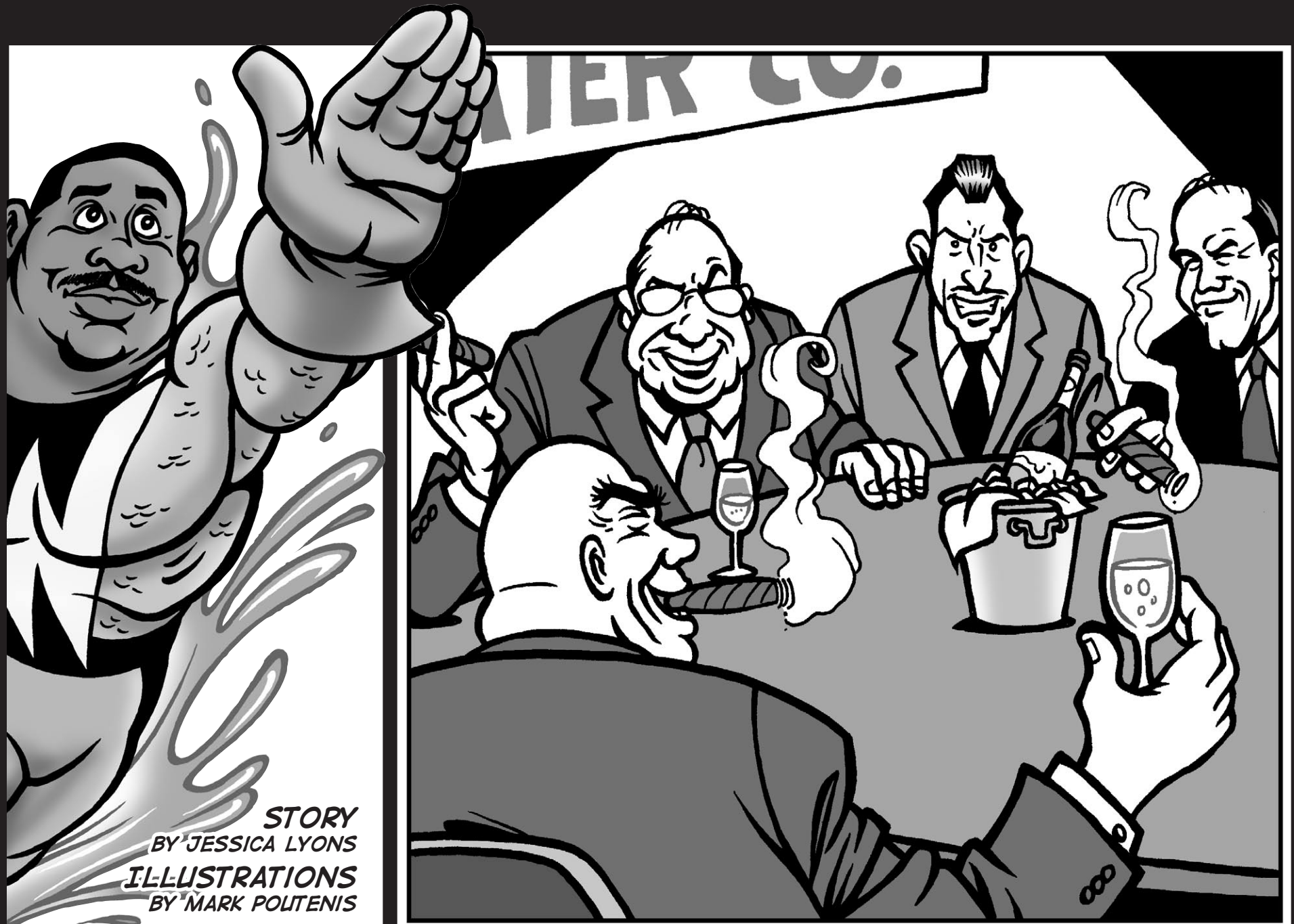


IT'S OUR WATER!

THE HEROIC HISTORY OF MEASURE 'W'



STORY
BY JESSICA LYONS
ILLUSTRATIONS
BY MARK POUTENIS

CHAPTER 1: THE MULTINATIONAL'S LOCAL MINIONS!

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER COMPANY OFFICIALS SIT IN A DARK, UNDERGROUND ROOM, SMOKING CIGARS AND SIPPING CRISTAL, LAUGHING ABOUT THEIR PLOT TO **DOUBLE LOCAL WATER RATES** AS SOON AS THE STATE APPROVES THE HIKE! AND **TRIPLE THEM** IN FIVE YEARS!

"MWAHAHAHAHA!. WE'RE **RICH!** AND WE'RE GOING TO GET EVEN RICHER OFF THOSE MONTEREY PENINSULA PEOPLE, WHO ALREADY PAY SOME OF THE **HIGHEST WATER RATES** IN CALIFORNIA!"

CAL AM'S GERMAN OWNER, RWE, MAKES \$2.6 **BILLION** IN PROFITS EVERY YEAR! RWE IS THE **BIGGEST** WATER SYSTEM OWNER IN THE US, AND THE 78TH LARGEST COMPANY, OF ANY KIND, **IN THE WORLD!** IT LOVES TO **GOUGE** CUSTOMERS!

MEANWHILE: CAL AM RATEPAYERS ARE FED UP. THEY'RE MAD AS HELL ABOUT **LEAKY PIPES**, OLD PUMPS, AND A **SILTED-UP** SAN CLEMENTE DAM. WHO WILL PAY FOR THESE REPAIRS? WHY, THE RATEPAYERS, OF COURSE!

CAL AM STOCKHOLDERS RAKE IN THE BENJAMINS. AND LITTLE OLD LADIES BUY **CAT FOOD** FOR DINNER SO THEY CAN AFFORD TO PAY THEIR WATER BILLS!

STILL, LOCAL CUSTOMERS CONTINUE TO CONSERVE WATER, CUTTING USAGE ON THE PENINSULA BY MORE THAN 20 PERCENT. MANY RESIDENTS (GASP!) HAVE TO SHARE A **SINGLE BATHROOM** AT HOME, BECAUSE THERE ISN'T ENOUGH WATER TO ADD A **SECOND TOILET!** EEEWWW!!!

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MEASURE 'W'

CHAPTER 2: THE CARMEL RIVER DIES!



ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND FRIENDLY FISHERMEN WALK ALONG THE DRIED-UP CARMEL RIVER. THEY TRY TO SAVE FLOPPING FISH. BUT THEY ARE **TOO LATE!**

"POOR LITTLE **DEAD STEELHEAD!** YOU WILL NEVER GROW INTO A MATURE FISH, AND WILL NEVER SEE THE MAJESTIC MONTEREY BAY!"

"AND YOU, DEAD **RED-LEGGED FROG,** WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WATERY HOME?"

CAL AM HAS BEEN ILLEGALLY **OVERPUMPING** WATER FROM THE CARMEL RIVER FOR YEARS!

IN 1995, THE STATE SLAPPED CAL AM WITH A WARNING-- THE DREADED **ORDER 95-10**--WHICH RULED THAT CAL AM DID NOT HAVE A LEGAL WATER RIGHT TO **69 PERCENT** OF THE WATER IT WAS PUMPING FROM THE CARMEL RIVER.

(THIS WAS A RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS FILED BY THE SIERRA CLUB, THE CARMEL RIVER STEELHEAD ASSOCIATION AND THE CALIFORNIA SPORTFISHING PROTECTION ALLIANCE.)

THE STATE ORDERED CAL AM TO DO TWO THINGS: PUMP LESS WATER FROM THE DYING RIVER, AND CREATE A LONG-TERM WATER SUPPLY FOR THE PENINSULA.

CAL AM DID NEITHER!

THE RIVER RUNS DRY WHEN IT SHOULDN'T!
ENDANGERED FISH AND FROGS DIE!

AND NOW, 10 YEARS LATER, CAL AM IS ALSO **OVERPUMPING** THE SEASIDE BASIN! THAT'S THE PENINSULA'S ONLY OTHER MAIN SOURCE!
WE'RE ALL **DRIED OUT!**

MEANWHILE: THE COMPANY'S ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE DOESN'T END IN MONTEREY...

RWE, CAL AM'S PARENT COMPANY, IS KNOWN IN ENGLAND AS THE COUNTRY'S **WORST** POLLUTER. IT DUMPED MORE THAN **ONE MILLION TONS** OF UNTREATED **SEWAGE** INTO THE RIVER THAMES!

AS MONTEREY PENINSULA RESIDENTS LEARN THESE FACTS, THEY SAY: "WE CALIFORNIANS CARE ABOUT OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS! WE ARE GOOD STEWARDS! WHY DON'T WE CONTROL **OUR OWN WATER SYSTEM?**"

WATER, CONTINUED ON PG. 20

CHAPTER 3: LOCAL BUSINESSMEN JOIN THE FIGHT!



IN A CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL (CO-OWNED BY ATTORNEY **PETER CONIGLIO**, A FORMER MONTEREY MAYOR) LOCAL BUSINESSMEN SIT AND TALK. THEY'VE BEEN SUMMONED HERE TODAY BY CONIGLIO, WHO SHINED A SPOTLIT "W" SYMBOL INTO THE FOGGY NIGHT SKY! (OR MAYBE HE SIMPLY SENT OUT AN E-MAIL...)

THEY DRINK "**RECYCLED WATER**." (THAT'S A FANCY NAME FOR SEWAGE THAT HAS BEEN TREATED AND TURNED INTO DRINKING WATER! **EWWW!** OH, WAIT, THEY'RE ACTUALLY DRINKING GIN. WHEW!) THE LOCALS SWEAT BULLETS AND WORRY THAT THE HIGH PRICE FOR WATER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA WILL **HURT THEIR BUSINESSES**.

"SOON, WE WILL HAVE TO START PASSING THE BUCK ON TO OUR CUSTOMERS. HOTEL ROOMS WILL COST MORE! SO WILL HOMES! WHAT CAN WE DO?"

IN A DREAM-LIKE STATE (OR MAYBE IT'S THE GIN), THEY BEGIN TO IMAGINE A PUBLICLY-OWNED WATER SYSTEM.

"A PUBLIC COMPANY WOULD SAVE MONEY! IT WOULD BE TAX EXEMPT! IT COULD GET **CHEAPER** LOANS FOR SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT! IT WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS TO REPAIR THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FIX THE DAM! AND TO BUILD A DESALINATION PLANT!

"AND WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO TALK TO SOMEONE IN GERMAN (OR IN ILLINOIS) IF WE HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR BILLS!

"LET'S FORM A GROUP WITH A CATCHY NAME, SAY, **MONTEREY FLOW**, AND STUDY A PUBLIC TAKEOVER. PETER, YOU WILL BE OUR PRESIDENT!"

WATER, CONTINUED ON PG. 22

CHAPTER 4: OUR HERO!



BACK AT THE WATER DISTRICT, DISTRICT TRUSTEE **ALVIN EDWARDS** HAS A PLAN.

"CAL AM **MISMANAGES** OUR WATER DELIVERY SYSTEM! IT MAKES A LOT OF MONEY OFF OF A PUBLIC RESOURCE!

"LET'S TAKE BACK **OUR WATER!**"

EDWARDS CALLS FOR AN ADVISORY VOTE ON THE NOV. 8 BALLOT. THREE OTHER BOARD MEMBERS--**JUDI LEHMAN, KRISTI MARKEY** AND **DAVE POTTER**--AGREE.

THREE OTHERS--**LARRY FOY** (A FORMER CAL AM EXEC), **MICHELLE KNIGHT**, AND **DAVID PENDERGRASS**--DISAGREE.

IT'S CLOSE, BUT THE **GOOD GUYS WIN** THIS TIME. **MEASURE W** GOES ON THE BALLOT. IT ASKS CITIZENS IF THEY WILL PAY FOR A STUDY OF PUBLIC WATER OWNERSHIP. IF PASSED, IT WILL BEGIN IN JANUARY. IT WILL COST \$550,000--ONLY \$14.47 PER WATER CONNECTION! THAT'S ONLY \$1.20 A MONTH! WHAT A BARGAIN!

CAL AM EXECS LAUNCH A ZILLION-DOLLAR PR BLITZ. THEY POACH PR BABE **CATHERINE BOWIE** FROM **ARMANASCO PUBLIC RELATIONS**. THEY SEND OUT A TON OF GLOSSY DIRECT MAIL. THEY CONDUCT AGGRESSIVE PUSH-POLLS.

THEY WRITE A \$6,000 CHECK TO THE PACIFIC GROVE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR **GOOD OLD DAYS!** (THE CHAMBER'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS LATER VOTES TO OPPOSE MEASURE W BEFORE IT'S EVEN APPROVED FOR THE BALLOT.)

THEY BUY FULL-PAGE ADS IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, INCLUDING (AT LEAST, AS OF THIS WRITING) **THE WEEKLY!**

CHAPTER 5: MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE WORLD!



IT'S A MONTH BEFORE THE NOVEMBER ELECTION--AND CAL AM'S **JUDGMENT DAY**. SUDDENLY **VICTORIA KAPLAN**, THE NATIONAL ORGANIZER FOR PUBLIC CITIZEN'S "WATER FOR ALL" CAMPAIGN, BURSTS INTO CAL AM'S SMOKE-FILLED ROOM!

THE LIGHT OF DAY (OR IS THAT **TRUTH?**) SHINES IN. SHE'S ARMED WITH A NEW REPORT, PUBLISHED BY THE D.C.-BASED CONSUMER PROTECTION GROUP. IN BIG LETTERS:

"CALIFORNIA AND KENTUCKY CITIES SHOULD FIRE CORPORATE WATER GIANT."

THIS REPORT EXPOSES EGREGIOUS BEHAVIOR OF CAL AM'S PARENT COMPANY WORLDWIDE! IT SAYS:

"RWE'S GOT A **HORRIBLE** TRACK RECORD OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION! **RISKY** BUSINESS VENTURES! AND **DISMAL** CUSTOMER SERVICE! CUSTOMERS ARE REALLY UNHAPPY!"

KAPLAN THROWS THE HEAVY REPORT AT THE WATER COMPANY EXECS, WHO COWER AND CRY. IT FALLS OPEN TO A SECTION TITLED, "THE PUBLIC CHALLENGE TO BUY BACK THEIR WATER..."

MEANWHILE:

IN 2002, THE SAN MATEO COUNTY COASTAL TOWN OF MONTARA WON AN IMPORTANT **PUBLIC VICTORY** AGAINST CAL AM'S SISTER COMPANY, PROMPTING OTHER COMMUNITIES TO FOLLOW SUIT. MONTARA WATER RATES HAD **SKYROCKETED**, AND THE DELIVERY SYSTEM WAS OLD AND LEAKY. (HMMM...SOUNDS FAMILIAR). SO RESIDENTS VOTED--WITH 80 PERCENT IN FAVOR--TO APPROVE A \$19 MILLION BOND TO TAKE BACK THE WATER UTILITY. BUT THE PUBLIC-VERSUS-PRIVATE-WATER BATTLE DIDN'T END IN MONTARA...

STOCKTON RESIDENTS (ALSO FED UP WITH RISING RATES AND POOR CUSTOMER SERVICE) ARE FIGHTING WATER PRIVATIZATION IN THE COURTS! AND THEY'VE GOT ATTORNEY GENERAL **BILL LOCKYER** ON THEIR SIDE!

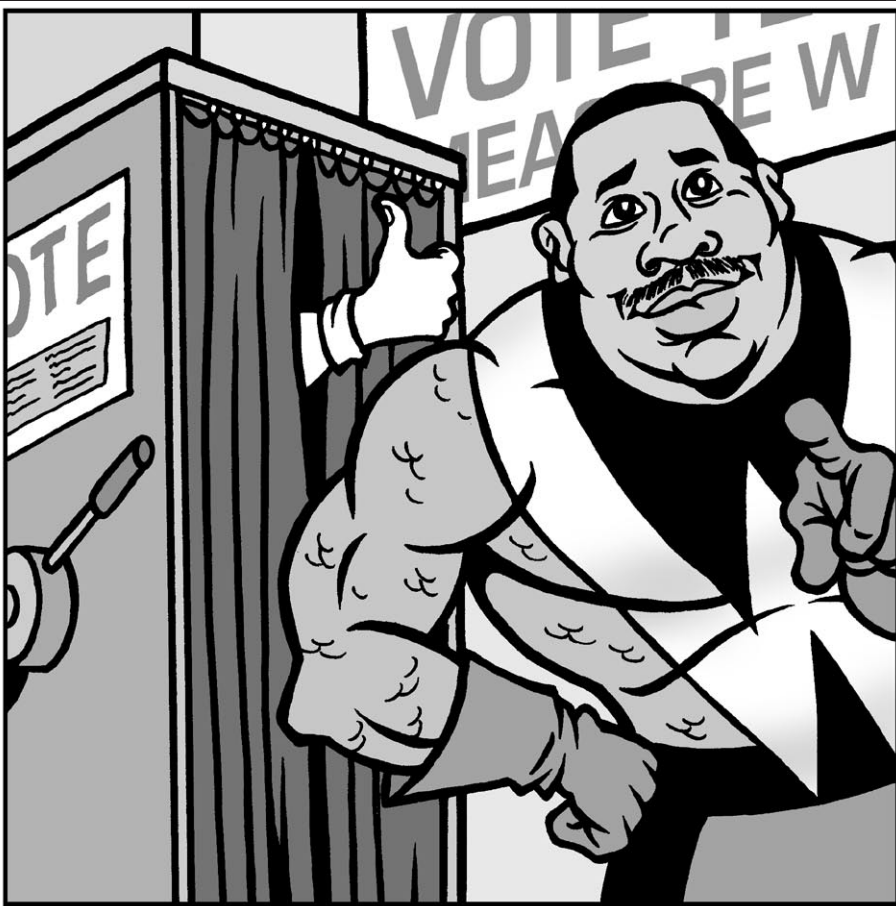
AND IN LEXINGTON, KY., A CITIZENS' GROUP CALLED BLUEGRASS FLOW IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER KENTUCKY AMERICAN WATER.

IN FELTON, A TINY TOWN IN THE SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS, CAL AM CUSTOMERS RECENTLY APPROVED AN \$11 MILLION BOND TO FINANCE A PUBLIC BUYOUT.

AND IN BUFFALO, N.Y., WHEN AMERICAN WATER WANTED A DOUBLE-DIGIT RATE INCREASE, THE CITY COUNCIL DECIDED TO NOT RENEW THE COMPANY'S CONTRACT. A PUBLIC WATER AUTHORITY WILL SOON ASSUME CONTROL OF THE WATER SYSTEM.

"IN MONTEREY, MEASURE W IS **GAINING STEAM!**"

CHAPTER 6: CAN YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING?



AT THE LAST MINUTE, CAL AM OFFICIALS HAVE A COLLECTIVE **CHANGE OF HEART**.

"WE WILL **FIGHT** MEASURE W! SURE, WE TOLD YOU ALL THAT WE WOULDN'T CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BALLOT MEASURE. BUT WE CHANGED OUR MINDS."

AS IN OTHER COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE CHALLENGED CAL AM'S CORPORATE OWNERSHIP, AN ASTROTURF GRASSROOTS CITIZEN'S GROUP, "WATER NOT POLITICS," WHICH OPPOSES MEASURE W, SPROUTS UP. A "TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION" FILES A LAWSUIT CHALLENGING MEASURE W.

BUT LOCAL BUSINESSPEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS AREN'T DETERRED. THE LIKES OF MONTEREY COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION'S **DARRYL KENYON**, ENVIRONMENTALIST **JANICE O'BRIEN**, NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL PROFESSOR **RON WEITZMAN**, LONGTIME ACTIVIST-ATTORNEYS **BILL MONNING**, **MICHAEL STAMP** AND **ZAN HENSON**, THE SIERRA CLUB'S **GILLIAN TAYLOR**, MONTEREY MERCEDES INDEPENDENT SERVICE, INC. OWNER **JOSE J. BAZZOLA**, AND PEOPLES MORTGAGE BANC OWNER **GEORGE MCBRIDE**, AMONG MANY, MANY OTHERS JOIN HANDS AND MARCH TO THE POLLS.

A DRUMMER AND A FLUTIST PLAY IN THE DISTANCE.

COUNTY RESIDENTS FILL OUT THEIR BALLOTS, AND VOTE **YES** ON MEASURE W.

TO BE CONTINUED...