

CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE FIVE DAY FAST TO LET IRAQ LIVE
THIRTEEN FASTERS AND SUPPORTERS WEATHER THE STORM TO STAND FOR PEACE
Downtown San Jose, California

SAN JOSE, Calif – Dec 19, 2002 – The Closing Ceremony of the Five Day Fast to Let Iraq live will be held Friday, December 20 at 5:30pm in front of the Federal Building on Second at San where thirteen water-only fasters and their supporters have held vigil since Sunday night to oppose a preemptive strike on Iraq. The Closing Ceremony will include speeches by San Jose Councilmember Cindy Chavez as well as the fasters themselves who will speak on their experiences. All are encouraged to join the Closing Ceremony and the first meal of bread and vegetable soup.

The Fast Team has remained present at the site, despite omnipresent rain and heavy winds, and has received over 175 supporters during that time—many who visit repeatedly to check on the health of the fasters and offer much-needed supplies to protect against the elements. The fasters include Bay Area community members and students from Santa Clara University, a diverse group of environmental, labor, and human rights activists who join an equally-diverse and ever-growing anti-war movement. Recent anti-war statements and resolutions include the World Council of Churches, the San Francisco Labor Council, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the NAACP Board of Directors, and the California Federation of Teachers.

The Fast is a nonviolent form of public opposition to the ongoing aggression against the innocent people of Iraq—especially on the part of the US government—including the first Gulf War, a decade of sanctions, and the newest threat of a pre-emptive strike. Iraq poses no immediate threat to the US and there is no substantiated evidence suggesting Iraqi connections to the September 11th attacks¹. UN Weapons Inspectors have, in the past, been effective at locating and neutralizing Iraqi weapons programs and in similar situations diplomatic means have proven successful at de-escalating potential conflict. The Fast is a planned act of communal opposition and is drawing together individuals and groups from throughout the area that call for peace and diplomacy during these times of escalating and unwarranted aggression.

The Fast is being sponsored by the Santa Clara University Peace Action Committee, a group of students and community members who came together after the violence of September 11th and October 7th—the day the US began bombing Afghanistan—and their aim is to encourage nonviolent solutions to violence. They can be contacted at A_Voice_For_Peace_at_SCU@yahoogroups.com.

Endorsing Groups: Call to Action of Northern California, GREEN Party of Santa Clara County, Human Concerns Commission of the Diocese of San Jose, Interfaith Peace Coalition, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, PaxChristi San Jose, The People's Nonviolent Response coalition of the East Bay, San Jose Chapter of School of the Americas Watch, San Jose Interfaith Peace Action, San Jose Peace Center, South Bay Labor for Peace and Justice, South Bay Mobilization to Stop the War, Stanford Community for Peace and Justice, St. Joseph's Cathedral Social Justice Committee, St Paul's United Methodist Church, United for Peace San Jose

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¹ Former UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter, <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/09/13/ritter.cnn/>