

World in Changes

World in changes still going through.

I've got a lot to learn about you.

World in changes still going through.

You've got a lot to learn about me too.

Dave Mason, "World in Changes"

I'm reeling in the years after going to see Dave Mason last Friday. He was much older looking with a large tummy to boot, but he aged with guitar perfection. His voice was deep, bluesy and soulfully sentimental. What a show to hear at the El Rey! I couldn't help but think it would have been a great show to see at the Oroville State Theater. It was rock-and-roll amazing. At one point during the show he told us how he had written the song he was about to perform when he was 22. He lamented that was 40 years ago, in 1969. He is 62 now. Forty years ago I was 16 going on 56. This year I will turn 56 for real.

When I was 16 I lived in the Bay Area. I can remember looking out at the Bay, listening to Dave Mason's song "World in Changes." The song fit 1969, and it still fits today in 2009. When I was 16 the world was in changes. In the 1960s everything was changing. It was an incredible time and it was my time to grow and understand the world a little bit better. It was years of awakening for many.

I can remember my teachers at school crying to hear that John F. Kennedy had been assassinated in Dallas. I can remember Martin Luther King, Jr. being assassinated in Atlanta and the profound sorrow I felt that the world had lost such an incredible man. And I can remember Walter Cronkite crying when Bobby Kennedy was killed. I remember my brother being in Vietnam, and my concern for his well-being. The world was constantly changing. It was a time for understanding the human condition and the environment that we lived in.

In those years I was basically a street kid living in San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley. I can remember my friends around me getting involved in weed, whites and wine and ultimately several of my friends died from heroine. But I was fortunate to meet Viviane Levine who came to our continuation school to ask for volunteers to work with the United Farm Workers to help the migrant farm workers in California. It was the '60s mantra to help people and I listened with rapt attention about how I could help poor people in the fields who worked to provide the abundance for America. I wound up working with farm workers from the time I was 15 years old until I was 19 and worked in Delano, Salinas and Mendota. Those years saved my life. I picked strawberries in Salinas and melons in Mendota. I know what hard work is. I labored

alongside workers of all ages, from young children to people in their 70s and 80s. I can remember one older gentleman named Candido Feliciano who was in his 70s.

During those years helping the farm workers further their cause for better working conditions, I made \$5 a week plus room and board. It wasn't much, but the experience was priceless and what I learned back then has shaped me into who I am today. I had the immense honor of meeting Cesar Chavez, who embodied the idea of sacrificing oneself for a greater good. Many times he fasted to produce a solution to the condition. One of his greatest influences was Mahatma Ghandi, whose greatest quote I feel is, "You must be the change you want to see in the world."

These years shaped my life and allowed me to more deeply understand the human need that is still with us today. When I turned 19, I decided to go to Merritt Junior College in Oakland where I majored in Ornamental Horticulture and minored in Philosophy. That's when I decided I wanted to work with the good Earth, and is what led me to my work in the parks and recreation field.

The world is still in changes, but I believe there are many positive changes ahead. We just have to visualize that they will come about for ourselves and for our country, and hopefully the world. It's a new time with a new leader and an exciting time to help those around us prosper.

Dave Mason brought back strong memories for me. It was great to see him. Hopefully next time I see him he will be performing at the Oroville State Theater.

Quote

"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."
~ John F. Kennedy

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"
~ Martin Luther King

"All of us might wish at times that we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't. And if our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity." ~ Robert F. Kennedy

"From the depth of need and despair, people can work together, can organize themselves to solve their own problems and fill their own needs with dignity and strength." ~ Cesar Chavez

Question

What project was built by the Red Cross for swimming lessons at Bedrock Park? E-mail your answer to bob@frrpd.com. The first person to respond with the correct answer will win \$20!

The Facts

Cesar Chavez led the historic non-violent movement for farm worker rights. He dedicated himself to building a movement of poor working people that extended beyond the fields and into cities and towns across the nation.

In 1962, he founded the United Farm Workers of America. It is the nation's first successful and largest farm workers union currently active in 10 states. The UFW's vision is to provide farm workers and other working people with the inspiration and tools to share in society's bounty. For more information, visit the official web page of the United Farm Workers at <http://www.ufw.org/>.

See you in the parks!