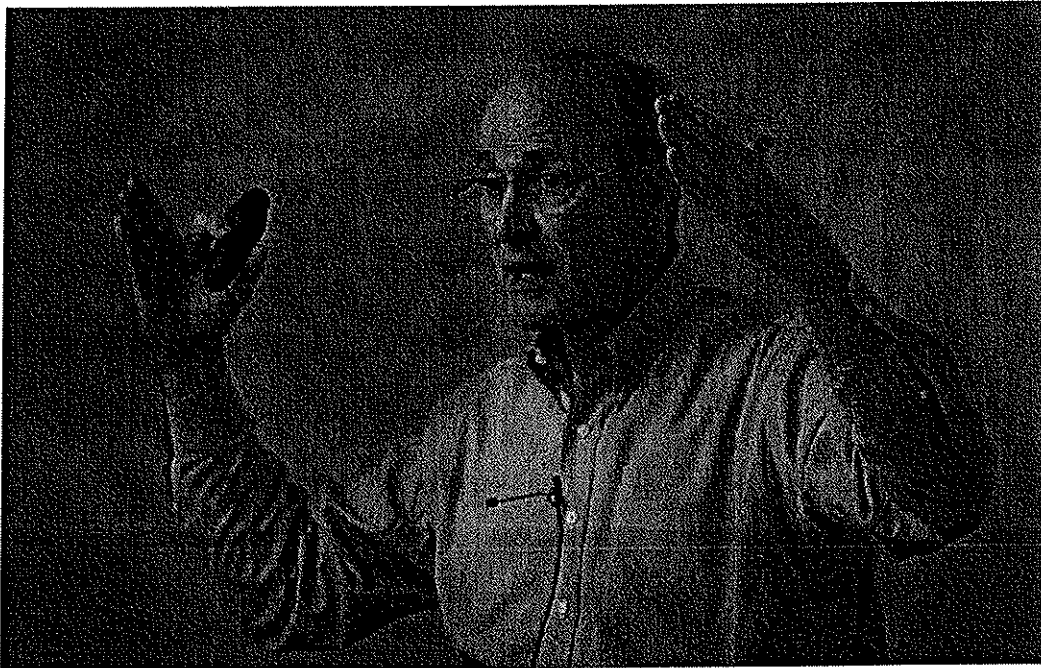


PRICE OF PARADISE

Gathering to focus on stories of social justice in Ventura County



STAR FILE PHOTO Michael Teasdale is one of four organizers of a new group called Ventura Stories. The group is hosting a workshop on economic justice Saturday.

By Arlene Martinez

Posted: Feb. 18, 2016



They are the stories of those struggling to pay rent and find housing, of fighting to receive just treatment at work, of the inability to get their kids an early childhood education.

At a workshop Saturday, Ventura County residents will share those experiences while advocates discuss public policies that could help ease such hardships.

The event is being organized by Ventura Stories, a group recently formed by four individuals who found they shared a passion for the arts and a desire to make things better.

Envisioned as the first of many upcoming events, the workshop is geared at bringing "greater awareness to policy and action that can help improve the quality of life in Ventura County," said organizer and co-founder Michael Teasdale.

The hope, he said, is to attract people who are not usually involved in social justice issues.

The activism will take the shape of forums and workshop as well as performances. It could be plays, readings or other forms of storytelling, Teasdale said. He and the other Ventura Stories founders, Doug Green, Pamela Lopez and Matthew Weisman, have backgrounds in the arts.

Before Teasdale joined the corporate sector (he retired as a senior director for Baxter Bioscience operations group), he was a director. Green's an actor, Lopez has worked in television and Weisman is a writer, Teasdale said.

In addition to drawing new people into activism, Teasdale said he hopes people get an understanding of the poverty and other problems taking place right in their backyard, and learn how to make a difference.

Speakers on Saturday will include Jamshid Damooei, professor and chairman of the Department of Economics, Finance and Accounting at California Lutheran University, who will provide an overview of the challenges and disparities in the region. Also scheduled to speak are Maricela Morales, Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) executive director; First 5 Executive Director Claudia Harrison; and attorney and affordable housing advocate Barbara Macri-Ortiz.

Want to attend? Saturday's event is free but registration is required.

It runs from 9 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. at the Ventura County Community Foundation Building, 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd., in Camarillo. It includes

light breakfast and lunch.

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ventura-stories-tickets-20771297510?aff=ebrowse>

