



The Sierra Club • Tehipite Chapter

Tehipite Topics

October-December 2012 – Vol. 58, No. 4

www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

Join us at the September 19 General Meeting – Wed. 7PM
when Gene Richards presents
Travels to the Middle Kingdom and Lessons for Life
FREE AND OPEN TO GENERAL PUBLIC at UC Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno



TRAVELS TO THE MIDDLE KINGDOM THERE AND BACK AGAIN – Lessons for US –

by Gene Richards

WE HAVE TO ARTICULATE OURSELVES

Having been overseas for so long and having got used to living in a foreign country, I've seen the tremendous changes that have come to China, but I'm more impressed by the fact that *I've* changed. What is different about me now? There is that 'cocktail party stare' that I get when I'm talking about some of my experiences — the polite, "Oh, isn't that interesting," expression — but I know my acquaintances have nothing to relate it to and so most is lost on them. It makes me a bit sad

to think that I have this wealth of experience and knowledge that is relatively rare but practically useless in the States. I'm just an oddity, a Bilbo Baggins who's been "There and Back Again," including a sort of magic ring that might even save the world...or might damn me, depending on how I use it.

What do we expatriates know that others don't know? Maybe it's just been given to me to try to explain what has happened to me — having experienced something different, to be an artist compelled to make word pictures of what I've seen. Werner Herzog, the well-known film director, says,

It's not only *my* dreams... The only distinction between me and you is that I can articulate them. And that is what poetry or painting or literature or filmmaking is all about. It's as simple as that. And I make films because...I have not learned anything else. And I know I can do it to a certain degree. And it is my duty because this might be the inner chronicle of what we are. *And we have to articulate ourselves otherwise we would be cows in the field.*

I first went to China in 1986 for a year and came back reflecting on my family values, my career and my relationships. And each time I returned to China I seemed to accept change more and to be able to live in the US, settled down, less. So every time I need to get away, or run away, I seem to end up returning to China. Slight attitude adjustments have far-reaching results, permutations that keep reiterating in different

– CONTINUED INSIDE ON PAGE 6 –

see also:

Reversing the Sprawl: The Fresno Urban Plan Update Process
What Can One Person Do: An Appreciation of Rachel Carson
Yosemite at the Tipping Point: Write the Superintendent Now!

on page 12
on page 14
on page 16

EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT THE PLANET



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Bear in mind the consequences.

The Yellowstone grizzly bear is an irreplaceable part of America's natural heritage, a symbol of the independence that defines the American character and an icon of all that is wild and free. The Bush administration set forth a proposal that would remove federal protection for the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Help Sierra Club protect our forest friends; they prefer the woods than being on display.

Get grizzly and JOIN Sierra Club.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Exp. Date ____/____/____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.



Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 5396
Fresno, California
93755-5396

Copyright © 2012,
Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club

Chapter Phone (559) 229-4031
Web Site www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

Tehipite Chapter Officers:

Chapter Chair
Bill Fjellbo (559) 642-4511
bjfjellbo@sti.net

Chapter Vice-Chair
Gary Lasky (559) 790-3495
data.nations@gmail.com

Chapter Secretary
—
Chapter Treasurer
Wayne Dill
wd@whcpafirm.com

Executive Committee Members:
Heather Anderson (559) 681-6305
heather.anderson8@comcast.net
David Cehrs (559) 875-9495
dcehrs@juno.com
William Fjellbo (559) 642-4511
bjfjellbo@sti.net
Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337
rkangas02@comcast.net
Gary Lasky (559) 790-3495
data.nations@gmail.com
Karen Laws (559) 227-2644
karen3245laws@gmail.com

Merced Group Appointee
Rod Webster (209) 723-4747
rwebster@elite.net

Chapter Committee Chairs:

Environmental Education Committee
—

Honors & Awards

—

Hospitality
Karen Hammer (559) 298-5272
ecuagirl45@yahoo.com

Membership/Newsletter Distribution
Marian Orvis (559) 226-0145

Outings and Outings Leader Training

—

Political Committee
Bill Fjellbo (559) 642-4511
bjfjellbo@sti.net

Programs
Heather Anderson (559) 681-6305
heather.anderson8@comcast.net

Publicity
Karen Hammer (559) 298-5272
ecuagirl45@yahoo.com

Tehipite Topics Editor
Bob Turner (360) 305-2328
robertsturner52@gmail.com

Tehipite Chapter Website Editor

—

Wilderness Committee
Heather Anderson (559) 681-6305
heather.anderson8@comcast.net

Conservation Committee:

Conservation Chair
—
Energy, Climate Change, Population
—

Kings Canyon National Park

—

National Forest Chair
Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337
rkangas02@comcast.net

San Joaquin River
Chris Acree (559) 709-4913

Sprawl, Air Quality
Gary Lasky (559) 790-3495
data.nations@gmail.com

Water, Kings River
David Cehrs (559) 875-9495
dcehrs@juno.com

Wilderness/Desert
Ron Mackie (559) 683-0293
rmackie@sierratel.com

Yosemite National Park
George Whitmore (559) 229-5808
geowhit1954@comcast.net

Council of Club Leaders:

CCL ExComm
Gary Lasky (559) 790-3495

CCL Delegate
Gerald Vinnard (559) 431-5780

California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee:

CNRCC ExComm
Gerald Vinnard (559) 431-5780

CNRCC Delegate
Heather Anderson (559) 681-6305

CNRCC Alternate
Richard Kangas (559) 896-5337



**Merced Group
of the Sierra Club
Box 387
Merced, California
95341**

Group Chair
Rod Webster (209) 723-4747
rwebster@elite.net

Group Vice-Chair

Jon Hawthorne (209) 723-5152
Group Treasurer
Lisa Kayser-Grant (209) 384-1016
Group Secretary
Annette Allsup (209)723-5152
Member-at Large
John Magneson
jmagneson@gmail.com

Conservation Chair
Open

Publications
Annette Allsup (209)723-5152
Agriculture
Charlie Magneson (209) 394-7045
Membership
Open
Publicity
Rod Webster (209) 723-4747
Population
Open

Merced Group Meetings

SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE MERCED GROUP MEETINGS

Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings

The first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM — Rod Webster's home, 345 E. 20th St., Merced
Conservation meeting is first and can last 30-40 minutes.
Anyone with an interest in local, state, or national conservation issues is welcome to attend.

Merced Group General Meetings

Usually the third Thursday of each month (May and December excepted)
Starts at 7:00, usually over by 8:30 or so

Merced United Methodist Church, 899 Yosemite Parkway (that's Hwy 140 to Yosemite)

Other events often going on, so park in the lot along Cypress Avenue and enter there to find us easily.

Tehipite Chapter Meetings

Conservation & Executive Committee Meetings

Second Wednesday of each month, except July and August ~ Open to the Public

October 10, November 14, December 12, January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, September 11

The Conservation Committee meets at 7 PM. The Executive Committee meets at 8 PM.

University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Avenue, Fresno (between First and Fresno Streets)

Tehipite Chapter General Meetings

FREE AND OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

University of California Center, 550 E. Shaw Avenue, Fresno (between First and Fresno Streets)

September 19, Gene Richards — Travels to the Middle Kingdom and Lessons for Life

October 17, Brandy Anglen, FCC Science Instructor, Study Abroad Programs at FCC — Some tidbits from past trips and highlights of the upcoming travel to Madagascar in 2013

November, No meeting

December 19, Helen Gigliotti — West Africa: Slavery, Color, Voodoo: A Digital Slide Show

Travel with Helen to some of the most compelling regions of West Africa. Culturally rich, photographically intense, and ethnologically fascinating, the tribal cultures in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and Benin are timeless. On this trip, we will venture deep into the heartland of these countries to see how people live and work. We will meet fetish priests and healers, attend festivals, colorful markets, and ancient ceremonies, and witness participants in trances and masked stilt dances. We will visit the monuments remaining from the slave traffic of the 15th/16th centuries and examples of the amazing adobe and thatched architecture. This area is the origin of Voodoo and in this part of the world its practices are still authentic. Don't miss this adventure into an area of Africa less traveled.

Merced Group News

WE'RE BACK!

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS RESUME SEPTEMBER 20 AND CONTINUE OCTOBER 18 AND NOVEMBER 15.

In September we will resume our general meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month. The public as well as members are cordially invited. Same time and place as last year: 7:00 P.M. in the Fireside Room at United Methodist Church in Merced. It is located at 899 Yosemite Parkway (also known as Hwy 40 to Yosemite). Park in the lot off of Cypress Avenue and use the entrance there.

WHAT'S ON TAP?

We try to schedule a variety of events during the course of the year. Some are topical and informational, meant to inform and stimulate discussion. The focus is on issues close to home such as our local community planning and growth, healthy food sources, regional water management, air quality in the Central Valley, and the future of our nearby State and National Parks. Programs might also address issues using a wider scope by addressing topics from a state, national, or even a world-wide perspective.

Others programs have a focus that has more of an entertainment and inspirational value. Speakers share their favorite destinations and adventures in the great outdoors. These could be local day trips, a weekend outing, or an excursion to the other side of the planet.

SOMETHING NEW

This year we are also trying two new formats for some of our monthly meetings: "TEDx" and "UN-CONFERENCES". They sound intriguing and will be a refreshing change of pace. Hopefully you'll check them out when they come around.

"TEDx" evening (Thursday, September 20)

The TEDx format for the Merced Group of the Sierra Club is to watch a TED presentation from TED.com on a subject of interest that pertains to issues that involve the stewardship of our planet and ourselves. The TED Talks are limited to 18 minutes. Some possible issues are: Sustainability, Environmentalism, Climate Change, Social Change, City Building, etc. After viewing the presentation, each person who wishes to make a comment on the presentation is encouraged to do so. But no pressure — also OK to just sit and soak it in. In the time remaining, an open discussion can continue. At the end of one hour we will bring the discussion to a close and break for refreshments before we leave.

You can go to TED.com or TED.com/talks to watch and listen to any of the thousands of Talks given already.

Sierra Club Meeting Unconference (tentatively planned for January)

Come enjoy an evening with members of the Merced group of the Sierra Club. Those who would like to can bring an idea or a topic that they would like to lead or demonstrate to other meeting participants. For example, you might want to share/learn and/or lead a topic regarding favorite hikes in Yosemite, latest backpacking equipment, preparing food for backpacking/car camping, or favorite winter hikes/trips. All topics are based on a desire to learn or share and the topics are meeting participant generated. The meeting will provide an opportunity to better learn from other club members about their interests.

We have a lot of collective expertise and ideas for outdoor experiences to share! At the beginning of the meeting, we will have some light refreshments. There will be an empty idea/topic board where attendees can post ideas/topic titles. You will learn great strategies and ideas, make new friends, and receive information that you can immediately apply!

WHAT SPEAKERS AND TOPICS ARE COMING UP?

Though we have mapped out the entire year ahead, we are not able to confirm our speakers months in advance. So in lieu of a monthly Topics you can...

1. Add your email address to Rod's list if you are not among the 75 or so already on it. He sends out notifications, reminders, and occasional pertinent information. Be assured that this will be used discreetly. Usually info about the speaker and the presentation is sent out a couple of weeks ahead and a brief reminder the week of. If this works for you send your address to rwebster@elite.net.
2. Keep an eye out for short items in the local newspapers around mid-month.
3. Phone Rod at (209) 723-4747.

ANNUAL BANQUET ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st

In December we will have our annual banquet and featured speaker. Everyone seems happy (and well fed!) with the pot luck dinner format, so we'll stick with that. Location and special speaker are TBA. See options 1, 2, and 3 above on how to be updated.

Tehipite Chapter to Host Regional Wilderness Meeting

The Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee meets Saturday, September 22 10 am to 5 pm at the Fresno Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 1444 Fulton in Downtown Fresno

from the President's September 3rd proclamation:

...our wilderness areas reflect an essential part of our national character, and as a people, we are immeasurably richer for their presence. Protected wilderness areas are recreational escapes for families, natural classrooms for students, living laboratories for scientists, irreplaceable retreats for sportsmen and women, and historical treasures for the American people.... Our open spaces are more precious today than ever before, and it is essential that we come together to protect them for the next generation....

Generations of visionary leaders and communities have given of themselves to preserve our wild landscapes.... During National Wilderness Month, let us celebrate the progress we have made...and let us recommit to protecting the land we love for centuries to come....

All interested wildlands advocates in Central Valley, the Bay Area, and surrounding areas are invited to celebrate wilderness during *National Wilderness Month* at a fact-filled gathering in Fresno of the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee. Join others who care about wild public lands on Sept 22 for fun, networking, food, and timely presentations on worthwhile wildlands topics, and follow up with a hike in the mountains the day after! Overnight accommodation can be arranged for out-of-town participants, so all can join our Sunday hike in the lower Sierra nearby.

Expanding diversity in the wilderness community will be one of the meeting topics — but there will be many more. Preference will be given to some wild public lands special to the Tehipite Chapter. We can put a big focus, for instance, on the newly-released management plan for Sequoia National Monument, which is directly pertinent to both the Tehipite Chapter and the Kern-Kaweah Chapter.

We hope to get some RSVPs for before the meeting (so Vicky can know how many cookies to bake), and more suggestions for the agenda are definitely welcome.

Contact Vicky at vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org or (415) 977-5527, or Heather at heather.anderson8@comcast.net or (559) 681-6305.

The Committee thanks the Tehipite Chapter for hosting us, with special thanks to Heather Anderson and Gary Lasky for working on the arrangements for this meeting.

Chapter Outing to Willow Creek with the Sierra Club's California/Nevada Wilderness Committee

Date: **Sunday, September 23, 2012 – 9:30am**

Leader: **Karen Hammer**

Outing Type: **Day Hike**

Destination: **Angel Falls and Devils Slide Falls**

Distance: **4 miles round trip**

Elevation Gain: **500 feet**

California/Nevada Wilderness Committee members who are in town for the meeting will be joining local Sierra Club members for a medium-length hike on Sunday before returning home. Even if you cannot attend the meeting, come join us on an easy outing to two breathtaking waterfalls on Willow Creek above Bass Lake.

Contact: Call Karen Hammer at (559) 298-5272 for more details.

Meeting Agenda Items Include:

- updates on wilderness legislation and other related bills
- various current bills in California:
 - Issa bill for San Diego County
 - Feinstein bill for two National Monuments plus wilderness
 - Farr bill to elevate Pinnacles to national park status
- wilderness possibilities for Nevada:
 - Gold Butte? Pine Forest Range?
 - potential for Lyon County/Yerington Bill
- markup action by House Natural Resources Committee
- general Congressional threats:
 - HR 1581 – “the lands bill from hell”
- current wilderness issues:
 - Point Reyes National Seashore – Drakes Bay oysters
- public lands management planning update:
 - recent revision to forest plans in Lake Tahoe Basin
 - how to make plans “climate smart”
 - upcoming forest plan revisions in Sierra NF
 - Giant Sequoia National Monument plan release
- Sierra Nevada Resilient Habitats Campaign:
 - relationship to our wilderness committee
 - what is a “resilient habitat”?
 - Sierra Nevada campaign
 - Coastal campaign
 - Berryessa/Snow Mountain NCA campaign
- off-road vehicle issues – trespass on Pacific Crest Trail
- Wilderness50: our committee's big project – celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, September 3, 2014, via outings and other events! To help give this some visibility, we need a coordinator for each chapter.
- increasing diversity in the wilderness community – discussion with invited guests from Fresno Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- partner organization presentation by Back Country Horsemen of America and Sierra Club chapters in California and Nevada
- public lands access fees – update on Sierra Club opposition
- communications:
 - CA/NV Wilderness Team page on Activist Network
 - need for a volunteer to update it
 - need for bloggers for our team
 - info at <http://community.sierraclub.org/join/climate-crossroads.aspx?nexturl=joincc>
 - CA/NV Wilderness Team page on Facebook – need for a facebook page guru
 - December issue of *Words of the Wild* newsletter – call for articles
- reports & other notices:
 - July BLM service trip
 - Highland Ridge Wilderness
- next meeting – February 16-17, 2013 in Shoshone, CA – joint meeting with the Desert Committee

Lunch will be served by the committee at a suitable time. (The hat will be passed to help cover costs.) **Please bring your own cup and plate.**

After the meeting, we will adjourn to the Bass Lake Recreation Area for a committee-provided dinner and overnight camping.

On Sunday, September 23, after an early breakfast, we'll meet hike leader Karen Hammer for a chapter-sponsored hike. Bring water and a trail lunch of your own for the hike.

Travels to the Middle Kingdom: There and Back Again — Lessons for US

by Gene Richards



– CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 –

ways, like that toy made of small wooden squares attached by strings (some call it a Jacob's Ladder) so that when you hang it and flip over the first one, all the others flip over, one after the other...clack, clack, clack. That's me.

One thing I've learned is that Americans are such funny people, because we basically know so little about the rest of the world, not like Europeans who have been living side by side for hundreds of years. And...we...don't...care! We're mostly fat, dumb and happy with this. Our reading about what goes on in other parts of the globe is distant entertainment,

unfathomable strangeness, digression from the business of earning a living, of going to football games, of taking the kids to soccer practice, and the like. My concern is that we are trivializing the entire world and all the other people in it.

CHINA LIFE

From my third floor picture window, in a fairly modern apartment complex on the outskirts of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, I look out over verdant fields — damp, warm air and frequent summer rain make everything green and sodden. I can see the tallest building of my university, nine stories, about 200 meters away. Off in the mist, high-rise apartment complexes under construction march towards us as the city expands east into the countryside, and new campuses of old universities jump out over everything. I can see a small 'Recycle Village' along the highway and rag pickers and dumpster-divers coming all day, loaded down with bags of bottles and packaging materials on shoulder poles or large, bamboo 'backpacks' or piled on three-wheeled cycles. All day long, my fellow residents walk slowly along a new, narrow paved road to a large, open-air market close to the university's back gate. That's the world defined by my living room window.

It's relatively quiet where I am, unlike the city proper, which is a huge metropolis in south-central China, in the Sichuan basin — the 'rice bowl' of China. There are many buses on the highway and, because we're practically in the countryside (a kind of early Orange County before the suburbs outnumbered the orchards), a lot of country folk are walking or biking across the roadway, irritating the bus drivers who honk at them with the klaxon-like horns the country seems to reserve for irritated bus drivers. But it's quiet from about noon to 2 pm because everyone is napping. In my opinion, *that's* a very good idea.

There's something definitely different about this, but what that is, I can't say for sure; I can just feel it. Is it this quality of the landscape and people always on the move, so much more crowded than anything I've ever seen in the U.S.? Or the air, the smell of cooking always present, and the pollution? Or is it that there are few people hanging around with little to do, except the retired folks taking their grandkids out for a walk. Which reminds me that there's no social safety net outside of the family, so everyone is working, many scraping by and not sharing in the double digit growth in GDP.

What I feel is not that this is another world but that it is another home besides the one I own in the Central Valley of California. What I feel is that I've got used to being in China after six years (this most recent time). I also feel how strange Chinese people are — they don't do things the way we do. (Does anyone?) Sometimes their ways seem superior to ours and at other times I'm baffled and annoyed — mainly baffled but with a fair share of annoyance if the mood strikes me.

GET USED TO IT!

What happens if you stay long enough in a place, either because you have to or something has attracted you there, is you get used to that place. In time you become accustomed to the rhythms of that place and accept the way things are, even if at first you couldn't, or at first they drove you crazy. They say that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, but most people don't give new experiences a chance. Most people run back to the things and ways they've always known and have already gotten used to. They're not willing to give a new place a chance, especially if they meet some problem or obstruction or frustration, which is pretty much a daily occurrence for a foreigner in China. What kind of person are you?

It takes perseverance, discipline and honesty. You have to be honest that certain things drive you crazy. For me that's hearing, "Look,



THE THREE GENERATIONS WHO SHARE THIS RUSTIC CHINESE HOME



**SHUNAN ZHUHAI — THE BAMBOO SEA
A 120 SQUARE KILOMETER NATIONAL PARK IN SICHUAN**

with family, the future, maintaining friendships, and being kind to one another, or with the world outside their borders.

Chinese are more concerned with affairs of the heart, relations between people in a face-to-face context. If given the chance, they'd rather appear to get along than not, which actually leads them to get along better with each other. Generally, the Chinese are very resilient and flexible. In a nation as crowded as this, that's pretty essential. Maybe Americans can afford to be so cold to one another because we've never had to live so close together, and never had to rely on one another so wholly.

A LAST STORY

I went to visit a very good friend's family, deep in the countryside — mud-daubed walls and thatched roof house, with a well and pump and a trough of water near the kitchen. They still use the traditional *kang*, a large concrete stove with a hole to fit a large wok in the center and fed by twigs and small brush to make a quick, hot fire for mealtimes. There are no doors, except on the bedrooms, and the floors are packed earth. Ducks and chickens roam around the small courtyard. Pigs are penned in the room next to the kitchen, where there is an outdoor privy, just a hole in the ground where the combined waste can be pushed out and used in the fields. They farm about an acre of typical Chinese fields — narrow raised pathways between sunken fields with rice paddies, fruit trees, and vegetables. Dad works on a construction crew for the farmers who are building better homes with the money sent home by offspring or relatives in the cities. But most of the time, he and mom are in the fields, bent over, just like Chinese farmers have been doing for thousands of years.

When I visited, it truly must have seemed I had dropped off the moon — the first foreigner ever to set foot in their house. At lunch, they were concerned that I might look down on them. I was very moved by this and told them that my father had been born and raised in very similar circumstances on the dry prairies of eastern Colorado, and that his mom had moved and taken in boarders so at least a couple of her sons could go to university. At the meal, they bought and served what was probably a week's worth of meat and other fare just to make a decent impression. Teachers are still revered in China. The expression, "Teacher for a day, father for a lifetime," pretty much says it.

Not surprisingly, dad and mom were much older looking than their ages, and with no local medical care had to live with the aches and pains of hard work. Still, they were pretty chipper people. Mom is a character who never misses a chance to chat up strangers she meets in the village or on the country busses. Dad can read and write, mom can't. Even my friend's practically toothless grandma, who raised her, was quite cheerful, though she was much too shy to ask any questions, even with my friend's prodding.



THE LAST DAY OF MY FRESHMAN CLASS IN SPOKEN ENGLISH

it's a foreigner," (in Chinese) or, "Hello," (in English) several times a day. So you have to be honest that you are the alien, you are the stranger in a strange land. You can rail against things as much as you like (and I have) but sooner or later you have to be honest about the situation. And, little by little you...get...used...to...it! My discipline is to *not* run away, to look harder at things that frustrate me, to never refuse to interact with another person.

In China, you get used to people interrupting all the time while you're trying to have a conversation with someone, especially at work or school; even students interrupt when I'm talking to the director. You get used to the masses of people, to listening to an alien tongue, to new foods, different climate, the bureaucracy, boring architecture, the...well, you get the idea.

But, what's *really* different is the people. In my opinion, Chinese people have bigger hearts. I don't know where there's room in their chests but they manage to get a bigger heart in there. Why do I say that? Americans are too much in a hurry, too concerned with making money, too concerned with their own little insular lives, and very little concerned



**A BAMBOO HARVEST — SO MANY USES
FOOD, MEDICINE, PAPER, SCAFFOLDING,
FURNITURE, WEAPON, MUSICAL INSTRUMENT**

Just like my grandmother, my friend's parents worked to make sure their daughter had a chance at college, where I met her, and she is their only safety net — their social security, their retirement, their comfort in old age.

Experiences like this will change a person. Americans, quite simply, don't know how good we have it.

Tehipite Chapter Current Events

Paul Ryan Fundraiser in Fresno

by Chip Ashley

Republican vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan was “welcomed” to his dinner reception fundraiser at the Fresno Convention Center on September 8 with a vocal protest in which about 200 progressives exchanged shouted slogans with about thirty CSU Fresno young Republicans. The young Republicans dined free, sponsored by an anonymous donor.

Sierra Club members joined the protest because of Romney and Ryan’s promise to undo environmental protections in a host of policy areas, including oil and gas drilling, transportation, mining, air quality, climate change, and logging.

Sierra Club’s position is complicated because the Democratic nominee, President Barak Obama also has made promises that threaten the environment and he has not adequately addressed the greatest challenge humans have yet faced — climate destabilization caused by the continued use of fossil fuels.

Sierra Club will have plenty of environmental challenges under either Republicans or Democrats. However, environmental regulations are likely to be a great deal stronger under a Democratic administration. Progressives and Sierrans must keep up the pressure in either scenario.



ACTIVISTS FROM SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOCAL PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE, INCLUDING THE TEHIPITE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB, DEMONSTRATING AGAINST PROPOSED POLICIES IN THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PLATFORM, FACE OFF AGAINST REPUBLICAN STUDENTS FROM FRESNO STATE UNIVERSITY, WHO WERE ON THEIR WAY TO HEAR PAUL RYAN AT A DINNER THAT RAISED NEARLY A MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE ROMNEY/RYAN CAMPAIGN.

Friant Ranch Lawsuit Finally Heads To Court

by Gary Lasky

On Friday September 21, the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter’s lawsuit against Fresno County, challenging the Friant Ranch development proposal, will finally go to Fresno County Superior Court. Co-petitioners are the League of Women Voters Fresno and Revive the San Joaquin. Separate lawsuits against the County have been filed by the San Joaquin Parkway and Conservation Trust and by the City of Fresno.

This legal action challenges, under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Fresno County Board of Supervisors’ 2/1/2011 approval of the Friant Ranch Project. The proposed project would develop what is presently 940 acres of agricultural land more than seven miles north of the City of Fresno. The Friant Ranch proposal is for 2,500 homes and 300,000 sq. ft. (a city block) of retail and office space near Millerton Lake, across from Lost Lake Park on Friant Road.

The Sierra Club case is represented by attorney Babak

Naficy. Mr. Naficy has successfully represented the Sierra Club Kern-Kaweah (Bakersfield) Chapter in four lawsuits against development projects proposed for Kern and Tulare counties. Subsequent to these victories, at least 25 developers have approached the Kern-Kaweah Chapter seeking to negotiate mitigations in advance of seeking approval for their project proposals.

Our petition filed with the court argues that the project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) failed to examine and account for numerous significant adverse environmental impacts from this project, including impacts on transportation, air and water quality, and parklands. The Project also conflicts with a number of Fresno County General Plan core goals and policies, including policies intended to preserve agriculture, open space, and minimizing traffic on rural roads.

The suit also asserts that the approved project is inconsistent with Fresno County’s General Plan policies that

are to direct large-scale urban development toward communities with already-in-place infrastructure: water and sewer, roads and transit options, schools, police, and fire services. The General Plan requires orderly and logical development close to established urban areas.

In our March, 2011 press release, I was quoted as saying, “Consistent with the General Plan, Fresno County must plan development closer to existing communities, not in the middle of bucolic pastures miles from town. This project takes us in the wrong direction. ‘Leapfrog sprawl’ is simply unaffordable to our county’s treasury and to the taxpayers of Fresno County. When smart growth principles are violated, the taxpayers are stuck with the bill.”

This court hearing is open to the public, and Sierra Club members are invited to attend.

Date: September 21, 2012

Time: 1:30 PM

Place: Juvenile Delinquency Facility

3333 East American Avenue, Suite A, 2nd floor, Fresno

The Juvenile Delinquency Facility is located just off Highway 99. From Fresno, travel six miles south on Highway 99. Exit at American Avenue. Head west and then take the first left into the facility parking lot.

For more information, contact the author at (559) 790-3495 or data.nations@gmail.com.

State Capitol Legislative Update

CEQA Survives Last-Minute Attack

by Gary Lasky

California’s state legislature wrapped up its session on August 31. The final two weeks featured another whirlwind attempt (what has become an odd, annual ritual) to amend the California Environmental Quality Act. This writer is happy to report that CEQA is safe for the time being.

Led by Senator Michael Rubio (D-Bakersfield), this latest effort to demolish CEQA was a serious policy effort to dismantle our landmark environmental protection law. (What is CEQA? — See below.) This move follows 11th-hour efforts in each of the past two years to exempt large, capital projects, under the guise of creating jobs. In 2009, an infamous proposal to exempt a proposed football stadium in Los Angeles from CEQA was passed in a flurry of late-night sessions. (Note: Three years have passed and no sign of stadium construction.) This precedent led, the following year, to a wish-list by Gov. Schwarzenegger of over 60 new projects that he wanted exempted from CEQA.

Rubio’s latest effort is justified by the hot-button argument that CEQA is a “job killer”. I have yet to see any logical argument to support this claim. Yet this assertion is a staple of politicians’ talking points (from both Democrats and Republicans) in the San Joaquin Valley, a region that has only begun to bounce back from the Great Recession. We need to fight back with arguments that CEQA protects our planning process from rash projects that would harm our quality of life in California.

CEQA protects our economy, too. With CEQA, we can be assured that our homes will not have a fracking oil well, a strip mall, or a housing development built next door without public notification, investigation into foreseeable environmental impacts, and opportunity for public comment. This is not only good for the environment; it’s good for property values, too. Individual property rights need to be balanced against the need for communities to plan and control their destiny. Only the government can play this crucial role for planning our future, and we all benefit from it.

How does CEQA work?

Since the early 1970s, the California Environmental Quality Act has evolved to be an important tool for residents who wish to preserve their quality of life from dramatic alterations of their environment, often in the form of real estate development projects. The Act is designed to ensure that the public is informed of the harmful environmental impacts of a proposed project in order that it can turn, at election time, to the ballot box to replace elected officials who are not working in the best interest of the public.

CEQA is a procedural law — it functions by ensuring that an orderly process is used in the writing of an Environmental Impact Report, or EIR. EIRs are created for large or controversial projects that affect the well-being and quality of life of the public.

According to CEQA, and as modified over time by case law (State court decisions) and guidelines from the California Secretary of Natural Resources, an EIR must identify the harmful impacts of a project on the environment. These impacts must

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 –

be addressed wherever they exist, including in the categories of air quality, water quality, wastewater, water supply, biology, archaeology, traffic, and aesthetics. In addition, the cumulative impacts of a project, in combination with other projects of the same type in the region, must be examined. Cumulative impacts may occur despite the insignificance of an individual project’s impact when, taken over time and in a region, the combined impact is significant.

One example of cumulative impacts is Air Quality. In the San Joaquin Valley, our air basin is rated as an “extreme non-attainment area” for ozone. This means that we exceed the number of allowable days per year for which the ozone levels exceeds a specified threshold. Levels above this threshold are known to harm human health. Because we already have a public health threat from ozone, any proposed project that delivers even the tiniest amount of ozone into our San Joaquin Air Basin is a significant environmental impact, based on the cumulative impact of this project, in combination with other already constructed and foreseeable projects in the future.

The EIR usually is prepared by consultants under the direction of County staff. In writing the EIR, the preparer must evaluate each predicted environmental impact of the project. Where there is no accepted standard, the preparer may improvise the methodology for this study and may, in fact, ignore best practices to use a rough-and-ready method. The courts are lenient in evaluating an EIR’s methodology, so you cannot usually win a challenge to an EIR by debating how the EIR evaluation was done.

On the other hand, EIRs can be successfully challenged by demonstrating to the court that a likely environmental impact was entirely ignored in the EIR analysis. It is necessary to show that this issue was raised in the public comment period and that the issue was ignored in the Final EIR.

Another required element in EIR preparation is *mitigation*. Mitigations are actions taken by the project applicant to attempt to reduce each environmental impact of a project to a level of insignificance. A “Statement of Overriding Considerations” can be made by the lead agency for a project if it is determined that, after all feasible mitigations are put into place, a particular environmental issue remains significant to the environment. Note: Feasibility is a practical matter and does involve cost issues, so a potential mitigation may be too expensive to implement and thus declared to be “infeasible”.

In the case of the Friant Ranch project, plaintiffs assert that the County did nothing more than token mitigations to relieve the traffic congestion and air pollution that will result from 18,000 additional vehicle trips per day after the Friant Ranch project reaches buildout.

Legislation that Sierra Club California Wants the Governor to Sign and to Veto

Working on a shoestring budget, our dedicated Sierra Club California lobby operation in Sacramento has just completed another grueling legislative session. As politicians return from Sacramento for Labor Day weekend picnics and election campaigning, the hard-earned fruits of their own labor in the 2011-2012 session have been passed on to Governor Jerry Brown to sign or veto. At press time, there was no word yet on the fate of several important environmental bills. See the following list of bills that Sierra Club California encourages the Governor to sign — and to veto:

September 06, 2012

Dear Governor Brown:

Sierra Club California respectfully requests your signature on the following bills, which we consider the most important environmental bills on your desk:

SB 535 (De Leon) – Would help fulfill the commitments made in the California Global Warming Act (AB 32) to work towards a clean energy future for California, specifically aimed at disadvantaged communities.

SB 1066 (Lieu) – Would ensure that the State Coastal Conservancy funds and undertakes coastal protection projects that address climate change.

SB 1221 (Lieu) – Would prohibit the use of dogs for bear and bobcat hunting while still allowing hunters to take bears and bobcats during open season with the appropriate Department of Fish and Game licenses and tags.

SB 1222 (Leno) – Would establish a cap on permit fees charged by local governments for residential and commercial rooftop solar voltaic energy systems.

SB 1329 (Simitian) – Would allow more healthcare facilities to participate in distribution program of usable pharmaceutical supplies that would otherwise be discarded and possibly end up in our waterways and pollute our environment.

SB 1339 (Yee) – Would create a four-year pilot program in the San Francisco Bay Area to allow for wider adoption of a commute benefit requirement that provides incentives to encourage alternatives to driving alone to work.

SB 1464 (Lowenthal) – Would establish safe passing distance and other procedures for motorized vehicles passing bicycles.

AB 685 (Eng) – Would establish a right to water for basic human needs as a policy of the state of California.

AB 1478 (Blumenfield) – Would direct \$20 million in special fund money to state parks and strengthen the composition and duties of the State Parks and Recreation Commission.

AB 1532 (Perez) – Would provide appropriate and necessary guidance on state distribution of auction revenues collected from California's cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas reductions.

AB 1589 (Huffman) – Would establish new funding to prevent closures of state parks and provide more clarity on how the Department of State Parks and Recreation selects parks for closures.

AB1801 (Campos) – Would require solar permit fees to be computed based on actual costs associated with the permit and specifically prohibit fees from being computed based on the value or the cost of the rooftop solar photovoltaic energy system.

Sierra Club California also urges you to reject and veto the following bills which we find harmful to California's environmental goals. Please veto:

SB 744 (Wyland) – Would remove the independent, non-biased, third-party county sealer of weights and measures from the accuracy inspection process for water submeters prior to installation.

AB 480 (Solario) – Would allow landfills to use captive insurance, a type of insurance that is backed loosely by the asset of landfill owners or its parent companies, to fulfill 50% of their closure and post-closure financial assurance obligation.

AB 845 (Ma) – Would undermine a 1984 voter-passed initiative to protect sensitive marshes from landfill expansion for imported garbage.

AB 976 (Hall) – Would make the launch of new Community Choice Aggregation programs virtually impossible by prohibiting any contact by local governments with potential providers of electricity or energy services prior to the commencement of service to customers.

AB 2200 (Ma) – Would increase congestion and pollution by eliminating the HOV lane on eastbound Highway 80 morning traffic between San Francisco and Sacramento.

AB 2154 (Bradford) – Would prescribe how the California Public Utilities Commission performs an updated study of the costs and benefits of Net Energy Metering, and would severely compromise the study's results by requiring the Commission to include energy in its analysis that is not actually net metered.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Phillips
Director



Jim Metropulos
Senior Advocate



Annie Pham
Policy Advocate

FRESNO CITIZENS AND METRO AREA RESIDENTS — GET INVOLVED IN THE FUTURE OF YOUR CITY

These are the dates for the workshops with City Planners on the details of the 2035 Fresno General Plan. All Meetings are on Wednesday, beginning at 6 pm, and are held in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The City is encouraging the Public to participate at these Special Meetings of the Planning Commission.

September 26 — Urban Form, Land Use & Design, and SEGA Draft General Plan Chapters

October 17 — Mobility & Transportation, and Parks, Open Space, & Trails Draft General Plan Chapters

November 14 — Healthy Communities, and Historic & Cultural Draft General Plan Chapters

December 12 — Resource Conservation and Public Utilities Draft General Plan Chapters

January 16 — Economic Development, Fiscal Sustainability, Implementation, and Noise & Safety General Plan Chapters

February 13 — Wrap-up Workshop

Review the **Draft 2035 General Plan** online at <http://www.fresno.gov/planningdocs/Aug152012/VIIIB.pdf>.

Reversing the Sprawl

The Fresno Urban Plan Update Process

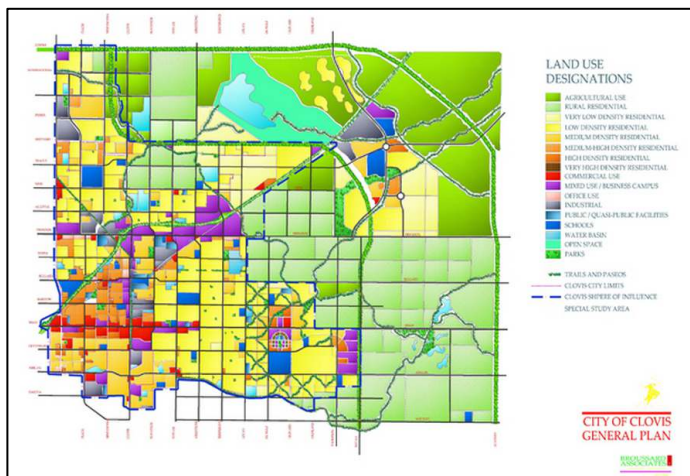
by Robert Turner

On August 23 the City of Fresno took another necessary step in the historic process of arresting its hitherto rapid growth across valuable agricultural land, by officially initiating an update of its General Plan. This allows the City Planning Commission to engage in a thorough public review of the current 40-page draft document, written by staff planners of the Development and Resource Management Department (DARM), so that by early next year the Plan Update can undergo the mandatory Environmental Impact Review that must precede its actual adoption as the foundational plan for future development in the city.

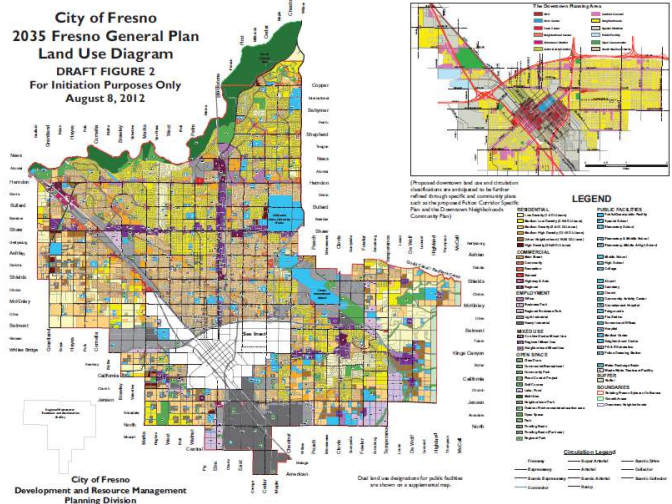
Surrounded by some of the richest farmland in the country, Fresno has expanded its borders to encompass an area eight times what it was at the midpoint of its history in 1945. Citizens, planners, and politicians, presenting now a nearly unified front on the environmental, social, and economic issues crucial to the future of the city and its environs, have come to understand that it makes plain common sense to return development to the decaying core of the city. Letting home and retail construction continue outward onto the undeveloped Valley floor will only increase traffic and air pollution and require added infrastructure in roads, water, and sewer lines, while doing nothing to help the downtown.

The new approach calls for accommodating future population growth with infill, directing new home construction to vacant areas within the city limits, where, with judicious planning, complete neighborhoods can be established by building new connecting roads, elementary schools within walking distance of all homes, and new parks and community centers. Three rapid-bus transit corridors will link centers of higher-density mixed residential/commercial development, where life can be lived without the need to drive on every shopping trip.

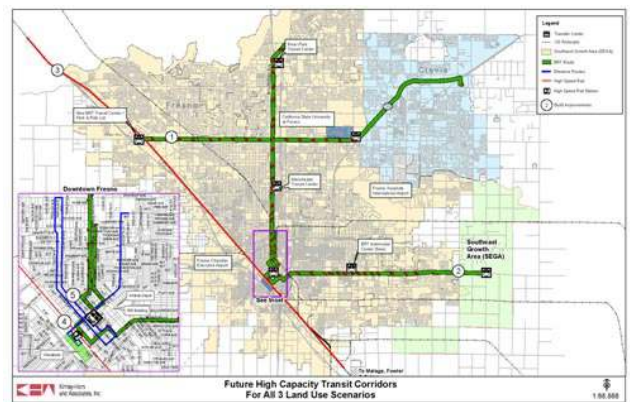
Revitalization of the inner city goes hand-in-hand with infill. Fresno has enormous potential for attracting businesses and new corporate centers, with its affordable development property, lower cost-of-living,



WHILE THE CITY OF CLOVIS HAS PLANS FOR A LARGE NEW PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT, ITS GENERAL PLAN EXTENDS FAR BEYOND ITS LEGAL SPHERE OF INFLUENCE TO ENCOMPASS OVER SIXTY SQUARE MILES OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AS POTENTIAL "RURAL RESIDENTIAL" AREAS.

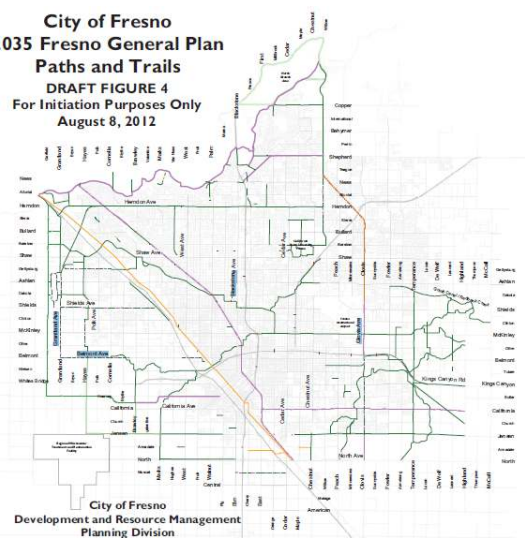


THE LAND USE DIAGRAM ON PAGE 21 OF THE PDF COPY OF THE INITIATION REVIEW DRAFT IS A MINUTELY DETAILED MAP THAT STILL LOOKS SHARP AT 16 TIMES ITS ORIGINAL SIZE.



BLACKSTONE, SHAW, AND KINGS CANYON CORRIDORS WILL FEATURE HIGH-SPEED MASS TRANSIT VEHICLES WITH DEDICATED LANES AND GRADE-LEVEL ENTRY AND EXIT.

City of Fresno
2035 Fresno General Plan
Paths and Trails
DRAFT FIGURE 4
For Initiation Purposes Only
August 8, 2012



THE CITY PLANNERS HAVE ALREADY HAD EXTENSIVE MEETINGS WITH ORGANIZATIONS ADVOCATING FOR MORE WALKING AND JOGGING TRAILS AND BICYCLE-FRIENDLY STREETS.

ready access to fresh, healthy food, and abundant recreational opportunities in the mountains and at the reservoirs. With a high-speed rail station centered on the Mariposa Street axis only two blocks from Fulton Mall, the downtown district and Chinatown will become even more attractive to architects and developers who want to find creative ways of combining office, residential, commercial, and cultural elements in an integrated way. As more amenities are developed, people will choose to live within walking distance of their downtown jobs, eliminating their commute times and helping to reduce automobile use throughout the city.

Much has been done to involve the community in the planning process. Thanks to the Brown Act, most substantive meetings must be conducted openly. In the same spirit, the DARM planners have been admirably forthcoming about explaining the process and sharing their reasoning behind these new strategies, making themselves available to the general public, as well as to the numerous community and public-interest advocacy groups, and listening and incorporating into the plan the expressed concerns of the public. Outreach to Hispanic, Hmong, and African-American communities has been facilitated by grants and the dedicated work of many organizations, such as Fresno Metro Ministry, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, and the Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program.

The federal government has also helped enormously, not only with a large grant to fund the planning process, but also by providing direct technical assistance with the loan of 23 employees from 12 federal agencies who work here in the city. Fresno was one of only six cities in the nation chosen for this Strong Cities, Strong Communities pilot program of interagency collaboration.



THE CELEBRATED FULTON MALL, A SIX-BLOCK ART-FESTOONED PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR DESIGNED BY PIONEERING AUSTRIAN ARCHITECT VICTOR GRUEN AND AMERICAN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT GARRETT ECKBO, IS IN DANGER OF BECOMING ANOTHER CASUALTY OF THE FLIGHT OF BUSINESS AWAY FROM THE CITY CENTER THAT BEGAN EVEN BEFORE THE MALL'S 1964 DEDICATION WITH THE OPENING OF MANCHESTER CENTER.



KEITH BERGHOLD, THE PUBLIC FACE OF DARM — FRESNO CITY GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION — HAS INDEFATIGABLY SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN THE OVERALL SCOPE AND COMPLEX DETAILS OF THE NEW PLAN AT AN UNTOLD NUMBER OF PUBLIC GATHERINGS AND MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS. KEITH IS A NATIVE FRESNAN WHOSE LOVE FOR HIS HOME CITY IS FREQUENTLY EVIDENT IN HIS ENTHUSIASTIC AND ERUDITE PRESENTATIONS ON THE PLAN.

There is still much to be done. We are entering an intensely democratic part of the process, where greater public input is being sought to fine-tune the details of the document. The City Planning Commission has scheduled six special meetings dedicated as workshops with the city planners to explain and solicit public input on the several chapters of the 2035 General Plan. (A list of the meetings is at the bottom of page 11.) While it is all well and good to attend the major City Council meetings where major actions are voted upon, many more common citizens need to involve themselves in the nitty-gritty, devil-is-in-the-details aspects of developing the plan's finer points.

And once the plan is adopted, the work of the public still must go on, for we will have to ensure that the City actually follows the plan. A finalized plan can be ignored or become subject to the granting of numerous special exemptions. Democracy must be exercised at all parts of the process. It is more than just voting in the good guys.

If Fresno can stick to the infill, no-sprawl growth plan, then we will be in position to serve as model to other Valley municipalities, as well as to cities and counties across the state, able to speak with honor, guidance, and determination against governments that ignore problems that affect us all. We have an opportunity now to capture the moral high ground, but only if we all participate in the civic process.



THE PICTURE AT LEFT IS THE TYPICAL VIEW OF THE FULTON PEDESTRIAN MALL — EMPTY. ON THE RIGHT IS THE DREAM OF THE LOCAL BUSINESSES — TO RETURN VEHICLE ACCESS TO THE CORRIDOR. BUT ISN'T THERE A WAY OF RESTORING THE ECONOMIC VIGOR OF THIS DOWNTOWN LANDMARK WHILE PRESERVING ITS CAR-FREE CHARACTER? WHAT THE MALL NEEDS IS A MAJOR DESTINATION ALONG THE ROUTE, SOME PLACE OF ACTIVITY AND INTEREST THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TO THIS CITY CENTER DURING DAY AND NIGHT.

What Can One Person Do?

by Heather Anderson

I first became acquainted with Rachel Carson (1907-1964) through her posthumously published small book, *A Sense of Wonder*, compiled from an essay she had intended to expand. As a mother of small children, years back, I was inspired with Carson's ideas for helping young folks experience and understand the importance of our natural world. I even named our daughter Rachel. Our own children were fortunate to grow up in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada and explore the open space of a state park. In contrast, Carson, who had adopted her sister's child, Roger, helped him discover the natural wonders of the northeast coast.

A credo of hers was to ask that a "gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as a unflinching antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years."

As a child growing up on a small family farm in Pennsylvania near the Allegheny River, Carson early learned about birds, insects, and plants. Later, she went on to major in English and Biology at Pennsylvania College for Women, to study at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, and to earn an MA in zoology at Johns Hopkins University. She worked at the Bureau of Fish and Wildlife Service as an aquatic biologist and writer, becoming Editor-in-Chief of all publications for the Service. The world of nature was her favorite theme in both literature and writing. Her 1941 book, *Under the Sea Wind*, is about a sea ecology I never knew, as the creatures, in first-person, tell about their lives. This was followed by *The Sea Around Us* and *The Edge of the Sea*.

Carson was a firm believer in the interconnectedness of life and opposed the disrespect of species and attempts to control nature. She especially deplored the overuse of pesticides. She felt America's unsustainable capitalist economy was leading to the destruction of many ecosystems and wildlife habitats. When Carson realized the environment that mattered most to her as a naturalist was being threatened, she shifted her

literary focus from enlightening readers to nature's wonders to warning them about the effects of poisoning it. She began to see the use of pesticides as a war on nature and armed with impeccable research and articulate writing, she courageously challenged the government and the agricultural industry's practices of indiscriminate use.

Silent Spring had a broad impact on the public, the President, and the chemical companies, as well as on the environmental movement. Carson used her skill as a writer along with her science background to tell a very readable tale about the chemistry of pesticides. Much of the book dealt with pesticide's damage to natural ecosystems, but some chapters dealt with incidents of human exposure to pesticide toxicity, causing cancer, death, and neurological dysfunction in memory, problem solving, and dexterity. Pesticide companies had never before informed us of these dangers as we had gone blithely about ridding our gardens of the pests damaging our plants.

The response to the book was partially responsible for the grassroots environmental movement of the sixties, the deep ecology and ecofeminism movements, and the phase-out of DDT. The Environmental Defense Fund was formed in 1967 and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act of 1972 was also an offshoot of Carson's work. Carson's legacy to the environmental community includes a generous bequest she made to the Sierra Club, as each year the organization receives a share of the royalties from the sale of *Silent Spring* and other titles.

Carson did not urge a total ban on DDT nor an elimination of all pesticides. She was, however, widely attacked on many fronts by chemical companies and others — as an "hysterical alarmist" and a Communist, and for her "ignorance," her scientific credentials, and her "fanatic defense" of nature. Because attorneys were well prepared with facts and



PAINTING BY MINETTE BICKEL

endorsements (one by William O. Douglas), attacks on Carson and the book eventually subsided. The New York Times reported some of the furor in *Silent Spring Is Now Noisy Summer: Pesticides Industry Up in Arms Over a New Book*. As public opinion and the academic community backed Carson's claims, and the chemical industry campaign of opposition simmered out, public awareness of potential pesticide dangers increased as well as book sales.

Carson testified before the president's Science Advisory Committee, made policy recommendations, and accepted only a few speaking invitations, due to declining health as her cancer spread more rapidly than the therapy. Many honors and memorials followed — schools, trails, refuges, conservation areas, and the preservation of her birthplace homestead. The highest honor was the Presidential Medal of Freedom

One person, Rachel Carson, changed her government and the world with her insight and environmental activism. As well, she was a successful marine biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Most importantly, she was a gifted writer and gave us *Silent Spring*. She shines as an example for what one person can do. I ask myself the question again, what can one person do?

from many areas of expertise. This is probably the largest planning process ever conducted by the NPS anywhere in the country. Because what is decided in this Plan probably will set precedents for future planning processes throughout the entire National Park system, the process is being watched closely from well beyond California.

Among those who have been watching, and participating in the planning process, are vested interests and politicians who are always looking for opportunities to convert scenery into money.

The Yosemite planning process is nearing a critical stage, with a draft document due out for public comment soon. But by the time a draft document is being circulated, the NPS will already be committed to certain general themes, and it will be very difficult to bring about a major course correction that late in the process.

The NPS planning process takes place within the constraints of a number of different laws, rules, and regulations. All of this legally mandated guidance is oriented toward preserving the natural features of the Park in such a way as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. The guidelines also call for making the Park available for enjoyment by present visitors.

That is fine as far as it goes. Public opinion polls have consistently demonstrated that most people want their Park kept in a natural condition, and that would normally be the

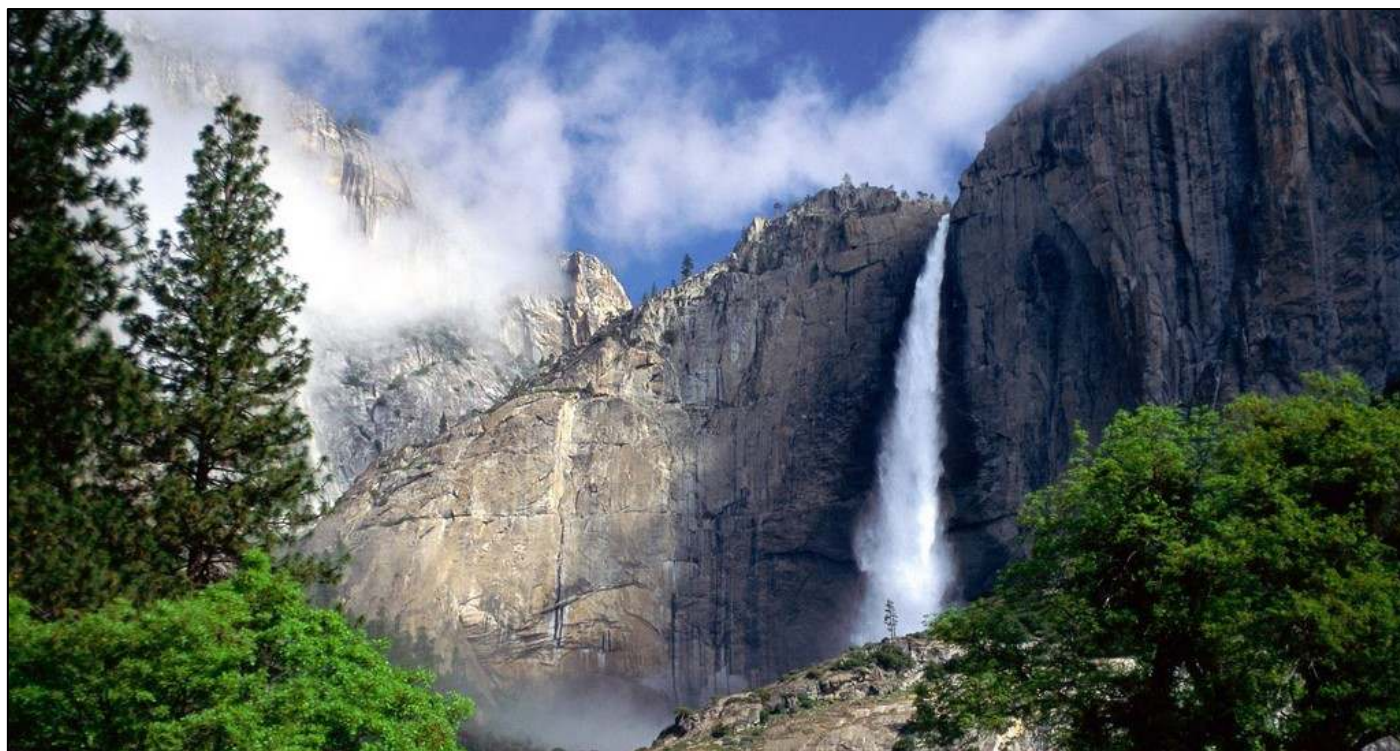
outcome of an unimpaired planning process. However, money talks, and it distorts the planning process. The present process is no exception. The NPS is being pressured to generate more economic development, and that inevitably means more asphalt and more development crammed into a very finite Yosemite Valley. The objective becomes more jobs and tax revenue. And what about the bears? Well, they can take the short end of it, because they don't generate any revenue.

Yosemite National Park, within easy driving distance of Tehipite Chapter members, enjoys an abundance of informed visitors who know the Park well. You probably have some strongly held views about how the Park should be managed, and it is time for you to be heard.

If you are concerned about the bears and the scenery, and feel that they should not be sacrificed on the altar of economic "progress", then the NPS needs to hear from you immediately.

You can write Superintendent Don Neubacher, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389. You can also email him at Don_Neubacher@nps.gov. You can also phone him at (209) 372-0201.

If you would like further information, please feel free to contact George Whitmore, chair of Tehipite Chapter Yosemite Committee at geowhit1954@comcast.net (recommended), or phone (559) 229-5808.



THE UPPER YOSEMITE FALLS — A NATIONAL TREASURE



**TEHIPITE CHAPTER
OF THE SIERRA CLUB**
P.O. BOX 5396
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93755-5396

Non Profit Org
U. S. Postage
PAID
Fresno, Calif.
Permit No. 150

Inside this issue of *Tehipite Topics*

Travels to the Middle Kingdom — There and Back Again:
Lessons for US..... Cover

Meetings and Information..... 2-3

Merced Group News..... 4

California/Nevada Wilderness Committee Meeting..... 5

Tehipite Chapter Current Events..... 8

State Capitol Legislative Update..... 9

Reversing the Sprawl..... 12

What Can One Person Do?..... 14

Yosemite at the Tipping Point..... 16

Tehipite Topics is currently published four times per year. Articles and photographs from Sierra Club members are welcome. Please send your contributions for the January-March 2013 issue by the end of November. Submissions can be emailed to robertsturner52@gmail.com.

A Call to Write the Park Superintendent Now!

Yosemite at the Tipping Point

by George Whitmore

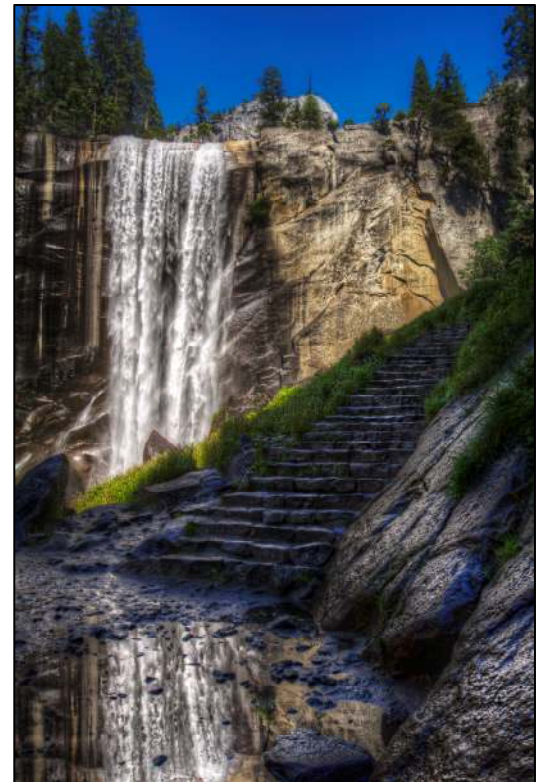
Have you ever considered how much money could be made by diverting Yosemite Falls into a hydroelectric penstock? The economic value of the scenery is difficult to calculate, whereas the economic value of falling water is easily determined. Considering how money drives most decisions in our society, it is remarkable that Yosemite Falls is still there every Spring, freely leaping into space in a thunderous roar.

While the idea of harnessing Yosemite Falls for hydroelectric power might seem unthinkable, other less obvious ways of degrading Yosemite Valley are a real possibility.

As the result of legislation enacted in 1987, the National Park Service (NPS) in Yosemite was directed to produce a management plan for that portion of the Merced River corridor which lies within the Park. This includes practically all of Yosemite Valley, El Portal, and major parts of Wawona. It also includes the wilderness portions of the Merced River corridor, starting at the headwaters south of Mount Lyell. (The Tuolumne River corridor is undergoing a separate NPS planning process, but it does not involve Yosemite Valley.)

After two earlier Yosemite plans for the Merced River were rejected by the courts, the NPS embarked on a massive planning effort to try to get it right the third time. Large numbers of NPS staff are being assisted by specialists

– CONTINUED INSIDE ON PAGE 15 –



STEPS FROM A TIME BEFORE THE PARK SERVICE — CAN WE BUILD IN THE VALLEY ONLY TO COMPLEMENT AND NEVER TO OVERWHELM THE NATURAL SCENE?