and it was my father's birthday. He's deceased, but I remembered him, he loved the underdog. I thought to myself, 'Hey, I'm out of this.'"

Looking back, she said "Some of the guards seem to have a vendetta, hurting people and being nasty. Some of them have that edge. You can see it. They don't have a lot of compassion."

"Everyone isn't kind in there."

Martín Rodriguez, a citizen of San Jose's East Side, spoke in Spanish about his 115 days in the San Jose Main Jail, the worst ordeal of his life. It began in the early

hours of last July 11, when he was trying to pull his twelve year-old son out of a gang fight. He and the child were arrested.

When he was being booked, police physically attacked Rodriguez. He said the reason they did this was a charge against him of supplying his son with drugs. (Later his son tested clean and this charge was dropped). In his cell Mr. Rodriguez was given painkillers for the injuries the police had caused him. After a couple of weeks they took him off the pills and he had a bad reaction. He could no longer sleep or eat, and he began talking incessantly. He began to hallucinate.

"I lost touch with reality," he said. "I thought I was Cuauhtemoc, whose history I had read, and I thought I was Montezuma."

Rodriguez was taken to the eighth floor of the Main Jail, the location of the mental ward. His family could no longer see him. He continued to refuse food and medicine; he had come to believe he was going to be poisoned. On August 22, he said, he was beaten and tortured.

According to Rodriguez, the following took place: He was pulled out of his padded cell by six guards who immediately attacked him. He was hit on the head and body with

batons. They used all kinds of compliance holds on him, each intended to cause maximum pain. They tore off his clothes with such force he was afraid he would be raped. Then they dragged him to a wooden bed, where he was held down with straps on his wrists and ankles. At least one officer humiliated him by handling his penis. They had shields, which they pressed against his head, forcing it against the wooden bed, until he thought it would burst. He pushed back with his head, fearing that otherwise his neck would snap.

The abuse went on for many minutes. Rodriguez said there were a lot of people around. No one took his side. There was a female dressed in civilian clothes present, whom Rodriguez said laughed at his predicament. Others made jokes, he said, including a gay male nurse. "They break your body and your soul," said Rodriguez.

"Psychologically," he concluded, "I will never be entirely well."

Rodriguez is seeking recourse. His public defenders have not allowed him to plead innocent to the charges against him: possession of methamphetamine and being under the influence. He hopes he can somehow get his own attorney, and also that he can get a

decent psychological evaluation. The Barrio Defense Committee in San Jose has taken up his case, and they can be reached at (408) 885-9785.



Judge Rules "Enemy Combatant" Must be Charged or Set Free

In a ruling that rejects the White House's power to seize and detain American citizens, a South Carolina federal judge ordered the Bush administration to release alleged terrorist Jose Padilla within 45 days or bring charges against him in a state or federal court. The Justice Department immediately announced it would appeal the February 28 decision. Judge Henry F. Floyd of the Fourth US Circuit Court of Appeals upheld most of the contentions of Padilla's lawyers, who charged that his indefinite detention violated the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments, as well as the Non-Detention Act, an act of Congress that explicitly prohibits arbitrary detention of any US citizen on the basis of executive fiat. Padilla, a U.S. citizen, was arrested on May 8, 2002 when he stepped off an airplane at Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

by Patrick Martin, World Socialist Web Site (www.wsws.org)

Pickets Support Unpaid Laborers

On Sunday, February 27, supporters of Manuel and Samuel Hernandez traveled to Fairfield, California to picket the home of Ruben Cruz. Cruz owes the Hernandezes \$12,000 for work that they have done, but has not followed through on commitments that he has made to make partial payments. One of the men needs to return to Mexico to assist his wife, who is very ill. Because the Hernandezes are not the only people who have been affected by this employer, the Day Labor Program (La Raza Centro Legal) led this effort encouraging people to say, "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!" (<http://lrcl.org/daylabor/daylabor.htm>)

Haitian Police Open Fire on Nonviolent March for Democracy



On February 28, the one-year anniversary of the ousting of Haiti's democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide, police opened fire on an unarmed crowd of protesters, killing three and injuring twelve others. U.N. soldiers from Peru and Brazil were present at the peaceful protest. The event marked another of many human rights abuses in Haiti in the past several weeks, including the murder of journalist Abdias Jean of Miami radio station WKAT 1360, who was killed by "security" forces during a police sweep on Friday, January 14. An eyewitness testified that before he was executed, the journalist begged, "Don't kill me, I am a journalist. Why should I be killed like that?"

Honoring Our Covenant of Compassion with Homeless People

BY TINY/POORNEWSNETWORK



"We are here today to hear the truth of homelessness and to remind people that there are homeless people who have died on our streets...we have to find a more compassionate way to solve homelessness and to be compassionate really means to suffer with people and through the identification with people, to relieve their suffering." I watched the warm brown eyes of Reverend Dorsey Blake from the Church of the Fellowship of All Peoples as he prepared to participate in the multi-denominational and truly inspiring Covenant of Compassion ceremony held on Sunday (February 6) in San Francisco's Civic Center Plaza. As he spoke, I clutched a handmade wooden cross, one of 100 crosses created by the ceremony's organizers; Religious Witness with Homeless People covered with the name of a homeless San Franciscan who had passed, unnoticed, uncounted, unnamed and unremembered, until now, on the ice-like streets of San Francisco in 2004.

As a formerly houseless member of POOR Magazine's Po Poets Project, I, too was preparing to participate by spitting spoken words and poverty scholarship with my fellow po' poets Jewnbug and A. Faye Hicks, in a day focused not only on honoring the houseless who have passed but also to hear, recognize and act compassionately on the real story behind the racist, classist, anti-homeless people legislation known as Care Not Cash (CNC) launched as the mayoral platform for Gavin Newsom.

"We live in very violent times when the current (presidential) administration is more outraged at a breast shown at a football game than the systematic abuse and torture of people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay" The day began by hearing from Assemblyman Mark Leno who along with SF supervisors Chris Daly and Bevan Dufty sponsored a legislation that once again forces the City to start counting and naming the City's homeless who died on the streets, a process which used to happen every year but was ended in 2001. Mark continued, "When violence is so glorified, humanity and the value of humans is

debased. We need to put a name and a face on the people that have died on the streets."

SF Supervisor Chris Daly followed him, "It's not just about the fact that people who have died on our streets should not go unmarked and unmourned but its also about analyzing how we're doing as a city and a society on one of our most difficult and confusing issues, homelessness." With his support of this and other issues Chris continues to be one of the few consistently



Religious leaders, Houseless folks and Advocates meet to tell the truth of the racist, classist legislation, Care Not Cash

progressive voices on the Board for economic justice in San Francisco.

"Allaaaahaa Akbaar" After the triumphant news that we had won back the right to recognize the passing of San Francisco's homeless, the diminutive and powerful Sister Bernie, Executive Director of Religious Witness with Homeless People launched the days multi-denominational Solemn Opening of Service which included a Buddhist bell sounding, a Jewish horn, a song about homelessness and a haunting Muslim chant by Souleiman Ghali. As he sung/chanted I was transported to the multiple targets of Bush/Cheney Inc.'s krusades/ kolinization efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran and mused at the similar ways in which the corporate media promoted international abuses and local abuses of marginalized and unheard peoples.

"We come here today because our sisters and brothers with no homes have asked us to listen to them in their time of suffering

despite the rosy picture created by the media" After the solemn service Reverend Jana Drakka described the focus of the covenant of compassion, "Throughout the past eight months that the legislation Care not Cash has been in effect the media has repeatedly reported on its wonderful results and indeed over 628 homeless adults have been placed in rooms. And we rejoice as members of religious witness in that fact as we have been advocating for housing with supportive services for the last 11 years. Sadly, however, the way Care Not Cash has been implemented has resulted in the suffering of many other homeless people- by both the 1000 people targeted by Care Not Cash as well as the over 13,000 San Franciscans not targeted by Care Not Cash. A study released in November conducted by homeless people confirmed what we have been told.

Later, we heard from Bill Hart, the formerly houseless Executive Director of General Assistance Advocacy Project /GAAP. He said, "Before Care Not Cash there were 2,497 homeless people receiving welfare benefits-it's now down to 852-but where did the 1,090 people go? Most of them dropped off the program 'cause it's too hard to jump through all the hoops just to get \$29.00 every two weeks, including a new rigorous form of job search and they don't even give you a bus pass, so people just said forget it I can't do all that."

"We are starting this new year tragically for poor and homeless people. One of the saddest examples of this is when I meet previous-

ly homeless people who are now incarcerated telling me that they are better off in prison (where they are now) in San Quentin- the only thing they lost was their freedom but that was better than how they felt on the streets of San Francisco under Care not Cash living on \$59 a month." With tears of horror in my eyes at Bill's last comment, I wondered if the paupers prisons' my poor Irish Grandmother used to tell me about could be far behind. But of course who needs them, they are already here...

The powerful and tragic day closed with a Dance of compassion, response to the testimonies by Reverend Jane Schlager and Reverend Nobu Hanaoka and closing hymn called The Lord hears the Cry of the Poor.....

For more poverty scholarship, poetry and journalism on issues of poverty and racism by the folks who experience it firsthand go on-line to <http://www.poor-magazine.org>

OAKLAND SCHOOLS continued from front page

However, another meeting will be taking place at First Congregational Church at 2501 Harrison St. by Lake Merritt in Oakland on Tuesday March 8th, starting at 6pm. The stated goal of Higher Expectations for Oakland's Public Schools for this meeting is to get at least 1,000 people to show up and help design a public plan that reflects the true needs of families and students. If enough people are in favor of direct action and can agree upon what form it should take at this meeting, it will become a reality.

Back at Cox Elementary, after an array of public speakers had stirred up the crowd with their fiery words, we were asked to split up into small groups to discuss the coalition's agenda and propose tactics. One Oakland Education Association(OEA) member who was in the group I had been assigned to suggested that sit-ins should target some of the giant corporations that dominate downtown Oakland. Another target for such actions is the port of Oakland, where APL, the fifth largest shipping company in the world is based.

Why should these corporations be profiting in Oakland while the city's schools are in a state of crisis? The sit-ins would demand that downtown corporations help pay off the \$60 million plus school district debt that is owed to the state, thereby restoring local control and democracy to the elected school board. Another demand would be the endorsement of local and state legislation to place higher taxes on corporations to support public education. OEA President Ben Visnick reasons in his letter to Walter Shorenstein of Shorenstein realty investors, "With the vast wealth available to your respective corporations, and the high rate of profitability you maintain, immediately helping to pay off the school district debt would pose little problem for you whilst it would benefit Oakland's students greatly".

Oakland is not a poor city. Its Gross Metropolitan Product of over \$100 billion is the 20th largest in the U.S. and 84th largest in the world. Forbes magazine ranked Oakland the 8th best city for business in the U.S., yet schools are closing,

school libraries are shutting down, custodians laid off, student resources cut back and teacher health benefits capped. What do Oakland's corporations stand to gain from being complacent in the privatization of public education?

Randolph Ward is running Oakland schools like a business instead of a public service, cutting funding to schools that need it the most and forcing shutdowns if test results are not up to par, with no concern for what will happen to teachers, families and students as a result. This is unacceptable and must stop.

Perhaps Greg Hodge summed it up best as he spoke to the angry Oaklanders at Cox elementary way out on 98th St. comparing the troubles we are facing today with the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. "Education in the United States, education in Oakland is a civil right. [I want to see] the same energy, the same passion, the same dignity and the same spirit that went into the marches in Selma and Birmingham."



Cities, Fire, Death, & Silence: ICONS OF THE WAR ON TERROR

BY CARWIL JAMES



Empires, like religions, have their own mythologies and myth makers. People wake up to find that their city has become a symbol, and that symbol is lethal. Deaths and lives are shaped by the dreams of a military-industrial imagination. Here are some of its fragments.

cities

New York is the forgotten capital of the United States (1785-90). While in many countries the largest city serves as the government's headquarters, our country's rulers fled the pressures — sometimes revolutionary — that masses of people on their doorstep could bring. Washington was built as a symbol of aristocratic detachment and missionary idealism: On this unpeopled swamp, the so-called founding fathers proclaimed, we will build a new realm of abstract geometrical precision and Roman-inspired monuments of power. The ruling class fled the masses and settled at the fulcrum between northern commerce and southern slaveholding. Washington was built as a white marble handshake between the powerful.

150 years later, aristocratic Washington became the handmaiden to a military-industrial stepchild housed in the Pentagon (but with franchises across the country). Middle Eastward, empire's course unfurled and Texan oil went global. New York grew into the capital of capitalism, gleaming high above a world-city, its "huddled masses" rooted in every land over which the American sun never sets.

When one marvel of modernism crashed into another on September eleventh, two New Yorks emerged from the smoke. The flesh-and-blood New York was wounded, grieving, searching, and irreversibly aware of itself as human, targeted, and suddenly more like the rest of the world. This realization cut across lines of class, race and power; it pushed tens of thousands to see their own lives from the outside. It shorted their impulses to go back to work, to the mall, to sleep.

Simultaneously, New York the image — widely syndicated, broadcast and exalted by the powerful — became a martyr. Though its devotees still seek vengeance or security, they've also become more American by being less human. After repairs are completed at the crash site, they will glide silently past the Puerto Rican, Pakistani, Haitian and Black enclaves to lay wreaths on the dark polished granite, listen to the flowing water, and curse the beggars' voices wafting in from the street.

the phoenix

When Hiroshima was incinerated in 1945, the scientists whom many would

later call a "nuclear priesthood" spoke not of death, but of their device: "Little Boy." Hugh Gusterson, an ethnographer of America's nuclear scientists, found their language "characterized by its lack of emotion ... fondness for abstraction ... [and] focus on hardware rather than people." Their intellectual stepchildren still write our histories. These warriors by means of memos and mechanical computation, these blacksmiths on the drawing board, these serial killers whose blade is mass-produced obedience — these men dream unreasonable nightmares. As patriarchs of inhumanity have done for centuries, they weave visions of birth they can control — visions that mix blood with fire rather than tender flesh. Where others would mourn, bury or grieve, they stare into the fire and see a phoenix of power amid the ashes.

"When one marvel of modernism crashed into another on September eleventh, two New Yorks emerged from the smoke. The flesh-and-blood New York was wounded, grieving, searching, and irreversibly aware of itself as human, targeted, and suddenly more like the rest of the world. Simultaneously, New York the Image -- widely syndicated, broadcast and exalted by the powerful -- became a martyr."

The ashes smoldered below Ground Zero for nine months. But before the dust had even settled, new dreams of empire — power in its highest, global form — had taken flight. While toxic smoke still swirled over downtown residents, this phrase began to circulate: "The world will never be the same."

The new world that the bureaucrats of control sought to claim from 9/11's fires was an openly proclaimed empire. Their strategy, published in bookstores around the world, promised "a globally preeminent military capability both today and in the future" and threatened "preemptive war." Covered by a flag, the wound of twisted steel, shattered glass and singed flesh could become a cry for war. Once the reality of our human weakness was clothed in fear and patriotism, the quest for global strength could begin.

Guiding this new empire was a new

worldview, proclaimed from the capital further south. Like twenty-first century merchants and slaveholders, Democrats and Republicans, blue and red, shook hands in unity, approving unending war powers 518 to 1, and initiating a PATRIOT police state 455 to 67. In their joint chambers they divided the world into dualities: "with us or against us," "good and evil," — Manichaeans with missile strikes. With their media-gilded face bleeding and diplomacy cast aside, the basest revenge would be called Operation Infinite Justice.

fire

The new war began in fire as well. The paper warriors dream that their ancient enemies rise up to fight for them — automatons of destruction named "Tomahawk missiles" and "Apache" and

war on terror." A half-hour before he died, CIA Officer Johnny "Mike" Spann was interrogating prisoners. His partner, "Dave," assuming the role of "good cop," offered oblique threats: "The problem is, he's got to decide if he wants to live or die here. We're just going to leave him, and he's going to fucking sit in prison the rest of his fucking short life. It's his decision, man. We can only help the guys who want to talk to us. We can only get the Red Cross to help so many guys."

Without the benefit of rights monitors, the captives — Taliban and others — turned to rioting. Their rebellion killed Spann and consumed the fortress-turned-prison of American ally General Rashid Dostum in several days of close combat backed by U.S. helicopters. In the end, the prisoners were forced to retreat to the basement, where diesel fuel was poured and then set on fire.

The eighty-six people who survived to surrender joined Dostum's other prisoners in Shibergahan. From there, as many as 3000 prisoners of war were driven to the wasteland of Dasht-e Leili in cargo containers swollen with heat, exhaustion and suffocation. Once the truck stopped, trenches were opened and American advisers stood by as their Afghan proxies dragged and machine-gunned the prisoners into mass graves. When witnesses began showing up dead, the U.S.-led "international security force" declined to provide protection for a U.N. investigation of the massacre, an operation that guarantees that justice will remain agonizingly finite.

The American arsenal of bombs and cash won the war of Afghanistan — a war that has been won six times, but never ended. Instead, the kaleidoscope of warlords governing this land of 26 million shifted again. An American agent, Hamid Karzai, became President of Afghan councils in Berlin and Mayor of a Euro-American protectorate in Kabul. Rashid Dostum joined other prison princes in command of the various liberated regions: Kunduz, Herat, Kandahar.

While liberation remains missing in action in Afghanistan, the blood price of vengeance has been paid three times over. A shadow of death the size of 9/11 looms, "evening the score" among Afghan civilians, combatants, and prisoners.

See *Cities Continued* on page 9...



photo: Tim Simons

MUNI FARE HIKE

On February 28, the S.F. Metropolitan Transit Agency approved a new budget imposing 25¢ increase in fares on Muni trains and buses, the second increase in two years. At press time, the proposal still awaits the approval of both the government and the people of San Francisco.

Drivers and Riders Unite!



When you hear MUNI Director Michael T. Burns, and the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) screaming about deficits, you'd better watch out! Riders are about to lose services and pay higher fares, while drivers are about to get their wages cut!

BY ELLEN MURRAY

what do you think of the muni fare hike?

Chris Daly, SF Board of Supervisors:

We are facing a real budget crisis with Muni. It's clear that we have to do something, we have to cut services or raise fares. One answer I, as well as other people have been looking into is trying to get more revenues from downtown lines. If you look at the muni map, most lines go to downtown. Some answers we have been working on are raising the parking tax, which is primarily payed by commuters who choose to drive. There's also talk of some kind of assesement of the financial district to help pay for muni and a look into comercial real estate. We should be encouraging public transportation to those who still choose to drive.

Jeremy Nelson, Transportation for a Livable City Studies

show that raising fares and cutting services drives customers away. Those who can afford it will switch to driving and those who can't are forced to pay more for worse service. If you ask most people who live in the city, they will say they want to see less car traffic and congestion in the future. We have to make the tough choices now to have the city we want to see in the future. We should be discouraging driving and making drivers pay more for public transportation. One example is raising parking fees downtown. Right now the public meters cost \$2 per hr to park at. At privately owned garages it costs \$7-10 per hr. These garages know that you can only charge the maximum of what people are willing to pay. The city should be charging more for parking etc, instead of lumping the burden on muni commuters.

Maggie Lynch, SF MTA

We have a budget problem because everyone has a budget problem. People say the deficit is because of mismanagement, but thats not the case. If the vehicle lisenace fee hadn't been cut and if there hadn't been a state of fiscal emergency declared we wouldn't have these problems. We only exist to provide service, we carry 7,000 people every day, more than all the other transit services combined and we're very proud of that. Hopefully we will pass some proposals that will share the burden equally, not only on Muni patrons.

The MTA claims it has a deficit of \$57 million for 2005-2006 and at least a \$9 million deficit to be solved before June 30, 2005. This attack comes from the biggest money in San Francisco through the manipulation of the MTA as MUNI tries to prepare a balanced budget. The bigwigs behind such corporations as Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Shorenstein, the Carlyle Group, Chevron, and Bechtel are organized to wield political power through The Committee on Jobs and other business groupings.

Drivers and riders have been organizing to stop these attacks. This coalition is vital if we are to put the burden for solving MUNI's revenue problems on those who benefit the most from MUNI service: the Downtown Corridor.

Since September of 2004, MUNI management has carried out secret service cuts when it could not implement its planned service cuts to balance the budget. This means that riders wait longer and drivers work harder. The hardest hit are community, cross-town, and weekend services. This is a racist policy because it affects minority communities and the poorest riders who use transit for going to work as well as for personal needs. Management continues to make rush hour service a priority, thus reinforcing the institutional racism of the whole economy.

WHERE DOES THE DEFICIT COME FROM?

In general, the deficit results from capitalism at a stage of international competition over markets and rescues. This is causing shooting wars, trade wars and falling dollars. The ruling elite has responded with attacks on the working class everywhere. They want more for less: less employment, less medical coverage, smaller wages, fewer pensions, fewer services, etc.

On the federal level, some \$400 billion on oil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan limit federal funding for transit while war profiteers like Bechtel, Carlyle, Chevron (and who knows, maybe a subsidiary of Halliburton) occupy prime business locations in downtown San Francisco. Bush's \$400 billion in tax cuts to Corporate America right before the election should not be forgotten.

Locally, the deficit at MUNI comes from the long history of the downtown developers and CEO's using their control of city government to refuse to pay their fair share for a transit system that benefits them. Their profit needs will continue defining the budget UNLESS WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES FOR ACTION!

A LITTLE HISTORY

In 1981 a coalition of labor and neighborhood activists called the "SF Budget Task Force" fought for an annual Transit Assessment on the big business corridor downtown. In his book, *City for Sale*, the Transformation of San Francisco, urban plan-

ner and author Chester Hartman states: "The reasoning behind a special assessment of this type is simple: The increased land values in downtown San Francisco [and] the ability to charge among the highest per-square foot office rents in the nation ... are in large part created by MUNI's ability to assemble a workforce and customers efficiently. Muni in effect provides a massive subsidy for downtown businesses; an assessment district or (annual) fee is the neatest way for recovering that subsidy and requiring downtown businesses to pay their rightful costs."

The end result of this battle was a compromise favoring big business and robbing MUNI of a predictable, stable source of annual funding. This annual fee would have provided \$21 million in 1981 alone to MUNI and would have steadily increased with more development. Instead, the legislation required only new buildings to pay a one time fee of five dollars per square foot as a Transit Impact Development Fee (TIDF) which was well below what MUNI computed as the cost to provide service to the downtown corridor: \$9.82 per square foot (79% of all service). Influence peddling at City Hall and the Planning Commission over the years resulted in many building owners never paying the proper TIDF. As cited in the San Francisco Chronicle on November 4, 2000, one housing expert estimated that MUNI had lost up to \$80 million in "uncollected fees."

The Committee on Jobs outspent the Labor-Rider Community Coalition on Prop O. Had it passed, it would have started the process of setting up a Transit Assessment District. The Committee succeeded in defeating this proposition.

So the failure of big business to pay its fair share since 1981 is the cause of the "budget reality-deficit" today. One corporate VP stated that failure to agree to an Annual Transit Fee is "one of the most outstanding examples of municipal avarice I've ever seen" (SF

Examiner 4/21/81).

A MESSAGE FROM THE DRIVERS

Members of Transport Worker's Union, Local 250-A are involved in one of the biggest battles ever. We are one of the most visible, most scrutinized, and most scapegoated work forces in San Francisco. Strategically, we are one of the most important work forces to the economic health of the city. We are now facing wholesale attacks upon our standard of living, supposedly for the sake of the city, even though many of us cannot afford to live in the city. If the city management has its way, many of us will probably never be able to afford to buy a home anywhere.

The city claims that it is hemorrhaging red ink and that we as workers are the problem. We have constantly done our part in past years with "give-backs." Along with our standard of living, we give back our health and longevity. Driving a bus can injure and kill you. Long hours, schedules that amount to a nightmare where the driver can never get to his/her destination, and faulty equipment result in stress-related high blood pressure and physical injury far beyond that of a normal job.

The struggle we are now facing is one of uniting with our friends. We don't want an antagonistic stance towards the riding public. Service cuts and range pay cuts will hurt both operators and other working people. You, the riding public, are not our enemy.

Our job is to deliver MUNI service in a safe and timely fashion, within the limits set by the schedules and availability of equipment. It is not our job to enforce the fare structure. Management seeks to create artificial differences between riders and drivers, and wants us to squabble over a shrinking budget.

Ellen Murray, 0791 has been a driver for 20 years, presently on the 22 line.



Coalition For Transit Justice held a rally on Monday, January 31st on the steps of San Francisco City Hall to protest the proposed Muni fare hike. The current fare of \$1.25 would be raised to \$1.50, placing more of the burden on the poor working class of this city. Speakers from community organizations and members of the Board of Supervisors spoke out against the fare hike. /Bernie, fxmultimedia@mail.com

YOU can resist the fare increase:

A 2005 "SOCIAL STRIKE" ON SAN FRANCISCO'S MUNI

RIDERS: don't pay fares  DRIVERS: don't collect fares

BY KEVIN KEATING

A MUNI fare hike is an attack on every working person in San Francisco, including MUNI employees; a new fare increase will add to already high stress levels faced on the job by MUNI operators. After the hike takes effect, MUNI management wants to impose more mandatory furlough days. MUNI chief Michael Burns also has plans to fire up to 150 drivers, and take-aways aimed at employees' health coverage and retirement benefits are being planned as well. But large-scale collective action, with MUNI riders and drivers acting together, can stop the fare hike — and derail subsequent schemes by management and their big business backers to attack MUNI workers.

CORPORATE AMERICA IN DOWNTOWN: THE REAL FARE EVADER...

It sounds impressive when Michael Burns announces that MUNI has a \$57.3 million deficit. This figure is presented in a vacuum, divorced from its social context, as if salary increases and petty fare evasion were the cause. The real problem is that mass transit is a jumbo-sized free ride for bosses and billion-dollar corporations. San Francisco's private sector elite refuses to pay for what it squeezes out of MUNI. Running MUNI on the backs of MUNI's working class rider-ship guarantees a permanent fiscal crisis for

MUNI — and an endless series of demands from MUNI bureaucrats for fare hikes, service cuts, and contract concessions from MUNI operators. If MUNI riders go along with a fare hike, it will mean that the fare has gone up 50% in two years. A victory for management in this will open the way for a new round of attacks on MUNI employees.

A permanent fiscal crisis is built into the system. And the erosion of working people's conditions of work and life will go on and on if it isn't stopped by mass resistance. Collective action, on the job, outside of and against the control of the union, is the only way to stop MUNI management's rip-off of riders and drivers. We can all act together against our common enemies, MUNI management, City Hall, and their downtown pals.

WE CAN'T PAY, WE WON'T PAY

In Italy in the 1970's, wage earners and poor people fought back against wildly-inflated prices for goods and services in what became known as the "self-reduction" movement. Whole cities saw a mass refusal to pay increased prices. Bus and streetcar operators in many cities staged on the job wildcat strikes, where they kept transit rolling, but "forgot" to collect any fares. The same has been done in Nantes, France, Hanover, Germany, and Montreal, Quebec. Wildcats of this sort have been called "social strikes;" by avoiding hardship for working people, a social strike creates an immediate bond of solidarity between riders and drivers, often forcing management and politicians to beat a hasty retreat.

A threat of immediate, massive economic damage to the major corporations that own this city will bring attacks on riders and MUNI workers to a screeching halt. In the face of a big action the rich will back down fast.

Let's look at what happened recently in Chicago.

In July 2004, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) announced plans to impose major service cutbacks, beginning at the start of this year. The CTA was also going to jack up fares from \$1.75 to \$2.00, after the fare had just been increased in Jan. 2004 from \$1.50 to \$1.75 (does that sound familiar?) Bureaucrats gave the usual lame excuse — a budget crisis.

A group called Midwest Unrest began to organize a city-wide fare strike, calling on drivers and riders to act together. They said,

"If drivers stopped collecting fares and riders stopped paying them we would have the economic power to pressure the transit agency without disrupting the daily commutes of all of us who depend on transit service.

"...we started to flyer the eight bus garages in town, and talk to workers more about a fare strike...the drivers were all pretty pissed and stressed out. They had plenty to tell us about CTA management as well as their union reps...many workers were now telling us we should help them fight the CTA and the union (ATU local 241) at the same time because the union was a part of the company. Of the hundreds of CTA employees we have talked to at bus garages in the past six months, not one of them had anything but contempt for the union. When we brought up the idea for a fare strike, the response was usually quite positive..."

(*"Fight or Walk: the Chicago Transit Fare Strike,"* at www.midwestunrest.net/farestrike)

On Dec. 15th, the day the fare strike was to begin, the Chicago Sun-Times reported that a deal had been struck with state legislators, and that any further decisions affecting service cuts and fare hikes would be delayed for six months.

The simple threat of a fare strike appears to have played a role in making politicians back off. This is a precedent for San Francisco as well.

Recently in Italy, a fare strike has been staged against the rail company Trenitalia:

"In Bologna, engineers and conductors have grasped the link between the fare strike and the ongoing labor disputes of the railway workers, speaking about it in assemblies and distributing the flyer..."

"This society runs on two tracks: one for the rich and one for the poor. While the trains are not adequate for commuters, stops are discontinued and discomfort increases...they would like to reduce us to nothing more than voters and consumers, but a great force is in our hands. It is up to us to use it.

"The fare strike is spreading to various cities. Let's all participate...the more widespread the strike, the more reasonable the managers will be about the demands and labor disputes of the workers."

(*from a leaflet distributed by participants in the fare strike, senzabiglietto@libero.it*)

conservatives have struck pay dirt by characterizing progressive revenue raising measures as "taxes" while regressive payments are described as "fees" or, in the case of public transit, "fare hikes."

by Randy Shaw

But Republicans in Virginia got the idea in the 1990's to recast their own vehicle license fee as a "car tax." This idea swept to California, where Gray Davis cost the state billions by drastically reducing what Republicans—and nearly all of the state's media—now exclusively referred to as the "car tax."

Davis' agreement to reinstate the higher vehicular fee schedule was a major factor in his recall, and incoming Governor Schwarzenegger cost the state \$4 billion in his first week on the job by rolling back the higher fee. The biggest winners from the rollback were luxury car owners; the losers, to the tune of at least \$1.6 billion annually, are the children who attend the state's public schools.

I hope San Francisco's Municipal Transit Authority and our Board of Supervisors remember who benefited and who lost from the repeal of the vehicular license fee increase. I hope they also recall that thousands of San Franciscans earning \$200,000 or more enthusiastically backed John Kerry even though his victory would have raised their taxes, and that these taxpayers have already saved tens of thou-

MUNI FARE HIKE

LOOK THE OTHER WAY WHEN PEOPLE DON'T PAY

Our time on MUNI is part of the time that we are forced to sell to our exploiters. Paying to ride on mass transit is like having a parking meter mounted on the inside of a jail cell. The rich scum who own this city should be paying for MUNI and its problems, not MUNI riders and employees. In the event of a widespread fare strike, city bureaucrats will have no choice but to keep MUNI running; the rich cannot conduct business in San Francisco if their employees don't have a transit system to get them to and from work and shopping.

There is a lot of potentially explosive anger in San Francisco over the threat of fare hikes, elimination of transfers and massive service cuts. If riders engage in a mass refusal to pay, and drivers engage in a mass refusal to collect, the only ones who will be hurt will be the rich exploiters and politicians who make things rough for all of us. Bosses and politicians' power to mess up our lives is limited by our willingness to go along with their schemes. MUNI operators have all the power in this situation. If they take mass action against the fare hike, characters like Michael Burns will have to think twice before trying to impose layoffs, furloughs, and cuts in MUNI workers' retirement and health benefits.

Today the capitalist system is out to make all of us work harder for less pay — then work harder still for even less pay, and on and on until we'll all be sleeping on soggy cardboard mats in doorways somewhere. Life under the dictatorship of the market means an unending downward spiral for working people — until we make a conscious choice to stop playing the game and act around what we need. The rich want us to pay for the problems of their system. Let's return the favor. It's not our system — it's not our problem.

Contact Refuse to Pay at: angryworkers@yahoo.com



stop the Tenant Tax

While Muni and the media refer to the proposed \$109 increase in fast passes as a "fare hike," it is actually a tax on tenants. Tenants, many of them low-income, make up at least 75% of Muni riders, and over 95% of them are unable to purchase homes in San Francisco. We know why Bush and Schwarzenegger support regressive taxation, but San Francisco is supposed to be charting a more progressive course. Here's how the tenant tax can be stopped.

Conservatives have struck pay dirt by characterizing progressive revenue raising measures as "taxes" while regressive payments are described as "fees" or, in the case of public transit, "fare hikes."

The classic example is the vehicular license fee paid by car owners. The fee has been in effect in California since the 1930's, and was among the state's most progressive taxes in that it is based on the value of the car. Since wealthy people tend to own more expensive cars, they paid a higher vehicular license fee.

But Republicans in Virginia got the idea in the 1990's to recast their own vehicle license fee as a "car tax." This idea swept to California, where Gray Davis cost the state billions by drastically reducing what Republicans—and nearly all of the state's media—now exclusively referred to as the "car tax."

Davis' agreement to reinstate the higher vehicular fee schedule was a major factor in his recall, and incoming Governor Schwarzenegger cost the state \$4 billion in his first week on the job by rolling back the higher fee. The biggest winners from the rollback were luxury car owners; the losers, to the tune of at least \$1.6 billion annually, are the children who attend the state's public schools.

I hope San Francisco's Municipal Transit Authority and our Board of Supervisors remember who benefited and who lost from the repeal of the vehicular license fee increase. I hope they also recall that thousands of San Franciscans earning \$200,000 or more enthusiastically backed John Kerry even though his victory would have raised their taxes, and that these taxpayers have already saved tens of thou-

sands of dollars from Bush tax cuts that they strongly opposed.

The question of who will bear the cost of maintaining Muni service cannot be addressed in isolation. Rather, San Francisco officials need to account for who is profiting and losing from Republican economic policies at the federal and state level, and begin in a very small way to start leveling the playing field.

THE FULL ARTICLE "STOP THE TENANT TAX" was originally published 1/31 on Beyondchron.org. For updates on the MUNI battle visit Beyondchron.org; to get involved, check out local-impact.org.



THE DMCA

FIVE YEAR ROUND UP

And The Future Of Corporate Control



In 1998, congress passed a bill called the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). As is the case with most laws, this one was crafted by a consortium of large corporations for the purpose of protecting their interests. Ostensibly, the law makes circumventing copyright protection schemes illegal. But fundamentally, the story of the DMCA is a story of people vs. power. It's a story about increased corporate control over the choices we make in our lives, a perversion of copyright, and the destruction of fair use.

The Powers

All the big players in the motion picture and recording industries are affiliated with each-other through the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). These two organizations are commonly referred to as Trade Groups, but the words cabal or cartel are probably more accurate. Basically, the big players work together to ensure that they remain big players. Thus far, technology has been the biggest challenge to their continued dominance.

People vs. Power

Currently, technology has the potential to eliminate record companies all together. Peer To Peer networks are about more than music piracy, they're the demonstration of a model where exchange happens in a non-hierarchical and unmediated way. Artists have always had to suffer a relationship with record companies, because those companies control the existing means of production, distribution, and consumption. But technology threatens to eliminate the traditional means of distribution, which threatens the very existence of the recording industry. If artists can produce their own music and sell it directly over the internet, record companies might disappear all together. But when the website mp3.com started to facilitate that exact relationship — the RIAA invoked the DMCA and sued them into the ground. In an excellent example of recuperation, however, the RIAA then partnered with Apple to create a similar distribution network which does not threaten their interests. Apple iTunes users can now download music produced by major record labels via the Apple iTunes Store. Part of the licensing deal, of course, is that individual artists (and most likely smaller labels) are not allowed to distribute music through the iTunes Store.

Information And Control

The DMCA is more than a defensive

strategy; it's the foundation for a calculated expansion over the control of information. The MPAA wants to control the circumstances under which you watch DVDs, the RIAA wants to control the circumstances under which you listen to CDs, and Adobe wants to control the circumstances under which you read eBooks.

One of the very first DMCA controversies erupted over a computer program known as DeCSS. All DVDs are encoded with a very weak form of encryption known as the Content Scrambling System (CSS). Those vendors who wish to build and sell DVD players are required to license this CSS technology from the DVD Copy Control Association (CCA). Users of the Linux operating system were not able to play the DVDs that they owned, because Linux is a free collaborative project not a corporation capable of getting a license from the CCA. Some Linux users examined the CSS encoding, and realized that it wasn't really encryption at all. The decoding algorithm was so simple that they were able to easily reverse engineer it and write a program - known as DeCSS — which allowed them to play DVDs on their Linux computers. Since the CSS algorithm qualifies as a copyright protection scheme, however, the programmers who developed DeCSS were jailed and sued for DMCA violations.

This was a very significant moment. The DeCSS programmers were not sued for violating copyright restrictions, nor were they sued for selling a device which violates copyright restrictions. They were sued for publishing information which allowed them to legitimately use the DVDs that they had bought but which could also potentially be used to violate a copyright. They were jailed and sued for daring to publish this paragraph:

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Be careful, because this newspaper is now illegal. If you hand it to someone, you are violating the DMCA and could be arrested. While the above information will allow you to play a DVD that you paid for, it is a crime even if you intend to use it for only legitimate purposes.

Obviously, there are some larger dynamics at work here. The MPAA is so adamant about protecting CSS because its the foundation for their control over the DVD format. For instance, DVDs are now

showing up with unskippable advertisements. They are unskippable because the license for CSS requires them to be, and to create a DVD player which did skip them would be illegal under the DMCA. DVDs are also showing up with region encodings. The CSS license requires that DVDs which are sold in a given region can only be played on DVD players which were also sold in that region. So the MPAA can fix prices according to what the market will bare in different regions, and customers will not be able to import cheaper DVDs from elsewhere. And this is just the beginning. All indications are that DVDs will eventually become a subscription service, where buying a DVD will mean that you can only watch it a certain number of times before you have to buy it again.

The next big controversy erupted over a program which converts Adobe eBooks into PDF format. A Russian programmer named Dmitry Sklyarov, working for a Russian software company known as Elcomsoft, had examined the eBook format and wrote a simple program which converts them to PDFs. This program would allow people who owned digital eBooks to convert them into a more useable or printable format. This was particularly useful for blind people who wanted to do text-to-speech processing on eBooks.

Adobe, however, did not like the implications of this. They waited until Sklyarov traveled to the United States for a conference, and then had Federal Agents arrest him during a presentation. They had construed the eBook format to be a copyright protection scheme, and claimed that Sklyarov had violated the DMCA by publishing information which could be used to break a copyright. Again, the fundamental issue underlying Adobes concerns is control. They do not want users who purchase eBooks to have complete freedom of use. They want to control the circumstances under which someone reads, distributes, or prints them. Their ability to restrict the movement of information in this way hinges upon the DMCA.

One of the most interesting DMCA violations occurred when Sony announced a new copy-protected CD format. A few days later, the *New York Times* printed a story where they revealed that it was possible to defeat the new copy-protected CDs by drawing a ring around the outside of the CD with a sharpie marker. Everyone held their breath: the *New York Times* had just violated the DMCA! The collective hope was that Sony would sue the *New York*

Times, which would raise awareness to the absurdity of the issue. Sony and the RIAA didnt take the bait, though, and the lawsuit never came.

Copyright Conclusions

Copyright is spelled out in the Constitution as a tool to ...promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries. The idea is that by securing exclusive rights to inventors for a limited time, they will have an incentive to continue producing for public good. This is why copyrights eventually enter the public domain, and why copyright has always allowed for fair use exemptions. Since 1946, however, no significant copyrighted work has entered the public domain. And now the DMCA is destroying fair use as well. Owners of copy-protected compact discs do not have the ability to archive them, import them onto MP3 players, or share them with friends for non-commercial uses. Merely publishing information which could allow owners to engage in fair use is a crime.

The Future Of Corporate Control

While the DMCA was originally framed as a law which would stop copyright piracy, in practice it has been used to stymie a wide range of legitimate activities. This is only the beginning of a vision for a future where information is increasingly regulated and controlled by corporate interests. Under a plan called Trusted Computing, the RIAA/MPAA cabal is teaming up with Microsoft and Intel to produce a system where corporate controls are built into the very operating system and computer hardware. There is nothing you can trust about it, and the plan should more appropriately be named Authoritarian Computing.

The technical basis for the idea is that computers will contain a device with digital encryption and signature keys built into it. Proprietary programs will be able to use these keys in order to control what documents you can access, what you can do with them, what other programs are allowed to run, and how they will interact with the rest of the system. Ostensibly, this is for the purpose of Digital Rights Management where videos or music that you download will only be accessible for a short period of time and can not be shared. While that is bad enough, the authoritarian computing initiative will also apply to all programs and documents, not just music and video. Some documents might only be accessible for a short period of time or only be accessible from the computers in one location or corporation.

Imagine receiving an email from your boss that is a clear case of sexual harassment, or that suggests you do something unethical. Under authoritarian computing, there will be no way to print it or forward it to someone else. What's more, the authoritarian computing plan calls for authorization rules to be updatable via the internet. This does not mean that you will have any control over the rules — the automatic updates will come from corporate and/or government interests. Imagine writing a document on your computer that is unfavorable to a given corporation or government. They could simply update the authorization rules on your computer such that the document ceases to exist.

This is not conspiracy theory speculation. Microsoft has announced the development of its Trusted Computing platform, known as Palladium, and there have already been two bills introduced through congress (SSSCA and CBDT-PA) which would require all computer hardware to support Trusted Computing. Both were defeated, but there will surely be more to come.

Alberto Gonzales is not a Role Model for Latinos

By CARLOS VILLARREAL AND CARLOS MUÑOZ JR., FEB 16, 2005

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, followed the lead of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in endorsing Gonzales. The two organizations rationalized their decision on the basis that Gonzales was a compelling American success story.

They seemed to believe that it was more important to have Gonzales become the first Latino in history to hold the position of attorney general than to oppose torture.

We strongly disagree with these organizations. Gonzales' confirmation is tragic because of his ethnicity. As strong proponents of human and civil rights, we believe he is a poor role model for Latinos and a truly dangerous influence.

Supporters of Gonzales have made much of his humble beginnings. He grew up poor, his parents were migrant farm workers. His success is, in part, the result of hard work and intelligence.

For some, that puts him in the pantheon of Latino role models along with Delores Huerta or Cesar Chavez. But Huerta and Chavez didn't move past their humble beginnings to serve Bushes, Cheneys and Enrons.

Formerly a public school teacher, Huerta became an organizer in the agricultural fields in California and eventually joined Cesar Chavez to co-found the United Farm Workers union (UFW).

Chavez left a well-paying job to co-found the UFW with Huerta and to lead a boycott of California table grapes. He did not parlay his success in leading his union

to victory in the agricultural fields of California into an upwardly mobile career in government.

President Johnson wanted Chavez to serve as his Secretary of Labor. He would have become the first Latino to serve in that capacity, but he turned it down to continue to serve the most oppressed workers in the nation.

Gonzales, on the other hand, has moved beyond his modest beginnings to counsel Bush the governor about imposing the death penalty and to act as a cheerleader for the Bush presidency, which is hostile to human rights and that does the bidding of corporate interests. He may have grown up in poverty but now, as he said to a graduating class at Rice University, he can enjoy "steak dinners or rides on Air Force One or weekends at Camp David."

His supporters have worked hard to explain away the torture memos, but his opinion on the subject of torture may have played some role in the conduct of soldiers

at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay.

Thanks to Freedom of Information Act requests by the American Civil Liberties Union, we are learning about some of the abuses occurring at these detainment camps. Some of the documents describe seeing prisoners left for 18 to 24 hours without food or water, chained hand and foot in the fetal position. Soldiers shocked some prisoners with electricity, put out lit cigarettes in their ears, urinated on them or sodomized them. Remember these inmates have never been convicted of anything.

Some e-mails from the FBI made reference to an executive order, which would mean one that came from Bush, presumably with Gonzales' advice laying the groundwork.

Gonzales hedged his answers to a number of simple questions, including whether water-boarding – a torture technique where the victim is made to believe he will drown – should be banned. We would have preferred our attorney general or any future Supreme Court justice to answer no to this question – and to do so quickly and without hesitation.

Against the odds, Gonzales' confirmation as attorney general took longer than expected, but most politicians and pundits said he would be confirmed. Regardless, this should not make him a role model for the Latino community. For those of us who care about human and civil rights for all people, he is more a villain than a hero.

Carlos Villarreal is executive director of the National Lawyers Guild in the San Francisco Bay Area. Carlos Muñoz Jr. is an award-winning author and professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, and a longtime civil and human rights activist. Reprinted with permission of the authors.

Op-ed continued from page 5

a martyr's silence

New York has become the symbolic capital of the United States, the justification for the new state of war and the excuse for each new U.S.-led atrocity. A department store clerk, asked about the carnage in Iraq, demands to know if the questioner remembers 9/11. A homeland security bureaucrat, looking up the addresses of Muslim and South Asian men, hangs a photo of shattering glass and 95th-story infernos in his office cubicle. A vice-president, who happens to be a Texas oil man, mentions an enemy list of sixty nations before returning to an undisclosed location. An opposition candidate who knows firsthand the sight of flesh exploding before his eyes and in his crosshairs, extends his fingers to his forehead in a salute to a continuing war. A house (overseas, where you aren't looking) collapses every hour.

Few people recognize the name "Dasht-e Leili" in the United States. But across the American continent is Los Angeles, a city where the image rules the way finance governs Manhattan. When frustrated officers leaked the photographs of torture at Abu Ghraib, they interrupted the global etiquette that requires that suffering be visible only when it is the privileged who suffer. In the form of a scandal, the corporate media offered a look behind the mask of the war on terror.

In the day-to-day spotlight, however, only the words of a small few receive attention. From the podium of the loyal Democratic Party opposition in Boston, no one said "torture," "abuse," or "Abu Ghraib." Silence can have a shattering echo.

a city of flesh talks back

President Bush played his part in creating the martyr, New York City, arriving days after 9/11 to be photographed before flags and ruins. One year later and 50 blocks uptown, he began his failed bid for global backing to wage war on Iraq. He had lost his audience. The devastation of Iraq alienated the world. The lies about our safety and deaths of our soldiers alienated much of America. The ill treatment of immigrants, slashing of housing support and education, and wasteful war spending have alienated New York.

For months after the crash downtown, New Yorkers created their own shrine of remembrance in Union Square. Candles, paper, conversations and tears spread out between the public plaza's fenced-in trees. Like a snow-globe toy of an Agent Orange forest in Vietnam, the park was cleared to apply pesticide to the lawns.

The garden of resistance bloomed again in February 2003, defying an Orange Alert

raised against the public outcry to stop the coming war. The New York of flesh-and-blood had siblings across borders and oceans. The new war's poster had lost its child, and old ideas found a new voice. Police charged crowds of hundreds of thousands, attempting to keep them offstage. The request for U.N. approval never came: hated on both shores, the leaders of the invasion of Iraq announced their plan from the Azores Islands in the middle of the Atlantic.

Just a month earlier, the Republican Party inked a deal to host the renomination of Bush in New York City. While intended as a striking intersection of "brave leader" and "martyred city," Bush's party convention proved to be a hall of mirrors. On one side, a showman passed before New York's deeply distorted reflection. On the other, the city of flesh and blood screamed its rejection.

Three years after its clearing, Union Square witnessed New York's largest Critical Mass: 5,000 cyclists reclaiming Manhattan's streets in the opening act of a counter-spectacle by hundreds of thousands. The War Resisters League's funeral procession from Ground Zero never made it to confront the Republican National Convention. But as Bush accepted the nomination on the final night, hundreds coalesced into an unplanned march at the square. The trip across lower Manhattan swelled the march to thousands, delivering a final, massive "NO" to the spectacle at Madison Square Garden.

New York has smashed its own television glass image as a backer of war, isolation and hatred. Which icons of empire are within reach of your rejection, which silences can your voice rise to fill?

Notes:

- Nuclear scientists: Hugh Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites*, 1996. Quoted in Howland held Cox, *The New Nuclear Danger* (revised edition), 2003. Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell, *Hiroshima in America: A Half Century of Denial*, 1996.
- Toxic smoke after 9/11: *Fallout: The Environmental Consequences of the World Trade Center Collapse* by Juan Gonzalez.
- "With us or against us": George W. Bush, November 6th, 2001. (cite:<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.o.n.terror/>)
- War Powers: S.J.Res. 23, passed on September 14, 2001.
- PATRIOT Act: H.R.3162, passed on October 25th, 2001.
- Manichaeans were a religious sect who saw the world as a battlefield between two equal and eternal powers — one good, and the other evil — who conduct endless warfare.
- Black Hawk historical archive: <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/blackhawk/>
- Chowkar Kariz attacked October 23, 2001: Quote from CNN, "Pentagon: Afghan village a 'legitimate target'," November 2, 2001, (<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/central/11/01/ret.afghan.village/index.html>)
- Kama Ado destroyed December 1, 2001: Richard Lloyd Parry, "A Village is Destroyed. And America Says Nothing Happened," *Independent* (London), Tuesday, December 4, 2001. [http://www.commondreams.org/headlines01/1204-](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines01/1204-05.htm)

05.htm

- Mike Spann/Prison Revolt: Luke Harding in Mazar-i-harif, Simon Tisdall in Washington, Nicholas Watt and Richard Norton-Taylor, "Fatal errors that led to massacre," *The Guardian*, December 1, 2001. Threat quotes from Colin Soloway, "Tale of an American Talib," Newsweek Web Exclusive, December 1, 2001.
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- Cheney's enemy list: "There is a terrorist underworld out there spread among more than 60 countries." (Linda D. Kozaryn, "Cheney: Enemies Must Face 'Swift, Certain, Devastating Response'," *American Forces Press Service*, Aug. 26, 2002)
- Suitcases of cash: Jason Burke, "Torture, treachery and spies - covert war in Afghanistan," *Observer*, November 4, 2001. Jason Burke and Ed Vulliamy, "How a suitcase full of dollars finished off the Taliban," *Observer*, November 17, 2002.
- Prison princes: Christian Parenti, "Who Rules Afghanistan?," *The Nation*, November 15, 2004. Human Rights Watch, <http://hrw.org/doc?t=asia&c=afghan>

Documentaries Reveal War's Impacts on Asian Americans

BY
LISA TURNER

The 23rd Annual San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival, which kicks off Thursday, March 10th, serves up a feast of culture and commentary. The festival is hosted by The National Asian American Telecom Association (NAATA). James Stern & Adam Del Deo's *Year of the Yao* and Evans Chan's *Sorceress of the Small Piano* – two captivating documentaries that are sure to sell out – introduce anomalous characters with wide-ranging appeal. Yet another cause for celebration: Alice Wu's *Saving Face*, the festival's first-ever queer film to screen on Opening Night.

But to linger in the "festivity" of this year's program is to overlook some of its best films: the true stories of people touched by wars past and present.



A still from *And Thereafter*

Liam Dalzell's post-9/11 interviews with Sikh cab drivers in *Punjabi Cab*, for example, reveal xenophobia's deadly effects in the Bay Area. Hosup Lee's *And Thereafter*, a wrenching story about a Korean American woman and her veteran husband, fuses last century's warfare with this century's dysfunction.

Other films commemorate the suffering of internment camp prisoners held on American soil during World War II, such as Satsuki Ina's *From a Silk Cocoon*, Casey Peek's *Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story*, and Steven Okazaki's *Days of Waiting*. Okazaki, a Bay Area film luminary who has achieved mainstream acclaim, will also premier *The Mushroom Club*, a film about a support group for people born deformed from the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Among these films, *And Thereafter* will root itself immediately and permanently in your mind. After a series of black-and-white newsreel clips -- bombs being dropped over Korea, a child doing a macabre dance of desperation next to his dead mother -- Lee turns to a present-day tract house with a motionless American flag in the yard. It is the home of 76-year-old Young-Ja Wike, whose husband's post-war psychoses have left him with a frail grasp on reality.

Through Lee's deft scene selection, the viewer gradually understands the creeping psychological rot that has infected this family. The film's calm, deliberate tone belies its violence. Lee, who understands that we assimilate pain better when offered moments of short relief, continually relocates us in Young-Ja's pepper garden -- first in an ultra-close frame of the woman's wrinkled hands turning the earth, and finally in a gorgeous carpet of harvested red peppers covering the walkway. Over the course of the film, Young-Ja reveals to Lee what some mothers never reveal to

anyone. We are left with the sense that the happenstance of this film project, along with the pepper garden, is the only sanctuary that the elderly woman has ever known.

Steven Okazaki (*Survivors* [1982], *Days of Waiting* [1991], *Black Tar Heroin: The Dark Side of the Street*

Filmmaker Steven Okazaki Calls His Own Shots

Tell us about your documentary, *Survivors*.

... I happened to pick up a newspaper with a story about a Hiroshima survivors group that was meeting in San Francisco. I sat in on the meeting and well, I didn't actually decide to do it. They asked me what I thought of the meeting and of the issue ... one of the people in the group just stood up and said, "I think that Steven Okazaki should make a film about us. Let's take a vote."

And they all raised their hands, and then looked at me and said, "Go ahead!" And I was just flirting with the idea, really. And I realized I was committed.

And so I tried to make the film ...

[1999]) presents another of the festival's most pointed messages. *The Mushroom Club* covers a vast amount of emotional ground in 35 minutes, alternating actual footage from after the bombing and interviews with survivors. Like *And Thereafter*, the film's tone is almost meditative; it delves methodically into subject matter that mainstream American media have deemed too controversial or troubling. By illuminating each survivor's day-to-day anguish -- the logical fallout of witnessing so much death -- Okazaki forces us to confront the U.S.'s decision to drop nuclear bombs on two heavily-populated cities.

Witness Toshiko Saiki, an 85-year old woman who collects ceramic buttons that wash up among the river rocks in Hiroshima. Each button bears an insignia identifying the profession of the person who wore it.

"To me they represent the souls of the people they belonged to," she says. "This one is a student studying to become a teacher. This one is a middle school student. This one is a fireman."

The woman's hobby doubles as an act of contrition. "There's one thing I'll always regret," she says, beginning to weep. "After the bombing, I was looking for my family and ignored the people who needed help. We did such shameful things."

Her shame becomes our own. And this is NAATA's greatest gift to its festival audience: films that help us remember the sentiment behind "war as a last resort." By introducing us to our nation's war victims, *And Thereafter* and *The Mushroom Club* offer an antidote to passivity. Presented with this feast of humanity, the viewer can no longer stomach a Wonder Bread diet of disembodied statistics and platitudes like "fighting for freedom." In an era that repurposes World War II analogies to justify American foreign policy, Lee, Okazaki, and other Asian American filmmakers offer survival tools for citizens of a war-waging nation.

know, being labeled. Now I'm the "hard-core drug filmmaker" because that's what I've been doing the last couple of years.

For people who go and see your serious films, is there sort of a "preaching to the choir" phenomenon? Or does it not matter because films like these deepen everyone's understanding?

... Some of the stuff you watch, it's like you expect to see it and feel good about it. It's not challenging. There's a lot of stuff that's not challenging ... when you take like, a TV show where there might be an Asian-American character, and it's so bad, or so minimal ... and then you take, um, some piece -- well-meaning -- that's too insular, that only speaks to the community. You always want something that tries to reach across ... It's a mass medium. I think you need to try to reach across as much as you can.

In the end ... we just want to tell compelling stories in a compelling way. Sometimes the films are not that interesting, but [they're] about the community -- so people love them, because they're so starved. And that's great and kind of sad at the same time.

People are always saying it's getting better, but frankly whenever I turn on the TV, I don't really think it's getting better.

How important is it for there to be more Asian characters on 24, for example, or more Asian news anchors?

"Sometimes the films are not that interesting, but they're about the community -- so people love them, because they're so starved. And that's great and kind of sad at the same time."

At this point in your career, you can choose to do something entertaining ... or you can choose to do something relevant to your community. Do you consider it a privilege to make films about your community or is there a certain burden in not being able to linger in 'entertainment'?

Well ... you're always sort of being bracketed. And I've always felt that I'm a filmmaker ... I wasn't happy with the bracket of being a "Japanese-American filmmaker", "Asian-American filmmaker" or being a "serious filmmaker" ...

It's a privilege but it's also something that on one hand you sort of welcome, but on the other hand you sort of resent ... you

I think that television should reflect a little bit of reality ... If you go into an average hospital it's full of Asian-Americans and Indian-Americans -- doctors, everywhere. Not just Los Angeles and San Francisco, it's everywhere across the country. And you would never know that from watching TV.

For some reason, on ER, the Asians are mostly nurses. Recently they put an Indian on, but that's ... for me, for my family, my nieces ... I care, and I get a little annoyed. For them, for my nieces, for my daughter, ... to watch a world that does exclude you ... makes it difficult to see how you fit into it.



AND THEREAFTER

Saturday, 3/12, 5 PM, Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley
 Sunday, 3/13, 4:30 PM, AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres, San Francisco
 Saturday, 3/19, 12:15 PM, Camera 12 Cinemas, San Jose
PUNJABI CAB, as part of the "Brotherhood Best" shorts series
 Sunday, 3/13, 7 PM, AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres, San Francisco

THE MUSHROOM CLUB (followed by a conversation with Nguyen Qui Duc, host of KQED's "Pacific Time")

Tuesday, 3/15, 6:45 PM, AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres, San Francisco
FROM A SILK COCOON
 Monday, 3/14, 6:30 PM, AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres, San Francisco
 For more information, visit www.naatanet.org/festival.

John Hess 1918 - 2005



BY BEN TERALL

In late January, the great dissident journalist John Hess passed away at age 87. Counterpunch co-editor Alexander Cockburn wrote of Hess, "he reminded me of the old green eyeshade days, when the best journalists were bohemian in spirit, parlous in financial stability, ...[and] had real politics and the fire of the great populist muckrakers and hellraisers of an even earlier time." Through the work he left behind Hess will remain an inspiration for future muckrakers and supporters of alternative media, which he said "may well be our last best hope."

Unlike too many figures on the left, Hess managed to do productive work to the end of his days. Last year saw the release of *My Times: a Memoir of Dissent*, his excellent, frequently hilarious memoir of life working for the New York Times.

For anyone who has found themselves throwing that newspaper across the room in disgust, the book is filled with vindication of every early morning expletive hurled at the "paper of record." The Times, writes Hess, "yearns for distinction but requires conformity" and is marked by "a pseudo-objectivity, a naive embrace of establishment spin, a disdain for dissent."

In describing his work on a groundbreaking expose of the nursing home industry, Hess writes, "truly investigative, questioning, skeptical reporting was practically unTimesian. That is why I asked for rookies. They would still be unspoiled." Veteran Timesmen, on the other hand, wound up like reporter Scotty Reston: "a sucker for the national interest, as defined from on high." Times hack R.W. Apple carried this tendency to such extremes that he bragged of killing Vietcong soldiers via target practice from a U.S. Army helicopter.

Hess writes of a banker who described the Times's business coverage as excellent, 'except in banking, where they don't know their ass from first base.' Hess sees this as "the conventional view in a capsule: the Times is great, except on anything one happens to know something about."

My Times shows that while the Times now runs columns by Paul Krugman challenging Bush Administration rationales for savaging Social Security, as early as 1983 its columnists "swallowed, hook, line and sinker the Establishment's hoax that Social Security was going broke." The paper's repeated touting of such big business propaganda enraged Hess, for, unlike many more blandly "objective" stenographer-journalists, he saw that "Social Security is not an insurance company, it is a social contract."

At the end of his life, Times writer (and member of one of the paper's ruling families) Cy Sulzberger wrote in his diary of the realization "that in all my long life I had never done a single thing of which I could genuinely be proud: no act of true courage, generosity, sacrifice, or even pure kindness."

John Hess stands as a fine contrast to such an ignoble end. He plied his craft with care, always sided with the underdog, and snickered at pretensions and upscale striving. Most importantly, he saw "the media as a battlefield, though hardly a level one," and thus, "for fifty-seven years in journalism, ... sought to even the balance, by my lights."

SCAM #5

BY BEN DITCH

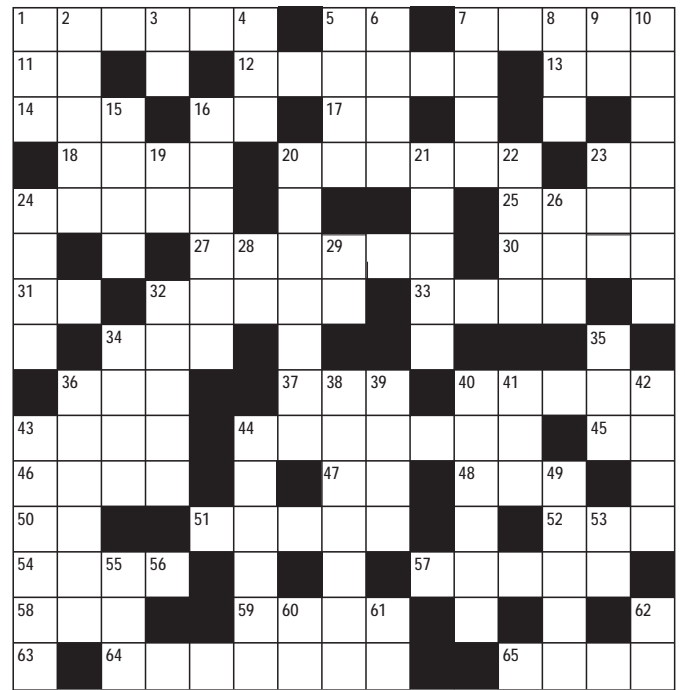
I first heard that editor Erick Lyle was putting out the much-anticipated fifth issue of Scam when I went to see him do a reading at the AK press warehouse in Oakland. He read a page from the soon-to-be-released 'zine, a kind of collage of letters he had received over the years that made up the new issue's letters section. I was immediately excited to see what else was going to be included in the new issue, but didn't get my hands on a copy until a few weeks later when I ran into Erick (and everybody else that I've ever met in my life) at a big punk show in the city. Scam #5 didn't disappoint.

Erick's been putting out Scam sporadically for over 10 years; in that time it has become one of the punk rock reading staples. This issue is a departure from the mostly personal anecdotes of earlier Scams. Erick has chosen instead to pursue a more journalistic direction, introducing the theme of fighting for "what we're for" instead of fighting "what we're against". How can we do this is the recurring question as Erick interviews local artists, activists and politicians including Clarion Alley Mural Project co-founder Aaron Noble, former Mayoral candidate Matt Gonzales and the City College Anarchy Club. These interviews, combined with the 'zine's other articles, are a testament to what can be achieved when people come together to create the world they want to see, resisting Amerikan death culture in more creative ways than the tired old protest march. The result is inspiring.

Though the events covered in Scam #5 are an important part of San Francisco's history, they're not likely to appear on the news or in the big papers. And rightly so - they are too important to be left to mainstream journalism's habitual misrepresentation. We are responsible for documenting our own history so that it is not forgotten. With Scam #5, Erick Lyle has begun the work.

Scam c/o Erick Lyle; PO Box 40272
San Francisco CA 94140

CRYPTO compiled by Iain Boal #8



Across

1. moral principles (6)
5. It's father, stupid! (2)
7. Welsh Zimmerman? (5)
11. Arizona (2)
12. _____Diallo (6)
13. Argentinian motorcyclist (3)
14. Doyen of Indian cinema (3)
16. British Petroleum (2)
17. French article (2)
18. back (4)
20. philosopher of money (6)
23. decilitre (2)
24. Gymnopedist? (5)
25. buckeye state (4)
27. needs quenching (6)
30. virtual diary (4)
31. Egyptian sun god (2)
32. heavy modernist poet? (5)
33. sore back? (4)
34. Rainforest Action Network (3)
36. waste cloth (3)
37. electromotive force (3)
40. shoddy, inferior (5)
43. Greek runner up? (4)
44. French historian of material life (7)
45. 12 step program (2)
46. what, me cheat a symbol? (4)
47. Eliot, initially (2)
48. snake-fish (3)
50. thus (2)
51. Ireland's "last romantic" (5)
52. united (3)
54. cold war tribunal (4)
57. High priest of LSD (5)
58. choose (3)
59. provincial (4)
64. Lev Bronstein's pseudonym (7)
65. Composer behind bars? (4)

Down

1. Van Gogh lost his (3)
2. Romanian cutup poet, cultural terrorist (5)
3. Freud's it! (2)
4. silly tree juice (3)
5. surrealist artist (4)
6. early man (4)
7. jazz nobility? (4)
8. liquid crystal display (3)
9. sigh of relief (2)
10. Study of the new (7)
15. bigfoot (4)
16. The pope of surrealism (6)
19. sloth (2)
20. Chomsky's bete noir (7)
21. unit of length (5)
23. Cassius____, Roman historian (3)
24. genius of Hollywood melodrama (4)
26. laid in this place (3)
28. uh, reversed (2)
29. refer to drawer (2)
32. old time religion? (5)
34. current IMF chief (4)
35. alias(3)
36. money back? (6)
38. clodbreaker (7)
39. bother (4)
40. Wodehouse's valet (6)
41. heavy beer (3)
42. New Haven college (4)
43. hierarch (6)
44. alienation's playwright (6)
49. Poet victim of fascism (6)
53. New York (2)
55. lawyer attached? (3)
60. copula (2)
61. Kentucky (2)
62. You and I (2)

Answers to last month's Crypto

Across: 1. basta 2. magnum 6. gibbet 9. jo 11. rnr 12. if 13. graffiti 15. pi 16. tee 17. EC 18. oak 19. sr 20. hammer 22. ska 25. moo 26. ed 28. zoo 29. steep 30. ilo 31. anna 32. fn 34. nag 35. Di 36. am 38. casino 41. beach 42. am 44. aa 46. enema 47. Rue 49. civil 50. yea 51. Yale 52. Hells Angel

Down: 1. Bangkok 2. Mein Kampf 3. ATF 4. nam 5. music 6. grits 7. inter 8. brie 9. Jackson 10. of 14. memo 15. Pere Lachaise 21. mo 23. koa 24. hex 27. dog 28. Zn 29. sodom 30. in 31. alchemy 33. nae 37. malign 39. steel 40. naan 41. BP 43. duel 45.al 47. rye 48. eal

Calendar

For More Information or to submit your event, visit www.indybay.org/calendar

4/8-4/10, 9 AM: GET ON THE BUS!

Alternative Fuels Summit hosted by Unifried (the Biofuel Bus), and Mercey Hot Springs



Kick the oil habit at this weekend-long summit! Workshops include Brewing Biodiesel, SVO (collecting, selecting, filtering & using), Engine Conversion, a Forum on Organizing an Alternative Energy Co-op, Grant Writing for Environmental Causes, and more. Other events and exhibits include Permaculture & Sustainable Living Demonstrations,

tours of Mercey Hot Springs' off-the-grid energy systems, open-mic night at the Friday evening community campfire, and live music on Saturday night. Cost is \$100 and includes admission to all workshops & exhibits & events, camping/RV space, and two tickets for soaking. Mercey Hot Springs, Firebaugh, CA. For more information visit www.veggiebus.com or call (562) 505-3176.

for war. Find out more about this form of conscientious objection at our introductory workshop. Topics will include: creative legal protests, refusing to pay all or part of federal taxes and the possible consequences of this form of civil disobedience, living below the level of taxable income, phone tax resistance, redirecting resisted taxes to local alternative funds and/or community organizations, and local support networks for war tax resisters. Palo Alto Friends Meeting House, 957 Colorado Avenue, 650-856-0744.

3/12, 5 PM: Bowl the Planet Fundraiser

Help save rainforests and bring hands-on science to Bay Area classrooms at the Eleventh Annual Bowl-The-Planet on Saturday, March 12th at Serra Bowl in Daly City. This event is a

fundraiser for the Center for Ecosystem Survival. A \$15 pre-registration fee or \$25 at the door provides food, rock & roll and Glow-Bowling from 5-8pm. Bumper bowling for kids. Serra Bowl, 3301 Junipero Serra Blvd., Daly City CA 94014 To register, donate or volunteer, please call 415.648.3392.

3/14-3/19, 8 AM: Week of Campus and High School Resistance

Students from the U.S. and all over the world will march against the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and colonial occupation everywhere. During the week of the second anniversary of the "shock and awe" invasion of Iraq, a generation will make its presence felt. Tens of thousands of young people have mobilized for mass antiwar demonstrations, and have organized walkouts, sit-ins and more at their schools and on their campuses. Help build the militant and vibrant youth and student movement that has grown continuously over the past three years. For more information, contact A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), www.ANSWERcoalition.org, 415-821-6545.

3/14, 1-3 PM and 6-9 PM: Exhibit of "Bogside Artists" from Derry, N. Ireland

THE BOGSIDE ARTISTS - Tom Kelly, Kevin Hasson, and William Kelly have produced a range of works of art in various mediums, but are world famous for their huge murals painted on the side of houses and buildings in the Bogside area of Derry, N. Ireland. These murals graphically depict historic images of the struggle for basic human rights endured by their community during the last 30 years. The artists have lived in the Bogside most of their lives and have experienced the worst of the conflict

in the north of Ireland. This exhibition of their work is a chronicle of those events that they consider to have been the most significant. FREE. UC Berkeley, Tan Oak Room - Fourth Floor, MLK Student Center Building, Corner of Telegraph & Bancroft, 510-910-0966.

3/16, 7 PM: Remembering Rachel Corrie: An Evening of Music, Poetry and Activism

Come celebrate the life and activism of International Solidarity Movement activist Rachel Corrie. Rachel was killed by a D-9 Caterpillar bulldozer driven by Israeli soldiers on March 16, 2003 while non-violently attempting to prevent the demolition of a family home in the refugee camp of Rafah, occupied Palestine. Find out what Palestine-solidarity activists and others are doing to further the cause of peace and justice in the Middle East and the world. Featured Speakers include Peter Camejo, Julia Butterfly Hill, Pratap Chatterjee, Barbara Lubin, and Starhawk. Requested Donation: \$20. King Middle School, 1781 Rose Street, Berkeley. For more information visit <http://www.norcalism.org/events.htm> or call 510-236-4250.

3/19, 11 AM: Global Day of Action - March and Rally to Beat Back the Bush Attack

This is the second anniversary of Bush's criminal aggression against the people of Iraq. More than 100,000 Iraqis have died. U.S. soldiers are being killed and maimed in a war for conquest. While the U.S. government is spending billions to kill in Iraq, Palestine and Haiti, it is also destroying social programs and working peoples' Social Security. At the same time, the U.S. is threatening new military action in Iran, Syria, Cuba, North Korea, the Philippines, Sudan and other countries. Join with other Bay Area residents and protesters in Los Angeles and other cities around the world. March assembles in Dolores Park; Rally at 1 PM at the Civic Center, San Francisco. Call 415-821-6545 or email answer@actionsf.org for more info or to volunteer.

3/21, 7:30 PM: WorldCentric Monday Night Film Series: "Friendship Village"

View the award-winning documentary about an international group of veterans building a village in Viet Nam for children with Agent Orange-related disabilities. Built on a former rice paddy near Hanoi, the Friendship Village stands not only as a symbol of peace and reconciliation, but as a testament to the potential for all people to come to terms with the past, heal the wounds of war, and create a better world. Discussion to follow after film. Suggested donation: \$5 to \$10 (no one turned away). Unitarian Hall, 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. 650-283-3797.

3/26, 8 PM: Georges Lammam Ensemble Benefit Concert for Palestine Youth

Come hear exquisite Middle Eastern music and benefit Palestinian children's education at the same time! The Friends of Deir Ibbi'a present the renowned Georges Lammam Ensemble performing classical and popular Arabic music. Proceeds provide scholarships for youth in the West Bank village of Dier Ibbi'a

(outside Ramallah). Children's art and women's embroidery will also be on display. Admission is \$20. La Pena Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley. For more information visit www.deiribzia.org or call Arla at (415) 567-1699.

4/1, 6:30 PM: April Fools Day Party with Scoop Nisker in North Fork

As part of a celebration of 30 years in community radio, KFCF 88.1 FM is hosting an April Fools Day Party to benefit listener-sponsored, free speech radio. Wes "Scoop" Nisker is a Buddhist meditation teacher, journalist, and author of two books about the sixties generation: *Crazy Wisdom and The Big Bang*, *The Buddha, and the Baby Boom*. For over twenty years, he has been leading retreats and workshops worldwide in Buddhist insight meditation, humor, and philosophy. The party begins at 6:30 pm with food and beverages and the music of the local group Good Medicine. The party will take place at North Fork Town Hall, located at 33060 Road 228 in the mountain community of North Fork, an hour north of Fresno. Tickets are available at the Movies Video Shop, 1435 N. Van Ness (559-233-8346) and KFCF Radio (559-233-2221).

4/2: a commUNITY mutiny against fare hikes

When the war economy tries to takes the PUBLIC out of Transportation, we Reclaim the Streets! Join the Street Party at Dolores Park at noon and prepare to depart at 1pm. It's a masquerade ball, so you better dress to impress. If you want to help make it happen, join us in weekly meetings, or plug in on your own. Check out <http://sfrts.tribe.net> or www.rts-sf.org or email sfrts@zipflp.com. Meet at Noon in Dolores Park, SF

4/3, 12 PM: 5th Annual Cesar E. Chavez Holiday Parade and Festival in San Francisco

This worker and immigrant rights event commemorates labor and civil rights leader Cesar E. Chavez. The parade assembles at 11am at Justin Herman Plaza and proceeds down Market Street. Festival follows at Civic Center from 1-5pm. For more information call 415-552-2911.

4/9, 12 PM: Monthly KFC Protest

Join Bay Area Vegetarians as we stick up for the chickens and protest the Colonel's secret ingredient (animal cruelty) and distribute vegetarian starter kits at KFCs in San Francisco. Location will be updated once it's selected, so check back or stay tuned to <http://www.bayareaveg.org> for details. New or experienced activists are welcome. Rain cancels. For more information on KFC's animal cruelty, visit <http://www.kentuckyfriedcruelty.com> or email jendyess1@netscape.net.

4/25, 9pm: Rock Out with your Cock Out

Femina Potens presents Nedelle, Mind Your Pig Latoya, Retrievers (w/Greg & Satomi of Deerhoof) and Blevin Blectum. This is a monthly queer and progressive rock and experimental noise event showcasing women and transgendered musicians. Come eat some fish and chips, have a beer, and come see some kick ass performances for \$5. Edinburgh Castle, 950 Geary