

Voters face many special issues on November ballot

By MYRTLE OSNER

The League of Women Voters always presents both sides of the ballot propositions in its "Pros and Cons," a short analysis of all the propositions on the state level. These pamphlets are provided free at all Stanislaus County Libraries. Merced, San Joaquin, and several other counties in our readership also have Leagues that can be contacted. The following are the Leagues' recommendations for the November 4, 2008 General Election:

League of Women Voters recommends:

PROP 1A Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act. SUPPORT. This \$9.95 billion bond act would partially fund a high-speed train project between Los Angeles/ Anaheim and San Francisco, and possible extensions to Sacramento and to San Diego, at a total project cost of \$45 billion, including the additional segments. Federal grants and public-private partnerships would be needed to fund at least half of each segment. Proposition 1A would provide a transportation option that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and lessens the need to expand highways and airports. This revised proposition addresses concerns about cost and financial uncertainties by requiring a new business plan, peer review, and other accountability provisions, and it allows bond funds to be used for the other segments if there is no negative impact on the first phase.

PROP 3 Children's Hospital Bond Act. SUPPORT. Proposition 3 authorizes \$980 million in bonds to fund children's hospitals. These regional centers provide specialized care for children with serious illnesses or injuries without regard to a family's ability to pay. They treat the majority of California's low-income children. Eighty percent of the proceeds would go to eight nonprofit children's hospitals and 20 percent to University of California children's hospitals.

Recommendations continued p. 10

An Old Warrior's vision: Follow the Constitution, Honor the Truth, Serve the People

By JOHN MOREARTY

"Blackwater concentration camps exist already, of course," said Robert Bowman (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Air Force, retired), speaking to seventy-five people at University of the Pacific on September 8. "The camps are in northern Idaho, Oklahoma, on unused military bases in the South. Local people know; they told me about them during my 'Patriots Take Back America' speaking tour these past three months. Built by Halliburton, the camps are ready to imprison 'dissidents'—folks like us—if Bush and Cheney attack Iran and declare martial law in this country.

"That attack could still happen, because these guys are desperate not to be voted out of power and indicted for war crimes. But the attack is less likely than a year ago. Opposition is growing, even inside the military itself. Admiral Fallon and various generals have been fired because they opposed it, but there are still true patriots who haven't been rooted out, among higher officers as well as ordinary soldiers. I spend a lot of time talking to military people, encouraging them to refuse an illegal order to attack Iran. Instead, I say, keep your oath to defend the Constitution—not the president!—against all enemies foreign and domestic.

"If the order comes down to round up patriots like us, I doubt that the military will obey, certainly not the National Guard. They'll have to send Blackwater mercenaries (who are unconstitutional, by the way). But I picture soldiers stepping forward and forming a circle around us—with their guns pointed outward."

Bob Bowman has always considered himself a patriot. As a gung-ho hotshot he flew interceptors. He commanded four nuclear-armed squadrons over Korea, but promised himself he would never order the bombs released, even if the U.S. were destroyed by Soviet atomic weapons. "I believed in

Old Warrior continued p. 11

The Modesto Peace Life Center
Invites You To



A Harvest Gathering

A Benefit For
The Peace Essay Contest

Friday, October 24, 2008
7:00 p.m.

At the Home of
John Frailing and Maria Arevalo
629 Ila Way, Modesto

Enjoy:
Delicious Desserts, Good Wines
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Casual Attire

Join with people of peace to help us continue our outreach to our community's youth by supporting one of our most important yearly events, the Peace Essay Contest.



We look forward to seeing you and
your friends!

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

PEACE ACTION	2	ANDERSON AWARDED	8
PEACE ESSAY CONTEST	3-4	GATHERING OF VOICES	9
LIVING LIGHTLY	5	VOTE!	10
SOCIAL JUSTICE	6-7	GLOBAL CONCERNS	11

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SISTER CITIES: Modesto to host young people from Canadian Sister City

By MICHELLE GORDON

The Vernon, British Columbia-Modesto Sister City committee invites you to a reception in honor of the Silver Star Queen and Her Princesses who will be visiting Modesto at the end of September.

This is a group of young ladies chosen to represent Vernon and can be compared to our Junior Miss. Public speaking is part of the program and their itinerary includes some opportunities to address local organizations as well as a visit to a local high school.

The reception to welcome the group will be held at the McHenry Mansion on Friday, October 3rd at 6:00 pm. Please RSVP to mgordon.msci@gmail.com or 617-3534.

We hope you will be able to attend and help us welcome these young ladies to Modesto.

Come celebrate 20 years of friendship

By SHELLY SCRIBNER

For twenty years, the cities of Merced and Somoto, Nicaragua have maintained ties of friendship, support and cultural exchange. And we are having a fiesta to celebrate.

When: Sunday, October 19, 200, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Fellowship Hall, United Methodist Church, 899 Yosemite Parkway, Merced. Please bring a side dish or salad to share.

Roasted chicken and dessert provided. We are hoping to have guests from our Sister City attending this gala event. Please RSVP to shellys833@aol.com, or 209-521-6304.



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

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- ☐ Send me CONNECTIONS. Here's my \$25 DONATION.
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Connections fundraiser a success thanks to you!

The editorial committee of *Stanislaus Connections* and the Modesto Peace Life Center would like to thank all of you who contributed to our successful *Stanislaus Connections* Fundraiser and Auction.

By press time we had raised a whopping \$3050.00!

A warm thank you goes to Tom and Alfa Broderick for donating their beautiful Tuolumne Riverside backyard for the last three years for our event. Tom has been working hard each year to further beautify his yard and it showed. Thanks Tom!

A **Special Thanks** to all who so generously brought great food and contributed items for the auction, and especially to our auctioneers, David Rockwell and John Frailing for making the auction so much fun. David again excelled in extracting money from your wallet.

We also salute our layout editor, Linda Knoll, who designed our terrific flyer, and for making *Connections* look so great each month.

And last but not least, we thank our readers. Without your continued support, we could not put out our labor of love, *Stanislaus Connections*, nor could the Peace Center continue the programs and actions it does. **THANK YOU!**

John McCutcheon's Sermon on the Mound

By KEN SCHROEDER

As the baseball season approaches the World Series, check out John McCutcheon's new album, *Sermon on the Mound*. On January 20, 2009, come see John as he performs his annual benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center at 7:00 p.m. at the Modesto Church of the Brethren.

The recording is available at John's web site, www.folkmusic.com, where you will find the following:

“‘The first thing in my life I ever did right,’ muses John McCutcheon, “was baseball.” Since that day in 1959 when the lanky seven-year-old showed up a year too early for Little League tryouts (they took him anyway) McCutcheon has done quite a few other things right. With over thirty-five years of international concert touring, six Grammy nominations, countless awards, over thirty recordings and numerous books under his belt, he's been a busy man. With the release of *Sermon on the Mound* he's finally brought together two lifelong loves: music and baseball. “Whether honoring the games heroes (Roberto Clemente, Cal Ripken, Jr., Jackie Robinson, Pee Wee Reese), tackling the game's foul balls (steroids, John Rocker), celebrating street ball and Little League, or distilling it all down to its essence (the universal and heart-rending ‘Catch’), once again, McCutcheon's pen and eye are wise, bittersweet, and wickedly funny. A home run of an album!”

Union of Concerned Scientists seeks your stories for publication

The American outdoors has been central to some of this country's greatest books, from Henry David Thoreau's *The Maine Woods* to Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. Writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, Rachel Carson, Peter Matthiessen, and E.O. Wilson have inspired us to make positive changes in our lives with their wisdom and words about our lands, geographical riches, and wildlife.

The Union of Concerned Scientists and Penguin Classics—along with bookstores across the country—are encouraging all aspiring writers and photographers to submit their personal stories and images about global warming for publication in a new online book to be published in 2009, *Thoreau's Legacy: American Stories about Global Warming*.

The submission process is open to anyone in the United States through November 15, 2008. A panel of judges will select the top essays and photographs to be included in the book. Writers and photographers whose submissions are selected for publication will receive a limited edition printed copy of the book and will be invited to participate in book promotion activities.

ACTION: Visit <http://www.ucsusa.org/americanstories/index.html>

Watch Peace Center shows on TV
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find elsewhere.

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Comcast Public Access TV Ch 26

Wednesdays, 9:00 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Also:

Listen to local Valley Community Radio
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a suggested donation of \$25.00/yr.

Are some more equal than others?

By ED BEARDEN

How equal can equal rights be if some are more equal than others? That seems to be the question answered by the California Supreme Court in its May 16, 2008 ruling permitting same-sex marriage. The question was asked because some people, presumably equal, would like to marry but couldn't, because they were not as "equal" as some others who would like to marry.

It's an old story when it comes to equality. It's found first in families where Dad knows that if Johnny gets his first car when he graduates from high school then Billy will expect one too. Billy didn't have to tell dad either. Dad knew that Billy would want the same things as Johnny and that was OK with him. He loved both his sons, treated them the same.

When government considers fairness it has nothing to do with a father's love. The government does make laws that reward and punish, just like dad, but while dad can feel pride in his sons, the best government can do is remain neutral. Government neutrality in personal relationships is a good thing.

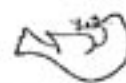
Neutrality in the recent court decision means that if you are a man and want to marry a woman, that's OK. It also means that if you are a man and want to marry a man, that's OK too. It's not a religious matter, not a moral issue, just four people who have a right to do the same thing — get married. It's the same sort of neutrality they would have if they wanted to apply for a business license.

In 1960 two soldiers, one white, one black, went into a small restaurant in San Antonio, Texas and were told they couldn't buy a milkshake. They were really just teenagers, both from California and very surprised not to be able to do that. Actually, not being allowed to buy a milkshake is not exactly right, one could — the white one. On base, just two miles away at Fort Sam Houston, things were different. On July 26, 1948, President Truman had desegregated the armed forces. On base they could both order a milkshake and not worry about someone's belief that it was somehow immoral to eat together.

Desegregation has given us a stronger, more flexible army and made drinking milkshakes together a neutral event. In 1964, Martin Luther King came to California in support of a fair housing initiative. It failed, but housing restrictions were ruled invalid under our state constitution, and I don't remember anyone back then complaining about "activist judges." Fair housing, with its neutrality regarding who can live where, has made real estate a stronger profession and opened up new markets.

Neutrality regarding who can marry is the next best equal-rights step we can take. Sure, there will be problems in some same-sex marriages. Some may even get divorced. But isn't that the point, to be like any other marriage? It will be the same, it will be equal, it will be neutral. And neutrality is the absolute best that government can do.

2009 Peace Essay Contest



How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Anne Frank, *Diary of a Young Girl*
Young German Jewish diarist (1929-1945)

Our world is filled with a variety of peacemakers. Some make the headlines while others quietly work behind the scenes. Some deal with international situations while others work in their own communities. They may be as close as a family member or next door neighbor or as far away as someone on the other side of the globe. The focus of each person's work may differ, but common to all peacemakers is a commitment to using nonviolent principles and actions to nurture and encourage a more peaceful world. The 2009 Peace Essay Contest invites students to study *living* peacemakers in our community and throughout our world. Each writer will then nominate one of these peacemakers, whose work inspires them, to be the 2009 Peacemaker of the Year.

In preparation for writing your essay, broaden your awareness of people who have committed their lives to nonviolent peacemaking. Resources like the local newspapers and their archives, talking with community leaders for suggestions, utilizing the school and public libraries and the internet are great places to start. You may click on *Peace Essay* on the Stanislaus Connections website for a beginning list of peacemakers to spark your exploration.

(<http://www.stanislausconnections.org/>)

Division I (grades 11-12) and Division II (grades 9-10)

In the first part of your essay of 500-1000 words, nominate a *living* person for Peacemaker of the Year.

- Describe how the person has worked for peace and justice. Share the specific nonviolent, non-military actions that are part of this person's peacemaking.
- Explain what motivated or inspired this person to become involved in this work.
- Identify and discuss the principles or values that guide this person's efforts.
- Express why you think the work of this *living* peacemaker is significant for our world.
- Tell how the work of your nominee for peacemaker might influence your future life and actions.

To qualify for an award your essay must answer each part of the prompt. Each essay will be judged on the quality of the writing, the strength of the case you make for the person you nominate as Peacemaker of the Year and the personal connection you make between the work of your nominee and your own life.

Division III (grades 7-8) and Division IV (grades 5-6)

In an essay of 250-500 words, nominate a *living* person for Peacemaker of the Year.

- Describe how the person has worked for peace and justice. Share the specific nonviolent, non-military actions that are part of this person's peacemaking.
- Explain what motivated or inspired this person to become involved in this work.
- Express why you think the work of this *living* peacemaker is significant for our world.

To qualify for an award your essay must answer each part of the prompt. Each essay will be judged on the quality of the writing and the strength of the case you make for the person you nominate as Peacemaker of the Year.

Awards	1st	2nd	3rd	Honorable
	Place	Place	Place	Mention
Division I	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division II	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division III	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25
Division IV	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25

Deadline for entries:
December 5, 2008

Notification of winners:
Mid-February 2009

For more information, email:
peaceessay@juno.com

Peace Essay Contest 2009

Rules

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students attending any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
2. Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced. Use one side of white paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly.
3. Give your essay a title. Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. DO NOT use a separate title or cover page.
4. Attach a "3 x 5" index card with your name, school, grade, and teacher's name on the index card. YOUR NAME SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.
5. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
6. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
7. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
8. Mail all entries, postmarked no later than December 5, 2008, to:

2009 Peace Essay Contest
Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

Judging

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays in early February. Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

I. Content:

- A. Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
- B. How useful/practical/well-developed are the ideas?
- C. Does it address the given topic?

II. Style:

- A. Is the essay original and interesting?
- B. Is it written with conviction?
- C. Does the personality of the writer come through?

III. Clarity of expression:

- A. Are the ideas clearly stated?
- B. Is the essay well-organized?
- C. Does it have an effective beginning and ending?

IV. Mechanics:

- A. Is grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
- B. Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
- C. Does the essay stay within the word limit?

First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded in each of the four divisions which have at least 15 entries. In the event that fewer than 15 entries are entered in any one division, all prizes may or may not be awarded in that division at the discretion of the judging panel. Up to three Honorable Mentions may be awarded in each division. Group entries (more than one author) are welcome.

The writer of the best essay in a division from a school which has ten or more entries in that division will be honored as the school winner. All participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Notification of Winners

In mid-February 2009, winners will be notified. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2009 Peace Essay Committee: Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Russ Matteson, Suzanne Meyer, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample and Shelly Scribner

The 23rd Annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750



Email: peaceessay@juno.com

ESPINO Youth Organizing Summit: "No Child Left Behind....Bars"

By JIM WALSH

The ESPINO Youth Organizing Summit "*No Child Left Behind....Bars*" is scheduled for Friday, October 3rd at San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton. California's Central Valley is ripe for youth organizing and has great potential to build and mobilize on behalf of youth social justice. The purpose of the summit is to help facilitate the building of a stronger multicultural youth movement in the Central Valley. The goals of the summit are:

- To discover the power that young people have when working together
- Create a space for youth to strategize
- Explore new ways of looking at issues involving youth justice and education
- Teach and reflect on the skills and theories of organizing, use of action research, how to use media, artistic expression and popular education as tools for youth organizing
- Present tools and resources to help build networks and identify current ongoing efforts
- Link grass-roots struggle to changing current systems and policies

The event will feature plenary speakers, Nina Moreno of the Children's Defense Fund, who will present "America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline" and Derrel Myers will speak on the "Power of Building Communities". The summit will then breakout into three interactive workshop sessions with six different subjects within three themes. The first will tackle the issues surrounding Education equity. The second breakout session will deal with issues of incarceration, and youth prisons and the final breakouts will focus on avenues for making social change. These will include journalism, lawmaking, community activism, digital media production and distribution and spoken word artistic expression with the overriding theme of building communities. The event will culminate with a culture jam of music, spoken word, comedy and dance hosted by Tama Brisbane of With Our Words. WOW, as they are referred to, has recently returned from the Brave New Voices spoken word event in Washington D.C. where seven Stockton youth competed with 450 spoken word artists in a nation wide poetry slam.

Confirmed presenters are Phyllis Taub Greenleaf, author of *I'd Rather be Learning, How Standardized Testing is Leaving Learning Behind*; Samuel Nunez will present the program *El Joven Noble y Cara y Carazon*, The Noble Young Man & Face and Heart, and Tama Brisbane and WOW Performance Collective, With Our Words. A workshop will also focus on voter registration and State Initiatives on the upcoming ballots that will negatively impact youth, including the Runner Initiative, Proposition 6.

This event is sponsored by the California Fund for Youth Organizing (CFYO) of the Tides Foundation with partners ESPINO, Youth in Focus, Fathers and Families of San Joaquin, Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin, Migrant Education of the San Joaquin County Office of Education, Associated Student Body Government of San Joaquin Delta College, the Puente Club and M.E.Ch.A. also of San Joaquin Delta College.

ACTION: For information, email jwprod1956@clearwire.net or call Jim Walsh, Summit Coordinator. (209) 981-0544; or Sammy Nunez samuelnunez@msn.com, (209) 444-5511. For updated information on ESPINO visit: <http://www.espinocoalition.net>.

Rivers of Birds, Forests of Tules: Central Valley Nature & Culture in Season

By Lillian Vallee

48. Coming of Age

Of the dozen or more Valley Oak trees (*Quercus lobata*) gracing our garden, only one has been planted by people. The rest are the “landscaping ideas of jays,” as the title of Judith Lowry’s latest book informs us. One of these oaks, somewhere between eighteen and twenty years old, has come of age: this is the first year it has produced full-sized acorns. Because this oak has endured what many oaks endure in the Valley—the chopping that indicates the chopper has no idea why the tree should be there and may not even know what it is—I have decided that the survival of this tree merits a rite of passage, so I festoon its trunk with red and blue ribbons, necklaces of old beads, and garlands of oak leaves and acorns.

In the La Loma neighborhood where I live, everything in nature conspires to recreate an oak savanna-remnants of which still remain. This is simply the spirit of the place, and in September and October it is impossible not to notice: the trails and sidewalks are littered with cleanly aerodynamic, often chocolate-colored acorns in their deep cups. People walk or ride all over them without noting the gift. The ground squirrels are busy caching them in burrows and acorn woodpeckers, in the upper stories of old trees (or, sometimes, in telephone poles).

The oaks create powerful communities of birds which share the oldest trees—hawks, owls, jays, magpies, crows, hummingbirds, and bush tits, to name just a few. Seeds find their way into the deep ridges of Valley Oak bark and I have seen fungi, miner’s lettuce, and various mosses and lichens growing on the trunks. Ants ply vertical oak highways to get at the gall exudate, a sap-like secretion that has been used by some of the oldest cultures as sweetener. During spider season, in late summer, spiders lower themselves from the oaks on gossamer threads. To my astonishment and amusement, spiders manage to scare one another as well as human arachnophobes: I have watched two come down at the same time, look at each other with what seemed like complete horror, and then scramble back up with unearthly speed, reeling in the thread as quickly as they spun it out.

The jays bring acorns from the monarch oak across the street which marks the neighborhood artery called Roble (Spanish for White Oak or, in this case, the Valley Oak), from Interior Live Oaks along Encina (the Spanish word for Live Oak), and from Scrub Oaks from the riparian corridor along Dry Creek to ensure a food source in case one species does not produce. The celebrated oak, which shades the entire patio and is full of gossamer tents this time of year and of at least four kinds of galls, is less than half my age, yet it yields, every day, a fresh understanding of integrity, utility and perseverance.

I am in my late fifties and this is the age at which bodies begin to break down: hips wear out their sockets; knees buckle and are replaced—the gashes stitched together with metal thread; mysterious growths appear in the folds of eyes or in the coils of brain or stomach, on the skin; the organs grow weary of doing their maintenance and need help; veins collapse.

Many of my friends have had serious operations and heart attacks; some have died. Others struggle with serious limitations in mobility. They feel helpless when their bodies become foreign countries whose languages require a legion of interpreters. Ageing parents hang on in spite of being widows or widowers and begin to lose their friends and everything that has been familiar. My mother, who survived World War II and managed to hang on to a certain

elephant skin around the dark pool of an elephant eye. In spite of its gallows humor (“Beth whimpers./She likes me./She has been lonely.”), the poem devastated me. Lee goes to dialysis every second day and stares the elephant down each time. His poem reminds us that we are surrounded by islands of suffering that make us flee into language to make sense of it all, to stoke the incandescent power of the spirit, even as the body confirms our mortality.

His poem reminds us that we are surrounded by islands of suffering that make us flee into language to make sense of it all, to stoke the incandescent power of the spirit, even as the body confirms our mortality.

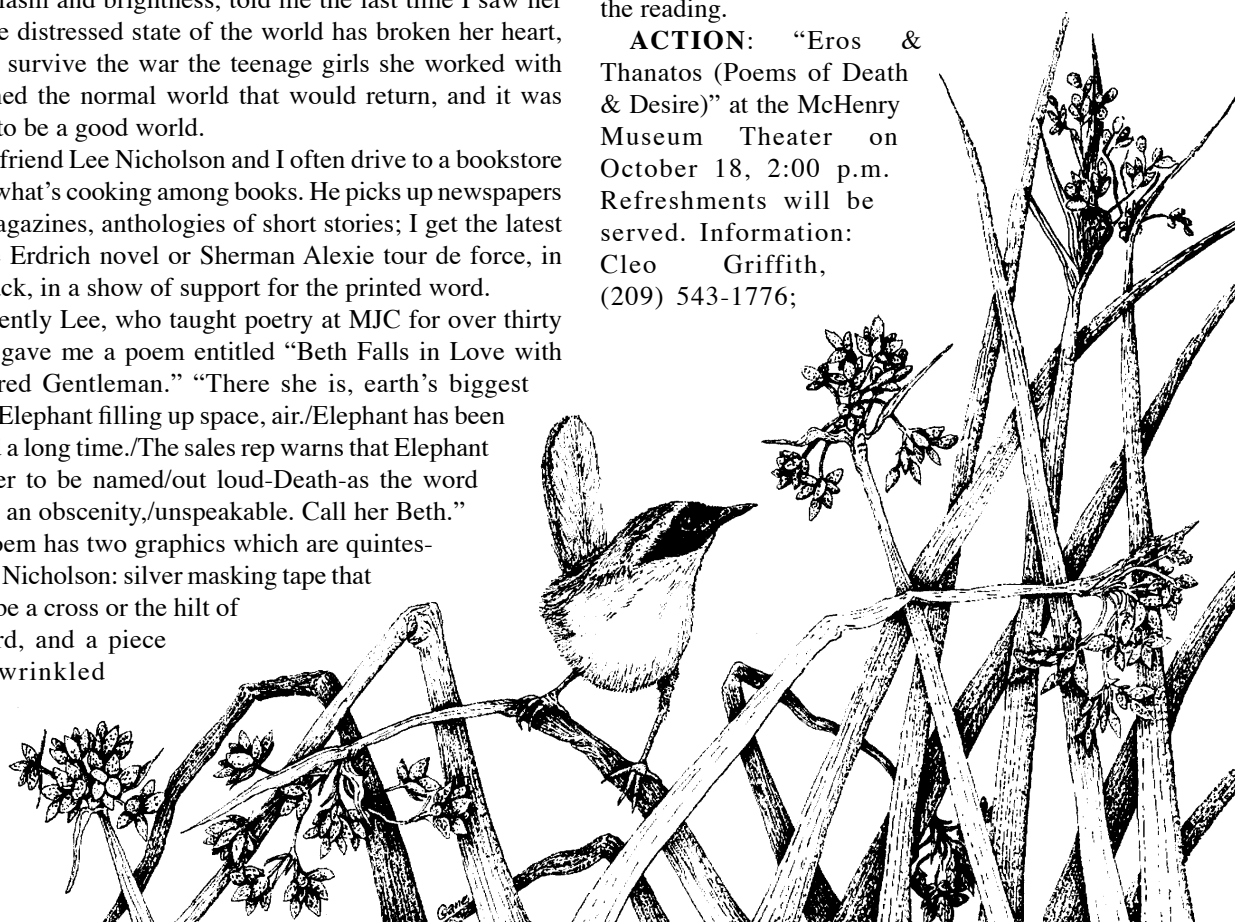
enthusiasm and brightness, told me the last time I saw her that the distressed state of the world has broken her heart, that to survive the war the teenage girls she worked with imagined the normal world that would return, and it was going to be a good world.

My friend Lee Nicholson and I often drive to a bookstore to see what’s cooking among books. He picks up newspapers and magazines, anthologies of short stories; I get the latest Louise Erdrich novel or Sherman Alexie tour de force, in hardback, in a show of support for the printed word.

Recently Lee, who taught poetry at MJC for over thirty years, gave me a poem entitled “Beth Falls in Love with a Retired Gentleman.” “There she is, earth’s biggest beast,/Elephant filling up space, air./Elephant has been around a long time./The sales rep warns that Elephant is never to be named/out loud-Death-as the word here is an obscenity/unspeakable. Call her Beth.” The poem has two graphics which are quintessential Nicholson: silver masking tape that could be a cross or the hilt of a sword, and a piece of wrinkled

the reading.

ACTION: “Eros & Thanatos (Poems of Death & Desire)” at the McHenry Museum Theater on October 18, 2:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Information: Cleo Griffith, (209) 543-1776;



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ANDERSON

Twenty Questions: Social Justice Quiz 2008

By: BILL QUIGLEY, *truthout* | Perspective

We in the US who say we believe in social justice must challenge ourselves to look at the world through the eyes of those who have much less than us.

Why? Social justice, as defined by John Rawls, respects basic individual liberty and economic improvement. But social justice also insists that liberty, opportunity, income, wealth and the other social bases of self-respect are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution is to everyone's advantage and any inequalities are arranged so they are open to all.

Therefore, we must educate ourselves and others about how liberty, opportunity, income and wealth are actually distributed in our country and in our world. Examining the following can help us realize how much we have to learn about social justice.

1. How many deaths are there worldwide each year due to acts of terrorism?

Answer: The US State Department reported there were more than 22,000 deaths from terrorism last year. Over half of those killed or injured were Muslims. Source: Voice of America, May 2, 2008. "Terrorism Deaths Rose in 2007."

2. How many deaths are there worldwide each day due to poverty and malnutrition?

A: About 25,000 people die every day of hunger or hunger-related causes, according to the United Nations. Poverty.com - Hunger and World Poverty. Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes - one child every five seconds. Bread for the World. Hunger Facts: International.

3. In 1965, CEOs in major companies made 24 times more than the average worker. In 1980, CEOs made 40 times more than the average worker. In 2007, CEOs earned how many times more than the average worker?

A: Today's average CEO from a Fortune 500 company makes 364 times an average worker's pay and over 70 times the pay of a four-star Army general. Executive Excess 2007, page 7, jointly published by Institute for Policy Studies and United for Fair Economy, August 29, 2007. The 1965 numbers from State of Working America 2004-2005, Economic Policy Institute.

4. In how many of the more than 3,000 cities and counties in the US can a full-time worker who earns the minimum wage afford to pay rent and utilities on a one-bedroom apartment?

A: In no city or county in the entire USA can a full-time worker who earns minimum wage afford even a one-bedroom rental. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) urges renters not to pay more than 30 percent of their income in rent. HUD also reports the fair market rent for each of the counties and cities in the US. Nationally, in order to rent a two-bedroom apartment, one full-time worker in 2008 must earn \$17.32 per hour. In fact, 81 percent of renters live in cities where the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom rental is not even affordable with two minimum-wage jobs. Source: Out of Reach 2007-2008, April 7, 2008, National Low-Income Housing Coalition.

5. In 1968, the minimum wage was \$1.65 per hour. How much would the minimum wage be today if it had

kept pace with inflation since 1968?

A: Calculated in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars, the 1968 minimum wage would have been \$9.83 in 2007 dollars. Andrew Tobias, January 16, 2008. The federal minimum wage is \$6.55 per hour effective July 24, 2008, and will be \$7.25 per hour effective July 24, 2009.

In no city or county in the entire USA can a full-time worker who earns minimum wage afford even a one-bedroom rental.

6. True or false? People in the United States spend nearly twice as much on pet food as the US government spends on aid to help foreign countries.

A: True. The USA spends \$43.4 billion on pet food annually. Source: American Pet Products Manufacturers Association Inc. The USA spent \$23.5 billion in official foreign aid in 2006. The US government gave the most of any country in the world in actual dollars. As a percentage of gross national income, the US came in second to last among OECD donor countries and ranked number 20 at 0.18 percent behind Sweden at 1.02 percent and other countries such as Norway, Netherlands, Ireland, United Kingdom, Austria, France, Germany, Spain, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and others. This does not count private donations, which, if included, may move the US up as high as sixth. The Index of Global Philanthropy 2008, pages 15-19.

7. How many people in the world live on \$2 a day or less?

A: The World Bank reported in August 2008 that 2.6 billion people consume less than \$2 a day.

8. How many people in the world do not have electricity?

A: Worldwide, 1.6 billion people do not have electricity and 2.5 billion people use wood, charcoal or animal dung for cooking. United Nations Human Development Report 2007/2008, pages 44-45.

The grain needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol could feed a hungry person for a year.

9. People in the US consume 42 kilograms of meat per person per year. How much meat and grain do people in India and China eat?

A: People in the US lead the world in meat consumption at 42 kg per person per year, compared to 1.6 kg in India and 5.9 kg in China. People in the US consume five times the grain (wheat, rice, rye, barley, etc.) as people in India, three times as much as people in China, and twice as much as people in Europe. "THE BLAME GAME: Who is behind the world food price crisis," Oakland Institute, July 2008.

10. How many cars does China have for every 1,000 drivers? India? The US?

A: China has nine cars for every 1,000 drivers. India has 11 cars for every 1,000 drivers. The US has 1,114 cars for every 1,000 drivers. Iain Carson and Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran, "Zoom: The Global Race to Fuel the Car of the Future"

(2007).

11. How much grain is needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol?

A: The grain needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol could feed a hungry person for a year. Lester Brown, CNN.Money.com, August 16, 2006.

12. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the richest one percent of Americans earns what percent of the nation's adjusted gross income? Five percent? Ten percent? Fifteen percent? Twenty percent?

A: "According to the figures, the richest one percent reported 22 percent of the nation's total adjusted gross income in 2006. That is up from 21.2 percent a year earlier, and it is the highest in the 19 years that the IRS has kept strictly comparable figures. The 1988 level was 15.2 percent. Earlier IRS data show the last year the share of income belonging to the top one percent was at such a high level as it was in 2006 was in 1929, but changes in measuring income make a precise comparison difficult." Jesse Drucker, "Richest Americans See Their Income Share Grow," Wall Street Journal, July 23, 2008, page A3.

13. How many people does our government say are homeless in the US on any given day?

A: A total of 754,000 are homeless. About 338,000 homeless people are not in shelters (live on the streets, in cars or in abandoned buildings) and 415,000 are in shelters on any given night. The 2007 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Annual Homeless Report to Congress, page iii and 23. The population of San Francisco is about 739,000.

14. What percentage of people in homeless shelters are children?

A: HUD reports nearly one in four people in homeless shelters are children 17 or younger. Page iv, the 2007 HUD Annual Homeless Report to Congress.

15. How many veterans are homeless on any given night?

A: Over 100,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. About 18 percent of the adult homeless population are veterans. Page 32, the 2007 HUD Homeless Report. This is about the same population as Green Bay, Wisconsin.

16. The military budget of the United States in 2008 is the largest in the world at \$623 billion per year. How much larger is the US military budget than that of China, the second-largest in the world?

A: Ten times. China's military budget is \$65 billion. The US military budget is nearly 10 times larger than the second leading military spender. GlobalSecurity.org

17. The US military budget is larger than how many of the countries of the rest of the world combined?

A: The US military budget of \$623 billion is larger than the budgets of all the countries in the rest of the world put together. The total global military budget of the rest of the world is \$500 billion. Russia's military budget is \$50 billion, South Korea is \$21 billion, and Iran is \$4.3 billion. GlobalSecurity.org.

continued next page

Seven Straight Nights for Equal Rights

By LUELLA COLE

Marriage equality. Scriptural analysis. Stereotyping. Justice and fairness. The GLBT experience from several viewpoints. Discrimination and hatred based on fundamentalism and fear. Stories of personal experience with being gay, having a gay child, or having a change of heart about homosexuality. All these discussions challenged and deepened a sense of justice and fairness for those who attended any or all seven of the Seven Straight Nights between September 14 and 20.

Sponsored by an inter-religious group of five faith communities and the Stanislaus PRIDE center, the event opened on Sunday night with "Why Marriage Matters"—deeply felt personal stories from both straight and gay points of view about what marriage means, and why marriage is different from domestic partnership. A lesbian couple, who were married soon after the California Supreme Court made that legally possible, listed several reasons why being married after 10 years together transformed their relationship to each other, to their families, and to the community. A domestic partnership is a legal relationship, easily created by signing a form, and just as easily dissolved by signing another one. It requires no witnesses, no family involvement, and while it is legally recognized for some purposes, it is not generally recognized by society as being the equivalent of marriage. If one partner needs emergency medical care, for example, a domestic partner might not be consulted or allowed to accompany her partner in the ambulance, as a spouse would be, without question. Especially for a person of faith, domestic partnership does not carry the spiritual and emotional meaning of marriage.

Monday night's topic was entitled "Texts of Terror". Pastor Michael Schiefelbein of College Avenue United Church of Christ read and analyzed several texts from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures which have traditionally been interpreted to condemn homosexual behavior. When these texts are examined in terms of the culture in which they were written, their meaning becomes far less judgmental. The Bible says nothing explicitly condemning homosexuality, nor did Jesus condemn it, partly because the word "homosexual" did not exist until 1892. None of the Hebrew or Greek words usually translated "homosexual" actually mean that in their

original language. The sin of Sodom was lack of hospitality and violence, not homosexuality. The Hebrew word customarily translated into English as "abomination" meant "ritually unclean" in the ancient Hebrew culture. Wearing clothing made of two kinds of fibers; planting two kinds of seeds in a field; eating pork, shellfish, or rabbit; or trimming the beard were all considered "abominations" or "unclean" by the ancient Hebrews. In the New Testament, passages used to condemn homosexuality were referring to sexual practices then considered socially unacceptable rather than immoral or sinful behavior.

"Faith and Fairness" was Tuesday night's topic. The Judeo-Christian prophetic traditions of doing justice, showing mercy to the less fortunate, and treating others as well as we treat ourselves were explained from the Christian, Unitarian Universalist, and Jewish viewpoint. Not only does discrimination against GLBT persons violate these principles of religious belief, but it violates our constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. The parents of a gay teen described their struggles to deal with the conflict between their knowledge that their son was gay and the attitudes of the church they were attending. They found a supportive community in an open and affirming congregation, and started a youth group for GLBT young people.

Young people were the focus of Wednesday night's program. A group of high school and college age youth staged a game show called "That's So Gay!" Through a series of questions put to a panel of eight young people and their own intuition, the audience was asked to identify the sexual orientation of each person on the panel. After the members of the audience learned that most of their guesses were wrong at least half the time, they had to agree that everyone engages in stereotyping occasionally, and they learned that you can't always tell who's gay. After the game show, the young people answered questions from the audience. All of them spoke of being supported by their parents and teachers.

"Allies and Advocates" was the topic Thursday night. Persons active in the campaign for marriage equality provided pointers for straight allies who want to advocate for GLBT equality. The first consideration is, talk to whom? Some people won't listen, and can't change. The focus should be on those who are undecided or questioning their

point of view. They should be approached gently and respectfully, emphasizing points of agreement, shared values and fairness, and avoiding divisive, attacking, in-your-face language. It was suggested that letters to the editor might be a good way to be an advocate, as long as the letter focuses on personal experience and avoids attack. The speaker quoted Jay Bakker, son of Jim and Tammy Faye and a straight ally: "It's not the words of your enemies that you remember, it's the silence of your friends."

Friday night was movie night. The participants viewed the Soulforce production *For the Bible Tells Me So*, followed by a short discussion. The documentary film follows five American families with gay children, including those of former House majority leader Richard Gephardt and Episcopal bishop Gene Robinson. In each case, the family had to struggle with the teachings of their church in order to accept their child's orientation. The experiences of each family are interspersed in the film by examples of hate-filled speech from fundamentalist Christians. The discussion after the film cautioned against demonizing those who hate, pointing out that they are also victims of their own fear.

The Stanislaus PRIDE Center opened its doors on Saturday night to display its resources and inform participants of its services to the community. Founded 3 1/2 years ago, it has grown from a group of four friends to an agency with counseling services, support groups, a lending library of books, tapes, and disks, and a gathering place for the GLBT community.

Seven Straight Nights provided an opportunity to network with new people, challenge old beliefs, and become inspired to take action.

ACTION: Write letters to the editor, speak to friends and neighbors, and go to the websites below for more information.

<http://www.soulforce.org/>

<http://www.atticuscircle.org/index.htm>

<http://www.forthetbibletellsmeso.org/index2.htm>

<http://www.stanpride.org/>

Twenty questions

..... from previous page

18. Over the 28-year history of the Berlin Wall, 287 people perished trying to cross it. How many people have died in the last four years trying to cross the border between Arizona and Mexico?

A: At least 1,268 people have died along the border of Arizona and Mexico since 2004. The Arizona Daily Star keeps track of the reported deaths along the state border, and it reports 214 died in 2004; 241 in 2005, 216 in 2006, 237 in 2007, and 116 as of July 31, 2008. These numbers do not include deaths along the California or Texas borders. The Border Patrol reported that 400 people died in fiscal 2206-2007, while 453 died in 2004-2005 and 494 died in 2004-2005. Source The Associated Press, November 8, 2007.

19. India is ranked second in the world in gun ownership with four guns per 100 people. China is third with third firearms per 100 people. Which country is first and how widespread is gun ownership?

A: The US is first in gun ownership worldwide with 90 guns for every 100 citizens. Laura MacInnis, "US most armed country with 90 guns per 100 people." Reuters, August 28, 2007.

20. What country leads the world in the incarceration of its citizens?

A: The US jails 751 inmates per 100,000 people, the highest rate in the world. Russia is second with 627 per 100,000. England's rate is 151, Germany's is 88 and Japan's is 63. The US has 2.3 million people behind bars, more than any country in the world. Adam Liptak, "Inmate Count in US Dwarfs Other Nations" New York Times, April 23, 2008.

Bill Quigley is a human rights lawyer and law professor at Loyola University New Orleans. He can be reached at quigley77@gmail.com.

From <http://www.truthout.org/article/twenty-questions-social-justice-quiz-2008>

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Dr. Richard Anderson: 2008 Recipient of the Purdy Award for Educational Excellence

By LYNN M. HANSEN, Professor Emerita Biological Sciences MJC

Each fall, Modesto Junior College Foundation selects one faculty member to receive the Purdy Award for Educational Excellence. The criteria for this award are that the nominee demonstrates exceptional educational leadership within the classroom, makes significant contributions to a positive campus atmosphere as well as extends educational opportunities into our local community at large. To receive this award is a high honor and represents the pinnacle of peer review. This year's Purdy Award was given to Dr. Richard Anderson, Professor of Microbiology at MJC.

The nominations of Dr. Anderson for this award came from a broad spectrum of community science educators, MJC faculty, staff and numerous former students. All acknowledged his exceptional teaching skills, community service, ecological activism, passion for learning and compassion for students. Each letter painted a picture of his energetic engagement with them. Former students commented on how nice it was to have an instructor who was so passionate about his job and loved it so much he could even be comfortable acting out silly characters in class to illustrate the workings of an abstract process. As one student wrote "how nice it must be to love your job so much you're willing to make a fool of yourself." One former student, now a registered pharmacist, commended Richard's mentoring during the Bridges to Baccalaureate program, a partnership with UC Davis to encourage students from under-represented groups to pursue degrees in the sciences.

Richard's MJC colleagues commented that he models high scholastic achievement (a Ph.D. in Cell Biology) as well as how to be a good human being in the world. All this is done without fanfare. His contributions to a congenial



campus community include his involvement with the Civic Engagement Project (CEP) where he helped to start Project Green, which renewed campus recycling efforts after years of neglect and established an annual Earth Day Celebration in 2007. He is also one of the advisors for the Student Environmentalist Organization, winner of the campus "Club of the Year" award in 2008, which this year assisted in the restoration planting process at San Joaquin National Wildlife

Refuge, and numerous campus projects.

Letters of nomination also came from the community members such as Anne Marie Bergen, Science Coordinator of Oakdale Unified Elementary School District. She wrote, "His donation of time, money and positive energy towards elementary science has added greatly to the development and success of our program...including a set of high quality microscopes for elementary student use." In addition, Richard has been a driving force for bringing science topics to our local community through the monthly Modesto Area Partners in Science community lecture series, the Science Colloquium, a weekly science lecture series. He organized last year's Symposium on Global Warming and two Symposia on Energy Alternatives this Fall.

His energy is boundless and his creativity freely given. Because of his generosity, many of his video and animation creations are currently used in local elementary schools as well as various MJC biology classrooms. He is always available to assist his colleagues with media development and presentation. For him this award represents a physical recognition, part of a bountiful harvest from his 33 years of education and community activism efforts. He is directing the \$1500 Foundation prize from his award to MAPS for speaker fees and to the CEP Committee to support their projects such as voter registration, multicultural diversity, and film and lecture series. One of his nominators even claimed, "Richard is as good as humans get." Congratulations Dr. Anderson!

ACTION: Attend free public MAPS "Energy Alternatives" symposia Oct. 10 and Nov. 7 from 6:25 p.m. to 9:15p.m in Forum 110, and Science Colloquium each Thursday Sept. 4-Dec. 4, Forum 110, East Campus. <http://virtual.yosemite.cc.ca.us/MAPS/>

"Should any American soldier be so base and infamous as to injure any [prisoner]. . . I do most earnestly enjoin you to bring him to such severe and exemplary punishment as the enormity of the crime may require. Should it extend to death itself, it will not be disproportional to its guilt at such a time and in such a cause... for by such conduct they bring shame, disgrace and ruin to themselves and their country."

— George Washington, charge to the Northern Expeditionary Force, Sept. 14, 1775



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Tokens Of Man

In the blue-gray mists of early morn,
before the sun has touched the hills,
the cathedral silence is shattered
like stained glass.

Droplets of condensation
duck and hide beneath the leaves
as the second wave rolls through.
Animals bolt in shock and panic,
searching for a shelter
that isn't there.

By the time the day
and knowledge dawn
there's nothing left
of the world they knew,
thanks to a wall of flames,
the tokens of encroaching Man.

This came about after I saw photographs of the rainforest fires and of a wildfire in our own region some years ago that was started by someone throwing a lit cigarette out of a car window.

Angry Drums

I hear angry drums,
and feet upon the path of war
as irate voices scream
"Give us our books back!"
I see the sparks arise
as hands fashion the tools of battle,
and we stand
to protect endangered schools.
They could not stop Nero,
who fiddled while Rome burned;
Let us stop our Caesar
before learning kids are spurned!

California Governor Pete Wilson proposed to sign senate bill 1133 in the middle of his term. This would have effectively ended my college career along with those of thousands of other students in the junior colleges. The bill would have cut funding to the local libraries, forcing them to close permanently at the same time that it tripled the college tuition fees I was paying out of pocket for my first AS degree. In protest, I sent this poem and a letter, which together warned that governor that if he closed my school and closed my library, I would close his office!

He didn't sign that bill.

Tears of the Angels

We are all children in the eyes of the Lord,
Brothers and Sisters in one big family;
but we don't seem to know what it means to love,
and the way we treat others makes the angels weep.
Whenever a person is lonely or hurt
by the scathing words of another,
fallen, abandoned, neglected,
the angels weep with pain.
Whenever a person harms a child,
wounding their body or soul,
hitting, starving, intimidating,
the angels weep outrage.
Whenever a child falls into danger,
abducted, deceived, or led astray
in cars without seatbelts driven by drunks,
the angels weep with fear.
When a person takes the time
to lift and encourage a child
by words of praise, a hug, a smile,
the angels weep for joy.
Vengeance and hatred,
pain, danger, and fear
should never be our goals.
Instead we should lift and encourage each other;
help when we know there's a need;
gladden another's sadness;
soothe the wounds of the soul;
lead them to warm, safe harbors
bringing smiles and comfort rather than pain.
We should work together
as brothers and sisters
to dry the tears of the angels
glistening in the eyes of a child.

I wrote this poem after watching a movie about child abuse. The straw that broke my back was a commercial about starving children that asked for donations to help feed them.

The mother of all my environmental conservation poems:

The Death Of Our Mother

I talk to the flowers,
aye, and the trees,
and the grass sometimes,
though it makes me sneeze.
I chat with the fish
and listen to tales
of condors and dinosaurs,
sometimes of whales.
I lie by the water
and listen to songs
of cures for diseases
and righting Man's wrongs.
I listen to fears
of our jungle ferns
and cough from the smoke
as our rain forest burns.
I greet native people
who've been torn from their lands,
who've been only *mistreated*
by prejudiced hands.
I sit with our Mother Earth
at her knees
while she weeps for all
of her extinct species.
I sit and do nothing
while Mother Earth calls,
asking "What can *I* do?"
as, dying, she falls.

Poet: Andi Laughing Star Beyers



Greetings, Brothers and Sisters. I am Andi Laughing Star Beyers. I currently live in Northern California with my husband and my son, who has autism. I began writing poetry at the tender age of five years and also write fictional stories and nonfiction essays.

"Life is a safari, a journey into the unknown." Having worked

in the past in many different industries focused on improving the lives of the people around me, I am currently managing the Northern California office of an international student travel exchange focusing on intercultural communications and improving cultural amity while moonlighting as an advocate for children with special needs. As a firm believer in the credo of Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combination (the Vulcan "IDIC"), I enjoy exploring new languages and

cultures and celebrating ethnic diversity with my peers.

I was raised in the belief that all men are my brothers and all women are my sisters; all other living things are equally members of my family and thus worthy of the respect due to family. When I looked around and saw that this is not the belief most people hold, I was moved to try to change that, even if only in my small corner of the world, by showing others the images of the predations humanity wreaks on ourselves and on our environment. Hence the poetry I write and the stories I tell to anyone who will listen to the pains we bring our Mother Earth and her children every day that we fail to act to improve the world around us.

Beyond my writing, I also volunteer for the American Red Cross as a Health and Safety instructor and as Disaster Service Operations personnel. I've done this since I was 14 years old, concurrently with being a Camp Fire Girl who taught others to live naturally with nature in a way that leaves no trace of one's passage. I am privileged and honored to be able to share this with you; and I hope that my words will move you equally to improve our world, even in small ways. It has to start somewhere, and where better than with us?

"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."

Harry S. Truman, 33rd US president
(1884-1972)

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An Evening with
New York Times Columnist
Frank Rich
"Art, Culture and Politics"

Saturday, November 15, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Performing & Media Arts Center
Main Auditorium, Modesto Junior College, East Campus

Frank Rich, an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times, will provide an insightful and entertaining analysis of the national presidential election results. His weekly 1500-word essay on the intersection of culture and news has been appearing in the Sunday Week in Review section of the Times since 2005. Mr. Rich has been at the paper since 1980, when he was named chief theater critic. Mr. Rich is the author of *Ghost Light*, a childhood memoir, a collection of his drama reviews *Hot Seat: Theater Criticism for The New York Times*, and his latest book, *The Greatest Story Ever Sold*. Mr. Rich will sign books following his presentation. For more information on this outstanding speaker visit the website: www.barclayagency.com/rich_f.html



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Issue recommendations

Prop 3 will address escalating construction costs and improve health care access for children who are indigent, uninsured, underinsured or eligible for government health programs.

PROP 4 Waiting Period and Parental Notification before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy. OPPOSE. Prop 4 requires a physician to notify the parent of a pregnant minor before performing an abortion. Mandatory notification laws may sound good but, in the real world, they put the health and safety of teens in danger. A frightened, pregnant teen who can't go to her parents may choose an unsafe, illegal abortion, or even contemplate suicide, instead of seeking the counseling and safe medical care she needs. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives, but good family communication can't be imposed by government. California voters have rejected this proposal twice, but proponents have put it on the ballot again, adding more unreasonable provisions.

PROP 5 Nonviolent Drug Offenses. Sentencing, Parole and Rehabilitation. SUPPORT. Proposition 5 would require the state to expand treatment and rehabilitation for nonviolent drug offenders and parolees, and reduce the criminal consequences of nonviolent offenses. Additional costs of treatment would be offset by reductions in prison and parole operating costs, as well as in the need for capital outlay for prison facilities. The League's study of juvenile justice affirmed the need to give funding priority to prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation.

PROP 6 Police and Law Enforcement Funding. Criminal Penalties and Laws (Runner Initiative). OPPOSE. This measure requires that nearly \$1 billion annually in state general funds be used for designated local law enforcement and probation programs. This will mean an increase of \$500 million a year for these programs and for operating prison and parole systems, and a \$500 million capital outlay for prison facilities. The League opposes the further restriction on the ongoing use of general funds. Harmful policy changes in this initiative include prosecuting more 14-year-olds as adults and giving counties less flexibility in the use of drug and mental health funds for juveniles.

PROP 7 Renewable Energy Generation. OPPOSE. Proposition 7 requires all utilities, including government-owned utilities, to generate 50 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2025. While the League supports a renewable energy target, we feel this is too optimistic to be achieved, and well beyond the targets for implementing the landmark greenhouse-gas emissions reduction law, AB 32. Moreover, Prop 7 is poorly drafted. Experts say it will not achieve its stated goals and will actually disrupt the development of renewable power. It may force small renewable energy companies out of California's market and cause higher energy bills.

PROP 8 Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry. OPPOSE. This proposed limitation of marriage as only between a man and a woman infringes on the equal rights that should be available to all people. The California Supreme Court has concluded that there is a "fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship." The League opposed Proposition 22 in 2000 and continues to oppose such limits on the basic civil rights that should be guaranteed to all Californians.

PROP 9 Criminal Justice System. Victims' Rights. Parole. OPPOSE. Proposition 9 would expand the legal rights of crime victims in various ways and could undo many of the rights of prisoners and parolees to due process

and speedy parole revocation hearings. This initiative asks voters to support victims' rights that are already protected under state law and is unnecessary.

PROP 10 Alternative Fuel Vehicles and Renewable Energy Bonds. OPPOSE. This measure would authorize the sale of \$5 billion in general obligation bonds to provide rebates to purchasers of certain high fuel economy and alternative fuel vehicles, and to fund grants and other incentives for technology development. The League favors the use of bonds to finance capital expenditures or the purchase of property for public purposes. The purposes of this bond are not an appropriate use for state-issued, bond-generated revenues.

PROP 11 Redistricting Reform: California Voters FIRST Act. STRONG SUPPORT. It is an inherent conflict of interest for legislators to draw their own districts to guarantee their reelection. Proposition 11 removes from the legislature the power to redraw district boundaries for the State Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization after each census. Instead, it provides for the appointment of a 14-member independent citizens commission to perform this process, establishes clear criteria for how the boundaries shall be drawn, and requires an open and transparent process with due notice, public hearings, and no communications outside of the hearings. This measure will hold politicians accountable and help stop the gridlock in Sacramento that keeps pressing issues from being addressed.

Because League positions do not cover the issues in Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals, and Proposition 12, Veterans' Bond Act of 2008, the LWVC is taking no stand on these measures. 9/1/08.

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VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 4!

Stanislaus CONNECTIONS, published by the Modesto Peace/Life Center, has promoted non-violent social change since 1971. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the center or editorial committee. CONNECTIONS encourages free speech to serve truth and build a more just, compassionate, peaceful and environmentally healthy community and world. We seek to enhance community concern, bridge interests of diverse groups. CONNECTIONS' editorial committee views peace as built on economic and social justice and equal access to the political process. We welcome pertinent signed articles - to 800 words - and letters with address, phone number. We edit for length, taste, error and libel. Deadline is 10th of the month. Send articles to Myrtle Osner, 1104 Wellesley, Modesto 95350, 522-4967, or email to osnerm@sbcglobal.net or Jim Costello jcostello@igc.org.

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Old Warrior

... from page 1

deterrence,” he told the audience, “but if deterrence failed I could see no point in incinerating a hundred million Russians. It was immoral.”

He flew 101 fighter combat missions in Vietnam, got a Ph.D. from Caltech in aeronautics and nuclear engineering, and was in charge of all Star Wars programs under Presidents Ford and Carter. He retired and took a lucrative aerospace job. But when President Reagan proposed weapons in space, Bowman balked. “We’d studied that exhaustively, and concluded it was suicidal. Reconnaissance satellites yes, laser battle stations no.” He wrote a book *Star Wars: Defense or Death Star?*, and began speaking out. His bosses said, “You can exercise your free speech—or you can work for us.” Bowman quit, and gave “about five thousand” speeches against Star Wars; he has been on the stump for peace and justice ever since.

At UOP, he spoke as the newly elected President, giving the State of the Nation address in 2009:

“I didn’t get here tonight by taking corporate millions. I didn’t get here by selling myself to the oil companies, the pharmaceutical companies, the insurance companies To be quite honest, I’m not sure how I got here! But here I am, and as long as I am President of the United States, this government will serve the needs of the people, not the greeds of the wealthy elite.”

The basic problem, he said, is “the domination of our government by a handful of billionaires and multinational corporations. This is the very definition of fascism.

I ask Congress to quickly pass a Constitutional amendment which says, ‘Corporations and other fictitious entities are not “persons” under this Constitution and shall have none of the rights and privileges thereof.’”

The media must be freed from corporate domination: “I am ordering the Federal Communications Commission to immediately reinstate the fairness doctrine and the ban on multiple ownership. It’s time for a return to family-owned newspapers and radio and television stations. The monopoly media conglomerates must sell off their assets immediately. (Sorry, Mister Murdoch.) The public airwaves are once again going to belong to the people and serve the public interest. The key to ending fascism is to separate big money and political power.”

The electoral process must also be reformed. “I ask Congress and the States to return to paper ballots and institute full public financing of elections, proportional representation, preference voting (sometimes called Instant Runoff Voting), abolition of burdensome petition requirements on independents and third parties, and (so working people can actually vote) making election day a federal holiday. Many of these changes are designed to empower third parties. There is nothing democratic about a two-party system when both parties are owned at the highest level by the same powerful interests.”

Bowman challenges the official story of 9/11. “I’m an old interceptor pilot, and hijacked airliners do not fly around for an hour and forty minutes without being intercepted ... unless our air defense system was sabotaged. Indestructible black boxes (orange, actually) do not evaporate in the same

fire from which an unharmed passport floats to the street below. Steel skyscrapers do not collapse at free-fall speed because of a kerosene [jet fuel] fire. Steel buildings do not collapse at all because of a kerosene fire – never have, and never will. And Building Seven wasn’t even struck by an aircraft. The truth about 9/11 is that after seven years we still don’t know the truth about 9/11 ... and we should. Never again must we allow this nation to be stampeded into war under false pretenses.”

“I have three degrees in nuclear engineering, and theoretically, nuclear power plants can be made very safe. But there is no safe way to get rid of the radioactive waste, and until there is, there can be no new nuclear power plants. Instead, bold programs in solar and wind energy with subsidies and tax breaks to make them not only competitive, but superior in the marketplace....

“No more Iraqs or Afghanistans. No more Kosovos. No more El Salvadors. These are not isolated incidents of stupidity. They are part of a long, bloody history of foreign policy being conducted for the financial interests of the wealthy few..... It endangers our national security. It mortgages our future. It sacrifices our children. And it will never happen again!

“I have ordered an immediate recall of our forces all around the world. Think of it. After 63 years, the occupation of Germany and Japan has finally come to an end. With the exception of small Marine detachments guarding our embassies, all our military will be home within three months, and all overseas bases will be returned to the host countries. This one change in military mission – eliminating the mission of protecting the global financial interests of multinational corporations – will allow us to reduce the defense budget by 80% ... and have more security....

“I see an America in which every family can be supported by one wage-earner with one job paying a living wage. It is an America in which health care is provided to all as a right through a single-payer national health program. (As a conservative, I believe that the only fiscally-responsible way to provide universal health care is to eliminate the profit, overhead, red tape, and interference between doctor and patient of the insurance companies by kicking them out of health care altogether.)”

Bowman looked at his audience.

“It matters not if my presidency is real or fanciful. My part is done. It is finished. The rest is in your hands. The future and the vision and the dream itself depend on you. May God sustain you in your struggles and bless America through your actions. We the people CAN win. We the people MUST win. We the people WILL win. Thank you, and good night.”

Robert Bowman has terminal cancer from Agent Orange. His website is www.ThePatriots.us. His full UOP talk (four times the length of these excerpts) is on the San Joaquin Connections website, www.pjnsj.org. For videotapes, call Vince Kotecki, 209-546-1876.

“KAWEH” - Passionate, Soulful Mediterranean, Latin, Spanish, Middle Eastern

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Sunday Afternoons at CBS introduces “Kaweh” to the Modesto Area, 3 p.m. Sunday, October 12 at Congregation Beth Shalom, 1705 Sherwood Avenue. The concert is the first of 5 in the 2008-09 series and is part of the band’s 2008 “Illusions” CD/DVD release tour.

“Kaweh” (pronounced Ka-Vay) is an international confluence of Spanish guitar, Latin Jazz, Nuevo Flamenco, Rumba Flamenca, Brazilian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern sounds, along with English, Farci, Spanish and Italian vocals and some folk, funk, fusion and maybe a bit of Australian Didgeridoo.

The group takes its name from bandleader Kaweh whose guitar playing has been described by Ardeshir Farah of Strunz & Farah as “very soulful and passionate.” The group’s reputation for “...rich acoustic guitar, passionate rhythms and international [musical] flair...reaches out to everyone, regardless of age or style preference.”

ACTION: Tickets (both season and individual concerts) are available through the CBS office between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays at 571-6060. Further information is available at www.cbsmodesto.org.

**Come out, come out,
wherever you are !**

MOFest!

Saturday, October 11, 2008

Fourth Annual PFLAG Modesto

Film Festival

The State Theatre

1307 “J” Street, Modesto

Doors open at 2pm; matinee show at 2:45pm

Special showing of short interviews with
area residents during both screenings.

Doors open at 6pm; evening show at 6:45pm

Tickets - \$10 per showing/person; \$15/day

MoFest!4 is a program of PFLAG Modesto
www.pflagmodesto.org

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