

stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
PEACE/LIFE
CENTER
PUBLICATION

JUNE, 2010
VOLUME XXII, NO. 10

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

PEACE CAMP	2
SOCIAL ACTION	3
LIVING LIGHTLY	4
RIVERS OF BIRDS	5
ISRAELI TEEN WORKS FOR PEACE	6
FREEDOM TO REPORT	7
PEACE ESSAY CONTEST	8
GATHERING OF VOICES	9
DIALOGUE	10
COMMUNITY	11

2nd Annual Youth Leadership Conference needs your help!

By MIKE & JANA CHIAVETTA

It is time to organize for the 2010 version of the Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference.

The success and energy generated at the conference in 2009 have been evident by the numerous youth involved in the several organizations that participated in the inaugural event. We hope that your organization has seen an increase in participation.

This year's conference will be held on Saturday, September 25th, 2010 at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, from 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM. We hope it will be bigger and better and attract about 100 students to attend. We hope that we have a greater distribution of students from the various high schools in the area. **The keynote address will be presented by the Alliance for Climate Education (A.C.E.).** Check out their organization at www.acespace.org.

Continuing the same format as last year, we are asking organizations to **"table" from 8:30 AM to 12 noon**. They can distribute materials, communicate with students and sign up individuals for any activities that each group has planned. Each organization will also participate in **panel discussion workshops** in the afternoon. We are expanding the afternoon to possibly 3 workshops that each participant would attend. Participating organizations are welcome to enjoy lunch and refreshments throughout the event. We again plan on a full day!

The budget for the conference is roughly \$2,000. This includes materials, advertising, T-shirts, food etc. We ask participating organizations make a monetary contribution to defray the cost of this endeavor. We feel that this conference provides a wonderful opportunity for local organizations to reach out to area youth, convey their message, and involve students in their activities. The comments from so many students last year were that they had no idea about all of the different groups that they could get involved with and truly make a difference. They also came away with a better understanding of the diversity of social justice causes that numerous people dedicate their time and money to alleviate.

Please get back to us as soon as possible via email chiavetta.m@monet.k12.ca.us. If you have any ideas or comments please let us know. **Make checks out to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134 Modesto, CA 95353-0134.**

Suggested donations: Participant \$ 100,
Contributor \$ 250, Co-Sponsor \$ 500.



35th Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday June 6, 2010

8:00 a.m. — Noon

*Benefit for
the Modesto Peace/Life Center*

Modesto Church of the Brethren
2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto



All-Star Favorites

- Blueberry • Buttermilk •
- Scotch Oaties •

Fresh fruit salad

Excellent coffees

Teas and juices

Fresh granola and yogurt

Deborah's Delight Sampler
(\$2.00 extra)

- Every order cooked up hot!
- Visit with fellow breakfasters.
- Browse displays.

Adults: \$7, Children: \$5

Family maximum: \$25

Helpers and food needed. Call 545-0590

A good community project for students

~ ~ ~

The Church of the Brethren has graciously
donated the use of its facility.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Modesto, CA
Permit No. 236

MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER
P.O. Box 134
Modesto CA 95353-0134
Return Service Requested

Register by June 6 for Peace Camp discount

By KEN SCHROEDER

Register by June 6 to get a \$10 per person discount for Peace Camp. We'll be heading up the mountain to Camp Peaceful Pines for June 25-27.

We will enjoy storyteller B.Z. Smith from Sonora, who will share stories on Friday evening at the campfire. On Saturday morning she will lead a workshop titled "Our Stories: The REAL World Wide Web."

Also on Saturday morning, artist, author and teacher Linda Knoll will lead a workshop, "Outdoor Sketching and Observational Drawing."

On Sunday morning, Karlha Arias of the Tuolumne River Trust will lead the workshop "Know Your River, Love Your River."

Modesto artist Jim Christiansen will be at camp to capture the weekend in sketches.

Deborah Roberts returns to cook up camp food extraordinaire in the dining hall.

Expect the usual cast of characters and newcomers of all ages, along with hikes, campfires, singing, talent show, children's activities, table tennis and other recreation, a full moon, the creek and river, fresh cool air, Sunset Rock and new mattresses in the cabins.

The \$70 fee covers program, food and lodging. Young people are \$50. *Early registration, before June 6th, entitles registrants to a \$10.00 per person discount.* Partial scholarships and day-rates are also available. Registration forms are available here and at www.stanislausconnections.org where they can be printed and mailed. The first ten families or individuals to register will get a cool peace bumper sticker.

Campers may arrive any time after 2:00 P.M. on Friday. The camp opens with supper on Friday and closes at noon on Sunday. Directions and other information will be mailed to participants before camp. Information: Ken Schroeder in Modesto, 209-526-2303.

Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Costs money for electronics, printing, postage.

- ☐ Send me CONNECTIONS. Here's my \$25 DONATION.
- ☐ Keep sending me CONNECTIONS. (Check renewal date on mailing label)
- ☐ I am enclosing an extra tax-deductible donation for Modesto Peace/Life Center
- ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

28th Annual Peace Camp June 25, 26, and 27, 2010



Camp Peaceful Pines
near Pinecrest, California



Registration Form

Early Registration Deadline: **June 6, 2010**

Adults (age 18 and older)

1. _____ Address: _____
2. _____ City/State: _____ Zip _____
3. _____ Phone#: _____
4. _____ Email: _____

Total x \$70 ----- \$ _____

Youth (ages 4 -17)

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____
3. _____ Age _____ 4. _____ Age _____

Total x \$50 ----- \$ _____

Infant (ages 0 - 3) _____ Age _____ **NO CHARGE**

Early registration discount by June 6: subtract \$10 per person _____ (-) \$ _____

I need vegetarian meals _____ Voluntary Donation for scholarships \$ _____

Special Health needs, allergies, etc. _____

Special needs for cabin assignment: _____ **GRAND TOTAL** \$ _____

I can offer/need a ride Friday _____ Saturday _____

There is an additional \$15 fee for each person who comes to camp without pre-registration.

Make checks payable to:
Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

Parent authorization for minor children (must be signed if applicable)

I give permission for decisions to be made in my absence about the need for medical care. I give permission for my child to be treated by a physician or hospital in case of an emergency. I understand and agree that the Modesto Peace/Life Center is not responsible for my child/children. I will not hold the Modesto Peace/Life Center, its officers or leaders liable for medical aid rendered.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

Note: *If adults bring children not their own, the parent/legal guardian of those children must complete and sign a separate parent authorization.*

For camp information and scholarship availability:

Call Ken Schroeder, (209) 526-2303.

SOA Watch November Organizing Internship in Washington, DC

SOA Watch is seeking a full-time intern for a four to five-month period this fall. The autumn season is an exciting and busy time in the DC office as we prepare for the November Vigil to close the SOA/ WHINSEC at the gates of Fort Benning in Georgia.

Being an intern at SOA Watch means becoming part of the staff, which is made up of paid, unpaid, full-time and part-time activists who are all dedicated to the work of the organization: standing in solidarity with the people of the Americas, working to close the SOA/ WHINSEC and changing US foreign policy. Interns have input into their job descriptions and work.

A little less than half of the intern's time will be spent doing the general administrative work that all office staff participate in. These duties include answering the phone, responding to e-mail requests, going to the post office, etc. The intern's share of these duties will be no more than any other staff member.

The focus of the fall internship is the organizing work for the November vigil. For more information, contact Mike Baney in the SOA Watch at 202-234-3440 or mbaney@soaw.org.

SOA Watch, PO Box 4566, Washington, D.C. 20017, USA: (202) 234 3440

New PLC videos now online

By BRAD JOHNSON & JOHN LUCAS, PLC Media Club

Here is a link to the NEW You Tube video of the 10 minute production of the video postcards sent to President Obama after 1 year in office (shot January 2010 at John McCutcheon concert): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5Fms6u3hU4>

Also watch You Tube video of the Modesto protest of Karl Rove's recent visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IabG987tRBA>

Solving the feral feline overpopulation problem, one cat at a time

By LOUIS & MARGARET DEMOTT-FELDMAN

On a cool Saturday morning in mid-March, we found ourselves at Alley Cat Guardians' Open House on Carpenter Lane in Modesto. Because it was the first time that we had stepped foot on the premises, we did not know what to expect; however, we were more than pleasantly surprised by what we encountered!

Before we could enter the building, we visited with cheerful volunteers who were supervising a lively children's drawing contest, which looked like lots of fun for the young people involved. Upon entering the building, we began to take in the incredibly professional environment, which, several days a week, serves as a facility where feral cats that have been trapped in Stanislaus County are spayed/neutered by dedicated veterinarians before they are returned to the local feral cat colony from which they came. Volunteers at

A "Cool Kid Who Cares!"

By REBECCA MEARS

This is the second installment to *Connections* in which we highlight a high school student who is involved in "social justice" issues. In this installment of a "Cool Kid Who Cares" we focus on Rosa Stanley, a senior at Modesto High School. As the ASB president at Modesto High School, Rosa has used her position to help create fundraising opportunities for Haiti and to urge other students to get involved. At Modesto High School's last rally, Rosa came up with the idea to get students to show their school spirit and support for Haiti. Rosa encouraged the whole school to collect empty water bottles, fill them with spare change, and use them as noise makers at the rally. Then, the money was collected and donated to Haiti while the bottles were recycled. Rosa has also been influential in helping to plan and publicize for Modesto High's 2nd annual Arts Festival known as "The Art of the Heart for Haiti." Furthermore, Rosa has one last end-of-the-year fundraiser for Haiti which she calls "A Celebration of Life." This event is designed to showcase the true value of donations and will be held in Modesto High's auditorium on May 22nd at 7:30 P.M. I sat down with Rosa for a short interview in order to ascertain how she came to dedicate so much of her time to social justice.

Why do you like being involved?

I'm not content with simply sitting back and doing nothing when I know there's so much to be done in the world. It makes me happy when I can benefit other people.

What has been the key motivation for your involvement in social justice?

A few years ago in leadership class, a girl named Sarah Boston brought in the *Invisible Children* DVD to show to the class. I don't think she knew that she was going to change someone's life. Just watching that movie really changed me, it opened up my eyes to the realization that there are serious issues in the world that need our attention.

What was your main inspiration for "A Celebration of Life?"

Over the course of this year the majority of Modesto High students have made donations toward Haiti, but not many of



them understand what their donation truly accomplishes. I wanted to show students the importance of life, and to showcase the true meaning of giving.

Do you think you will carry on with your involvement in social justice after high school?

Yeah! Actually, that has been a main priority in deciding which college I want to attend. I want to find the best campus which will allow me to be involved in student government in order to help keep others' minds open to both local and global issues. My main goal in life is to inspire people to want change. I think my main calling however, lies in Uganda (the area where *Invisible Children* was filmed) and I hope to travel there one day.

When you look at the world what is one thing you would like to see become a reality?

I want more than anything for kids all around the world to be able to enjoy their childhood. There are too many kids in the world who have the weight of the world thrust upon their shoulders at such a young age. They're forced to worry about issues that no kid should have to concern themselves with. Kids are forced to worry about taking care of their younger siblings, finding enough clean water to drink, and determining whether or not they can find enough food to eat each day. They wake up each morning wondering whether or not they are going to survive long enough to see the next day. It's just terrible! No kid should have to worry about such huge responsibilities; instead they should be allowed to live their lives simply focusing on having fun and being happy.

ACTION: If you want to nominate a young person whom you think is a "Cool Kid Who Cares" send us an e-mail at chiavetta.m@monet.k12.ca.us and let us know.



the Open House walked us through the process that a feral cat must undergo when brought into the center for spaying/neutering, explaining each step, using diagrams, veterinary surgical equipment, and any number of toy cats. Children in attendance were actively involved with the volunteers, and some were even participating in mock spay/neuter surgeries performed on stuffed animals with the veterinarian on duty.

Overall, it was more than evident that what Alley Cat Guardians is doing to reduce the feral cat overpopulation problem in the county is indeed making a difference, in spite of the fact that the number of feral cats that still need to be spayed/neutered is quite staggering.

This got us to thinking about how we could assist the organization in its efforts. Our answer came to us as we recalled what one volunteer had told us about the cost of altering one feral cat, which is \$20.00. Considering that many charitable

organizations have a monthly giving program for donors, why not make a \$20.00-a-month commitment to our local Alley Cat Guardian for the purpose of altering one feral cat a month, an action that could feasibly reduce the feral cat population by forty or more animals the first year of giving alone?

If you would care to join us in making this small commitment to the animals, go to www.alleycatguardians.org and scroll down to *Ways to Help* on the website's first page. This will lead you to the option, *Donate Now and Support Spay/Neuter*, where it is all set up for this local non-profit organization to accept monthly donations. We hope that you consider making this tax-deductible monthly contribution because in doing so you will be joining the county's cat lovers, who are trying to do their part to solve the feral cat overpopulation problem, one cat at a time!

Community garden, anyone?

By JENIFER WEST

Most folks think of gardening as a warm weather sport. But it is possible to enjoy homegrown produce year-round. The key, as Eliot Coleman so eloquently (and wryly) points out in his book, *Four-Season Harvest*, is in choosing what to grow and when to grow it. This means expanding beyond the familiar tomatoes, peppers and corn to things like claytonia (Miner's Lettuce – a California native green that helped keep the miners alive during the Gold Rush), kohlrabi (an interesting brassica family member that grows what looks like a turnip above the ground) and corn salad (you'll find these delicate little leaves in your "spring greens" salad at a chi-chi restaurant, where it goes by the name of mache).

So, late last September, I headed out to the garden with packets of lettuce, mild Asian cabbage, spinach, kohlrabi, carrot, and beet seeds. And by November, we were literally enjoying the fruits of that labor.

Seems like buying a red car causes one to see red cars everywhere, and suddenly I was noticing green everywhere. Our city was especially hard hit when the building boom went bust, and so there are vacant lots scattered throughout the town. And I kept noticing, as I drove past them, that they sported magnificent crops of weeds. Inspired by the success of our own gardening experiment, I couldn't help but think, wouldn't it be great if those weed factories could be turned into little neighborhood gardens?

So I started asking around, and found that there was land available for a pilot project. I called folks in town who are known for getting things done, and on a bright Saturday in April, a group of us agreed to start working on the Patterson 4-Season Community Garden.

And it couldn't be a better time! Childhood obesity, and particularly the dietary connection to it, is being talked about everywhere. The First Lady, motivated by a frank discussion with the First Daughters' pediatrician, has planted, and recently expanded, a garden in what used to be part of the White House lawn, and is actively promoting school and community gardens. And California's First Lady, Maria Shriver, is encouraging school and community gardens as one of her "WE" programs.

And it's no wonder. Gardens in general, and community gardens in particular, offer a wide variety of benefits, both

obvious and otherwise. Here, in no particular order, are a few:

Gardening, Generally

- The USDA estimates that every \$100 invested in a garden can return \$1,000 - \$1,700 in produce. (Where can you get a return on investment like that?)
- "Homegrown" produce is typically consumed shortly after harvest, and so offers a much greater nutrient content. (I was shocked when I started looking at the pack dates on produce and realized that most things have been picked at least a week before they reach the market, and often longer!)
- Gardening is excellent, and gentle, exercise.
- Kids are more likely to eat (and enjoy!!) produce they've helped grow. (Dotty, who runs the Riverbank Community Garden, shared an experience that confirmed this: Last Fall, the school kids planted broccoli, among other things. After it was harvested, most of the kids actually ate and enjoyed it when it was offered to them with dip. Dotty made the rest into cream of broccoli soup, and, with some trepidation, took it to the school. And she was delighted to bring home an empty soup pot!)
- Gardening presents a wonderful learning opportunity for kids. (Ask any teacher about the many skills that can be learned in the course of planning, planting and tending a garden, and, possibly, selling the leftover produce!)

Community Gardens

From: American Community Garden Association

- Increase a "sense of community".
- Unite people of different ages, backgrounds and even languages & cultures, as they work together toward a common goal.
- Can help with crime prevention (get to know neighbors, "eyes on the street").
- Allow individuals and families without growing space of their own to grow food.
- Can help alleviate hunger by donating to local food banks.
- Help add oxygen to the air, and so help reduce air pollution.
- And many other benefits.

And, as if all that wasn't enough, urban agriculture (backyard and community gardens) is 3 - 5 times more productive than traditional, monoculture practices.

The Patterson Community Garden Committee has now had two meetings, and is embarking on the monumental task of simultaneously bringing a new organization into being and launching its first major project. It is daunting, no getting around that. But, having worked with several of these folks on another major undertaking, I believe this group has the enthusiasm, skills and abilities to get this done.

In two weeks, we will formally establish the committee, elect the folks in charge, and break out into committees to take on the various tasks (fund raising/budget, site planning, public relations, and many others).

For information on establishing a community garden in your area, see the American Community Garden Association's website: www.communitygarden.org.

The spirit of community at the Urban Sheep Yarn Boutique

By CHRISTINE ROSCELLI and SYLVIA SCHMIER

Knitting or crocheting for charity is a wonderful thing. It allows you to knit or crochet more than you'd ever want to for family and friends and also get the good feeling that comes with helping others.

At the Urban Sheep Yarn Boutique, which recently celebrated its first year anniversary, the community spirit is celebrated in many ways. Knitalongs are one way to enjoy your craft and also give back while enjoying the company of other people. Last year several customers participated in a workshop to make hats for newborns that were then donated to a local hospital.

This month customers have volunteered their time and skills to participate in the construction of a Breast Cancer Awareness Afghan. It is a perfect group project. The afghan consists of 30 blocks and several customers of the Urban Sheep have signed on to make 1-2 blocks. Eventually, the plan is to auction it off and donate the proceeds to a breast cancer awareness fund.

Knitting and the Internet

The Internet in all its forms - websites, blogs e-mail, podcasts, and a dozen more modes of communication - is more than a source of free knitting patterns. It enlarges your circle of knitting acquaintances beyond the borders of your town. It can help you find and communicate with your knitting peers. Finding a knitalong (KAL) online is as easy as using a search engine and typing in "knitalong" and the type of project you are interested in finding. To find an in-person KAL in the community, a good place to start is to drop into your local yarn shop (LYS), as mentioned above. If you are interested in sharing an idea for an in-person KAL, the Urban Sheep is a good place to find like-minded people who might share your interest.

The term "knitalong" emerged out of the Internet knitting culture of blogs and discussion groups around 2003 and 2004, when it was used most often to describe the practice of knitters in different places working on the same project during the same time period. While they didn't all turn on their computers and knit at the same moment, they did pledge to make the same scarf, socks, or sweater pretty much simultaneously. Other jargon one might come across in surfing the internet for KAL's:

WIP - work in progress

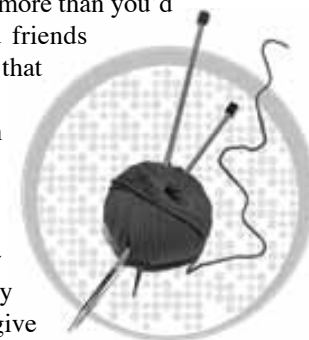
FO - finished object

UFO - unfinished object

FROG - to rip out a knitted work ("rip it, rip it")

TINK - (knit spelled backward) to "unknit" a few stitches - less intense than frogging

Knitting circles and meet-ups can be found in every size and level of intensity, from intimate get-togethers of just a few friends, to a dozen or so gathered for a local stitch 'n



stanislaus
CONNECTIONS

is published monthly except in August
by the Modesto Peace/Life Center
720 13th St., Modesto, CA 95354.

Open by appointment.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 134,
Modesto, CA 95353
209-529-5750.

CONNECTIONS is available for
a suggested donation of \$25.00/yr.

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

By Lillian Vallee

67. Blithe & Not-so-blithe Tomatoes

Spring semester has ended at Modesto Junior College but a few important tasks require attention before a more carefree summer rhythm establishes itself. Instructors are asked to order their books for the following semester, a task which seems simple enough but which requires a lot more thought than the end-of-the-semester flurry allows. In examining and reading books that would work in college composition and critical thinking classes, I am drawn to recent publications about farms and food, inspired to some extent by a small project that began as an ad in *Stanislaus Connections*.

In February I read that the good people of Modesto Church of the Brethren, on Woodland Avenue, were offering garden plots, for a minimal fee, to the community at large. When I stopped by the Church to inquire, Leah Knipe, Community Outreach Coordinator, told me about a Saturday workshop informing participants of protocols and techniques for successful community gardening, gave me a planting schedule, and offered free seeds. There were tools I could use if I had none, she explained, and the plot would be disked before Easter.

I had to overcome a few misgivings about the enterprise. I have plenty to do in my own (mainly) native plant garden, it is closer to home, and I get fresh vegetables and fruit from a local organic farmer weekly (making every Thursday feel like Christmas). But the backyard apple and cherry trees, bountifully served by native pollinators, are being edged out by thriving Valley oaks. I am torn between providing a tiny piece of native habitat in an urban setting and growing some of what I eat. I harbor imperialist fantasies of buying my neighbors' lots, demolishing their houses, and planting a generous kitchen garden and orchard. Native pollinators are such an industrious lot that any plants in their vicinity benefit, so the combination would be ideal.

Luckily for my neighbors, I am a person of modest means, but my fate is sealed the minute I see the Brethren garden plot-- a lovely open space, edged with a few winter gardens full of lettuces, golden chard, and mounds of strawberries bright red against black plastic. I come from people of the fields, and for me there is nothing more magnetic than dirt. I am aware that NOT having to make a living this way probably fuels my enthusiasm, but for me there is no greater satisfaction than coaxing edibles out of the earth. In surveying the

gardens, I notice mounds of freshly plowed dirt indicating that there is another creature equally fond of our coaxing edibles out of the earth, and I watch as a shiny bouquet of romaine disappears into the underworld. I plant tomatoes and marigolds. When a kind-faced man appears to clear Bermuda grass from the composting bins, he steals a knowing glance at the marigolds, candy to the gophers of the world.

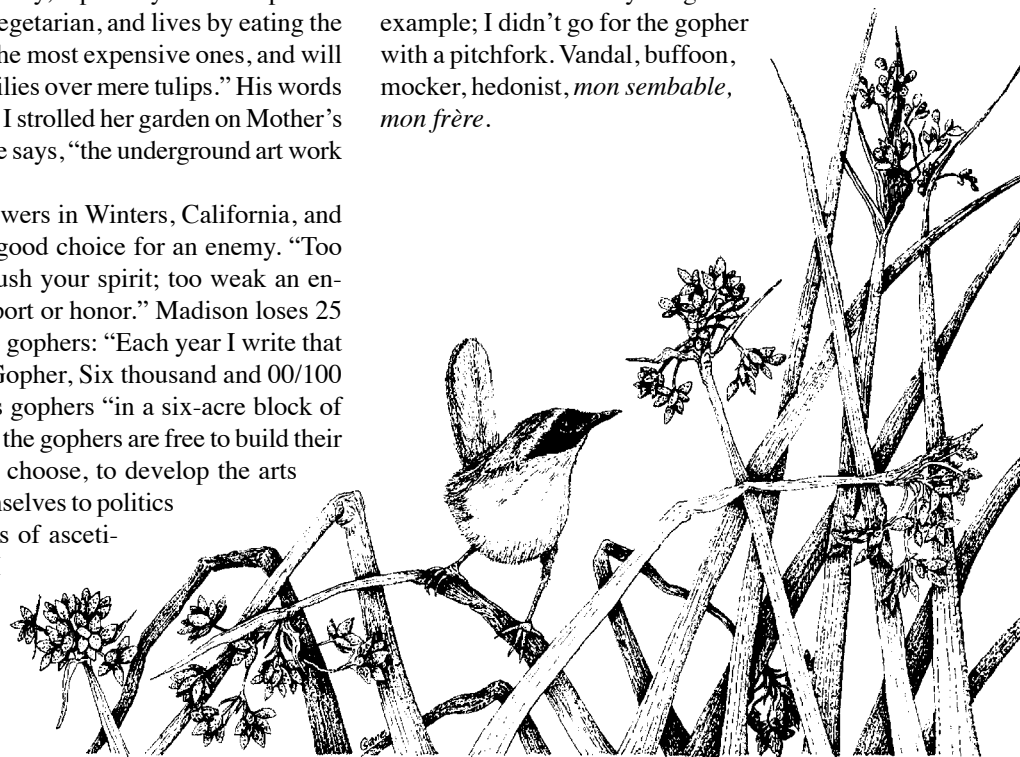
Meanwhile I am reading books about farming and food: Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire* (how plants manipulate people), *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (how people manipulate plants and animals), and *Food Rules* (Rule #20: "It's not food if it arrived through the window of your car."); Dana and Laura Jackson's *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems* (on the social, economic, and ecological benefits of good farming); Gene Logsdon's *Living at Nature's Pace: Farming and the American Dream* (on the crankiness, courage and affection one must have to farm); and Mike Madison's, *The Blithe Tomato* (portraits of fellow growers or farmers' market "society"). Madison's droll humor wins me over completely, especially in his chapter on gophers: "The gopher is a vegetarian, and lives by eating the farmer's crops. He prefers the most expensive ones, and will always choose Casablanca lilies over mere tulips." His words echo my mother's uttered as I strolled her garden on Mother's Day. "Let me show you," she says, "the underground art work of my arch enemy."

Mike Madison grows flowers in Winters, California, and writes that the gopher is a good choice for an enemy. "Too powerful an enemy will crush your spirit; too weak an enemy affords no scope for sport or honor." Madison loses 25 percent of his net income to gophers: "Each year I write that check: Pay to the order of Gopher, Six thousand and 00/100 dollars." He accommodates gophers "in a six-acre block of forest along the creek where the gophers are free to build their civilizations, however they choose, to develop the arts and sciences, to devote themselves to politics or literature, to pursue lives of asceticism or debauchery, and I will not interfere. But once they leave their own country...." One winter, when Madison "wasn't

paying attention," gophers "ate every single bulb out of a bed of two thousand tulips."

Back at the plot, I talk myself into a solar "mole deterrent," emitting a high pitched whine, annoying until I see a burrow opening near the tomato plants. "On a particularly bad day," writes Madison, "one is tempted to shake a fist at the heavens and cry out, 'Why, God, did you make this odious creature?'" The answer comes almost immediately: "For, among animals who are vandals, the first prize certainly goes to humans, the most destructive of all creatures; none of the others come even close. And so the gopher is there to play the role played by the buffoon and the zany in a comic opera. He is there to mock us by clumsily imitating us...."

A few years ago freshly installed plants began to disappear from my garden and I was eyeing a neighbor with suspicion until I spotted a gopher drowsing at his burrow entrance, four curved teeth exposed against glossy fur. On furlough from the dark, damp underground, he basked in the warm sunlight. I was ashamed of my suspicions, but I didn't follow my neighbor's example; I didn't go for the gopher with a pitchfork. Vandal, buffoon, mocker, hedonist, *mon semblable*, *mon frère*.



E. F. CASH-DUDLEY

Certified Specialist in Family Law
The State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization

Modesto Family Law Center

Formerly E. F. Cash-Dudley
A Professional Law Corporation

518 Thirteenth Street • Modesto, CA 95354
(209) 526-1533 • Fax: (209) 526-1711

CHEFS OF NEW YORK
The finest PIZZA & PASTA in Town!
Open 7 Days a Week

www.ChefsOfNewYork.com
2307 Oakdale Rd., Modesto, CA 95355
p (209) 551-0163
f (209) 551-0330

Club of New York
Dinner 6:00
Dinner 7:00
Dinner 8:00

Dan Langhoff
Owner

Information Management
IMA
Associates

(209) 522-8841
email: ima@imabiz.com
www.imabiz.com

2217 College Ave.
Modesto, CA 95350

Systems • Installation, Networking, Internet, Recovery
Support • On-site Repair, Troubleshooting, Consulting
Design/Development • Web sites, Programming

Palestinian Israeli Teenager: "War just brings more war."

By JOHN MOREARTY

Ismail Kharoub is a skinny kid who looks at you steadily, waits for you to speak. We're sitting in my garden.

"I'm eighteen, a Palestinian citizen of Israel. My family has lived in Jaffa, on the Mediterranean, for eleven generations—about three hundred years. My grandparents were land workers, my father worked in construction and now he's an air conditioning installer. My mother brings gourmet meals to people that are having a hard time. My grandfather is a great storyteller. If you come to Jaffa you will like him. We live in a mixed neighborhood. My parents are very close friends with one Jewish couple. He is a literature professor. They come and watch soccer games at our place. My mom teaches them Arabic, they give us free ceramic lessons. They enjoy the stories that my parents have to tell. Because they come from places that are only Jewish, they have never heard our stories. My mother cooks for them. She makes great hummus!

"From age eleven I worked at all kinds of jobs to help support my family: truck mechanic, web designer, computer engineer. I went to a Palestinian school, and then an expensive Jewish school, to get a good education. We were twelve Palestinians in a school of 1200; other kids called us terrorists. Teachers made fun of our accent. So I learned good Hebrew.

"I was one of the top in my high school, and my younger sister is the smartest person I've ever met in my life. We have all these gifts from God or whatever mystic forces are guiding us, but this doesn't mean that we have to sit back and let things come to us. In our family the most important thing is hard work.

"For a year I was part of a commune, a co-op, Sadaka Reut, both Jews and Palestinians, that worked against injustice in our own society. We went to Sderote, the border city between Israel and the Gaza Strip, that was constantly being rocketed by the Hamas. We had some workshops with the children there because a lot of people usually say that our kind of groups are biased, and demonize Israel in the eyes of people. But our group didn't do anything like that. What we did is fight injustice. We worked with Sudanian refugees that came to Israel and would be expelled. A couple of them were murdered, actually. The police used to take them away and throw them into Egypt, where they were treated like animals. Everybody is a human being, and needs to be treated equally and fairly.

"When the Israeli attack on Gaza began in December, 2008, I was worried. I was very close to one girl cousin there. We played together as little kids. She was a student at the University Khan Yunis in Gaza. We used to videochat a lot.



of my family members were being attacked.

"After ten minutes she said something was going on outside. I thought maybe IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) bombs in the neighborhood, and she said, 'I have to go now!' The connection was lost; neither of us got to say goodbye.

"Three days later we got a phone call from her mom. She told us that during the ten minutes we were talking, the Israeli Air Force had bombed the university, and my cousin, her sister and brother were all killed. Fourteen hundred Palestinians were killed in the attack on Gaza, and twelve Israelis, half of them soldiers."

Ismail sits quietly in the garden.

"It was the first time I experienced the death of a relative. I'd lost friends, but not family. It was very hard at first. I didn't know what to think. I'm a Palestinian, and I'm with the Palestinian side, but I'm also a citizen of Israel, and Israel is fighting to defend her citizens, they say.

"But I was mad at everybody. I was mad about the IDF that sent those helicopters. Okay, if you have war with another army, why hurt civilians? and I know my cousin, she wasn't part of any army, she was nineteen years old, very attractive girl, very sweet, very smart, very sharp; she was an amazing person. I was mad about Hamas for attacking Israel, and giving it a reason to attack the Gaza Strip. I was mad about everything and everybody.

"I was fed up, I had enough. I had a month or two to be calm and think about what happened, and what's gonna happen next.

"I could easily say that I'm mad at the world, and do what a lot of people who are under the Occupation does. Suicide bombers are fed up with their lives and they decide to kill themselves and kill a lot of people and hurt other people

"Three days after the attack started we got to talk on Skype. She told me the situation was not good at all, many of her family members were homeless or injured, and I started panicking a little bit. Although I had two Jewish friends from school who were killed in the Army in Lebanon and Gaza, this was the first time some

because they lost their relative or things like that.

"So what do I do next? Just get along with my life like nothing happened? Or should I be, like I deserve to be, a little pissed about these two societies because the two governments are not agreeing. People are dying. We are dying?"

"But being in the business world for a lot of years, I like to see results with my own eyes. And the results of 62 years of war are just people dying. So I decided war is not the solution that I'm looking for. If I want to bring more sadness and more sorrow to other peoples' lives, then I'll choose war. But what I want to do is to end this, so that things like what happened to me would never happen to anybody else.

"What I want to do is take nonviolent action, and work through my own community to make it a better place, and to make my people aware of the situation, and make sure that they make other people aware of the situation, so that we can fight this in a nonviolent way.

"So I came back to the commune. My sister and I started a small organization that helps kids who come from the Gaza strip and the West Bank to Israeli hospitals. Some of them are hurt by the war, or gang wars.

"But a kid could have only one parent in the hospital. He would have to choose between his mom or his dad, and this is the most horrible decision ever! So they would be depressed, and sometimes the healing process would stop or get worse....

"So my sister and I started going to these hospitals and just have fun with them! Make them laugh, give them a little joy, some time off from thinking about their situation, have fun. Sitting, playing, watching movies. This is my sister's idea. My sister is a saint. She likes children and she also is active in making our community a better place.

"We also take children who are in the streets of Jaffa. They walk around drug dealers, they see murder, so we give them the opportunity to help other people, and they learn from helping others to help themselves. Somebody from New York heard about the project, so he started an organization called the We Are Family Foundation. They invited my sister to come to New York and present our project, and we got somebody to fund it. We enjoy what we are doing.

"As students we have less time. She is a politics and international relations major, the top student in this subject in the entire country, but we still talk to the kids that we started with a year and a half ago. They are older now, and we tell

ISRAELI TEENcontinued p. 10



MICHAEL R. BAUDLER, CPA
DONNA E. FLANDERS, CPA

Office (209) 575-2653
Fax (209) 575-0629
e-mail b_f@modestocpas.com

1120 14th Street, Suite 2
Modesto, CA 95350

LAW OFFICES OF
FRAILING, ROCKWELL, KELLY & DUARTE

JOHN B. FRAILING
DAVID N. ROCKWELL
SHARON E. KELLY
JEFFREY DUARTE
Attorneys/Abogados

1600 G Street
Suite 203
P.O. Box 0142
Modesto, CA
95353-0142
(209) 521-2552
FAX (209) 526-7898

106^{FM}

Local Bands. Real News.

ValleyMedia.org

Amy Goodman strikes back against RNC arrest, files lawsuit

By YANA KUNICHOFF, *truthout* Report

Amy Goodman, host of the *Democracy Now!* news program and two of her producers filed a federal lawsuit against the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis on Wednesday, following the journalists' arrest and mistreatment while covering the 2008 Republican National Convention.

Filed with the Center for Constitutional Rights in a federal court in Minnesota, the lawsuit says authorities violated the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to Goodman, her producers and other journalists when they interfered with their right to gather news.

This is not only a violation of freedom of the press, but a violation of the public's right to know. "When journalists are arrested, that has a chilling effect on the functioning of a democratic society," said Goodman, whose show airs on over 750 radio and TV stations across the country. "We shouldn't have to get a record to put things on the record."

According to a telephone conference with Goodman, she and her producers, Nicole Salazar and Sharif Abdel Kouddous were arrested despite visibly holding their press passes and equipment and identified themselves as journalist. They were then physically assaulted, detained for a long period and had their cameras, video and other media equipment, as well as their personal belongings, searched and seized.

Goodman was arrested and pushed to the ground after she went to the arrest site and asked officers to release her producers. She said experienced several weeks of pain and tingling from her left elbow to her thumb as a result of handcuffs that were too tight.

The lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction against authorities to prevent their interference in the journalistic rights of Goodman and her producers again. It also calls for the court to

declare the actions that restricted their work unconstitutional and award compensation and punitive monetary damages, including compensation for medical expenses and lost or damaged property.

Goodman further asserted that the government cannot limit the flow of information in the name of security by acting unwarrantably against journalists who report on the public acts of law enforcement and speech such as dissent, which is protected by the First Amendment.

Anjana Samant, a staff attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, said the arrest of journalists during the convention was indiscriminate, and possibly even intentional.

"The media are the eyes and ears of the American people - that is why there are laws to protect them," Samant continued. "Law enforcement and Secret Service agents are not exempt from those laws in their dealings with un-embedded journalists who are documenting peaceful protestors or law enforcement's use of force and violence against those protestors."

The Obama administration, which has reaffirmed its commitment to break with the practices of the Bush era, has said it will improve public access to official information and in December a federal shield law, which would guarantee protection of sources, passed the Senate Judiciary Committee.

However, in May 2009 a federal appeals court decision granting the right to publish photos of torture of prisoners by US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq was opposed by the government, who cited a threat to military morale and the encouragement of anti-American feeling.

Most recently, a raid on the home of California blogger Jason Chen, who blogs about gadgets and technology at Gizmodo, highlighted gaps in the shield law, which will not cover the rising numbers of bloggers or citizen journalists. Chen was accused of obtaining a prototype iPhone and publishing an exclusive about it, together with photos and videos, without Apple's agreement.

Sharif Abdel Kouddous, a journalist and plaintiff in the lawsuit against St. Paul and Minnesota who suffered injuries that he says resulted in long-term numbness in his hands, chest pains for several weeks, and scars on his arms, considers this a fight to exercise the democratic role of the media.

"The protests on the streets outside the convention center are just as important to the democratic process as the official party proceedings inside," said Kouddous. "Journalists should not have to risk being arrested, brutalized or intimidated by the police in order to do perform their duties, exercise their First Amendment rights and facilitate the rights of

others to freedom of speech and assembly." Officers slammed Kouddous against a wall after he shouted to the officers arresting Salazar that she was a member of the press.

During the demonstrations at the Republican National Convention in 2008, law enforcement officers used pepper spray, rubber bullets, concussion grenades against protesters on September 1st, 2008 on the opening day of the convention. Goodman and her producers were among an estimated 40 to 50 journalists arrested by riot police while covering street protests at the RNC in downtown St. Paul. About 800 demonstrators and bystanders were also arrested.

The response by the police, who said reporters could either use a telephoto lens or embed with the police to avoid possible arrest, limits journalists right to cover matters of public concern by influencing the perspective they provide, said the attorneys.

"The video of my arrest and of Amy's mobilized an overwhelming public response," said Nicole Salazar, who was videotaping as officers corralled journalists and bystanders in a parking lot. "The public has both an interest and a right to know how law enforcement officials are acting on their behalf. We should ask ourselves what kind of accountability exists when there is no coverage of police brutality and intimidation."

The complaint says the officers pushed her to the ground, knocking her video camera from her hands. She was left bloodied with cuts, scratches and bruises on her face after her arrest.

The lawsuit names both cities, their police chiefs, Ramsey County and its sheriff, one identified police officer and other as yet-unidentified officers. The Minneapolis Police Department was one of several agencies providing security during the convention.

Goodman was cited for interference with a peace officer ("If only there was a peace officer present," she said) and obstruction of the legal process, and Kouddous and Salazar were told they were facing felony riot charges. Kouddous and a *Democracy Now!* cameraman were also arrested Sept. 4, 2008, along with a number of other journalists, on the final night of the convention. Kouddous was cited that night for unlawful assembly.

All the charges against the journalists and many of the protesters arrested were eventually dropped.

This work by Truthout is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License. This work has been edited. Read the complete version at: <http://www.truthout.org/amy-goodman-strikes-back-against-rnc-arrest-files-lawsuit59324>

American InfoMetrics, Inc.



Global, shmoba. . . we're local!

INTERNET ACCESS

Web Design & Hosting • Programming
Database • Consulting • Security
Development • E-Commerce Solutions
Corporate Services • T1 • DSL
Network Specialists
Professional Internet Solutions
Since 1994

www.ainet.com
sales@ainet.com
(209) 551.6226

PAINTING
PLUMBING
CARPENTRY
ELECTRICAL
REMODELING
SPRINKLERS
TILE WORK
FENCING

HANDYMAN

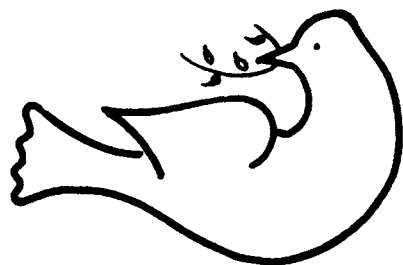
Quality Work at Affordable Rates

ALBERT SERROS
209.345.4779

ANDERSON
CUSTOM FRAMING GALLERY

Carl E. Anderson
Gallery Director
CERTIFIED PICTURE FRAMER®

1323 J Street • Modesto, CA 95354 • 209.579.9913 • Fax 209.579.9914
www.anderson-gallery.com



Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

— The Dalai Lama

2010 Peace Essay Contest

“Imagine that you suddenly have the power to put into action a non-violent plan to bring about a more peaceful future that includes respect and fairness for all.”

The 24th annual Peace Essay Contest received 1015 qualifying essays from fifth through twelfth grade students from throughout Stanislaus County.

The word “peace” has many meanings, from the absence of war and armed conflict to personal inner serenity. All around the world people yearn for the opportunity for their families to live work and thrive in peace. They dream of a future where forces like injustice, poverty and racism no longer exist. Each writer focused on a problem preventing people from experiencing peace and explained his/her plan for bringing about change.

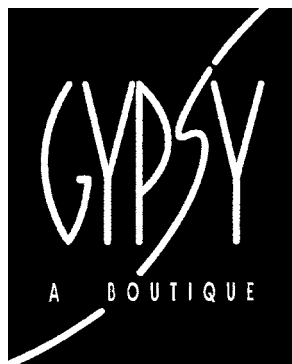
Sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center, the contest is co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts.

2010 Peace Essay Committee: Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Suzanne Meyer, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, and Shelly Scribner.



Modesto Homeopathy
Elise Osner, C Hom
1015 12th St., Suite 4
Modesto, CA 95350

209-527-4420
209-988-7883
eosner@ainet.com



DOWNTOWN
920 13th STREET
MODESTO, CA 95354
(209) 577-1903

GEORGIA
ANDERSON

Division IV First Place and School Winner Selene Avina

Riverbank Language Academy ~ Mrs. Jimenez

Unemployment

Unemployment has become a cruel reality for many during the past few years. Additionally, this issue has become a major problem due to the level it has reached during the current economic recession. While many reference war as the principal disruptor of world peace, the current unemployment crisis has dramatically impacted the peace in our society. Due to the many implications of unemployment, the daily peace that many use to enjoy is no longer something we can take for granted.

Poverty, hunger, and violence are some of the most obvious side effects of the unemployment crisis. These issues have disrupted peace in our society by lowering the quality of life of many individuals. As people have been losing their jobs, they have been forced to leave their houses, sell their cars, and limit their spending. Some people have even been left without a home and nothing to eat. These problems have caused violence and conflicts within families because of the depression and stress. Unfortunately, kids who use to live peacefully are now having to worry about whether their parents have a job or not.

Although unemployment has always existed, today the issue is bigger than ever. I choose to focus on this problem because it is an issue that is disrupting the peace in many people's life. My family and I have personally been affected

by unemployment in several ways. I have watched my father struggle to find a job and I have also witnessed his desperation. Additionally, my family has moved to a smaller house and has had to limit our spending. Furthermore, the company that my mother works for will soon close down and she will be left unemployed. For these reasons, I had chosen the problem of unemployment given that it has affected me and many others.

If I had the opportunity to make changes that would create employment, there are three main things I would do. First, I would order hospitals, schools, and businesses to be built in order to create more job opportunities. Secondly, I would order that home loans and payments be reduced for those who are unemployed. Then, I would increase taxes for the true rich and use that money to pay the government's debt instead of cutting aid to public services which creates more unemployment. The decrease of unemployment will create a more peaceful future because people's life will return to normal. With these changes, less people will be poor, hungry, and without a home.

While thinking about the concept of peace, I have learned that there are two types of peace, one you can see and one you could feel. The absence of visual peace is present in communities that are affected by hunger and poverty. Unemployment is to blame for this and also for the loss of the feeling of peace. Children like me are not at peace, when we have to worry about whether our parents will lose their jobs and whether we will have somewhere to live. Lastly, while many worry about the war in Iraq but most people ignore the disruption of peace in our homes, which is caused by the unemployment crisis.

Slick Operator: The BP I've Known Too Well

By GREG PALAST, *truthout* News Analysis

I've seen this movie before. In 1989, I was a fraud investigator hired to dig into the cause of the Exxon Valdez disaster. Despite Exxon's name on that boat, I found the party most to blame for the destruction was ... British Petroleum (BP).

That's important to know, because the way BP caused devastation in Alaska is exactly the way BP is now sliming the entire Gulf Coast.

Tankers run aground, wells blow out, pipes burst. It shouldn't happen, but it does. And when it does, the name of the game is containment. Both in Alaska, when the Exxon Valdez grounded, and in the Gulf last week, when the Deepwater Horizon platform blew, it was British Petroleum that was charged with carrying out the Oil Spill Response Plans (OSRP), which the company itself drafted and filed with the government.

What's so insane, when I look over that sickening slick moving toward the Delta, is that containing spilled oil is really quite simple and easy. And from my investigation, BP has figured out a very low-cost way to prepare for this task: BP lies. BP prevaricates, BP fabricates and BP obfuscates.

That's because responding to a spill may be easy and simple, but not at all cheap. And BP is cheap. Deadly cheap.

To contain a spill, the main thing you need is a lot of rubber, long skirts of it called a “boom.” Quickly surround a spill, leak or burst, then pump it out into skimmers, or disperse it, sink it or burn it. Simple.

But there's one thing about the rubber skirts: you've got to have lots of them at the ready, with crews on standby in helicopters and on containment barges ready to roll. They have to be in place round the clock, all the time, just like a fire department, even when all is operating A-O.K. Because rapid response is the key. In Alaska, that was BP's job, as principal owner of the pipeline consortium Alyeska. It is, as well, BP's job in the Gulf, as principal lessee of the deepwater oil concession.

Before the Exxon Valdez grounding, BP's Alyeska group claimed it had these full-time, oil spill response crews. Alyeska had hired Alaskan natives, trained them to drop from helicopters into the freezing water and set booms in case of emergency. Alyeska also certified in writing that a containment barge with equipment was within five hours sailing of any point in the Prince William Sound. Alyeska also told the state and federal government it had plenty of boom and equipment cached on Bligh Island.

But it was all a lie. On that March night in 1989 when the Exxon Valdez hit Bligh Reef in the Prince William Sound, the BP group had, in fact, not a lick of boom there. And Alyeska had fired the natives who had manned the full-time response teams, replacing them with phantom crews, lists of untrained employees with no idea how to control a spill. And that containment barge at the ready was, in fact, laid up

“HERE, IT’S FOR YOU, YOUR MOM”

This time I take the call. Her body hurts
in different places now,
new surgeries, more appointments,
new complaints, more blame.
Her voice stitches through my head.
Her always half-empty glass
clouds my own.
Emotions without sutures break her voice,
clog it, like mine sometimes.

She still feels the needle
stitching through her mother’s finger,
sees her own shell-shocked father
taken off to a soldiers’ home,
hears her mother’s lungs wheeze
until pneumonia carried her off.
She still sees the foster family
who needed money, took her
and her younger sister in, sees her
drawn into the dark garage.

I see the four husbands mom chose
and left. Threat and loss never stitched shut.
I hear her sing her favorite hymn
and the one lullaby she knew,
trying for time to read the two books
in our house. She gave me a paperback,
when I was 14, *Immortal Poems*,
“To a kindred soul—From Mom.”

Phone to my ear, this hand’s
grown numb, tired. My tight jaw aches,
piles of bills await.
I crook my neck, shift the familiar weight
of the receiver to my other shoulder,
listen for a lullaby hidden in the words.

Poet: Pat McCutcheon

I don’t think of my history as activist, but I do remember the rich three years we spent doing community development in Venezuela with the Peace Corps. More recently I have been involved with sexual abuse issues and with the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender community. I’m also a member of the Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and through our Social Action committee, help provide food and clothing for the homeless. I also tutor Spanish speakers in English through the Humboldt Literacy Project.

My father and his family are from Reedley in the Central Valley and have lived in Manteca.

Linda Johnson and I first became friends at a writing workshop with Naomi Shihab Nye at Tassajara and plan to go again this summer. We also had a great time at the 2008 Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival in New Jersey.



LITHIUM

Twenty years ago the doctor coaxed
her into the prescription,
probably saved her life.
They’ve worked together to keep her
balanced ever since.
Then a young nephrologist decreed,
“Change the medication or face dialysis.”

“Iatrogenic”
means the doctor caused the illness.
Not on purpose. Maybe just one missed workshop
on updated findings.
One journal article overlooked about a study
contradicting what he had been taught
twenty years ago. Or less.
A study reporting gender difference in acceptable
levels of creatine: male and female kidneys
are not created equal.
A lab level normal for a man’s
would eat holes in the intricate filter of
a woman’s, mean scarring
where the tissue tries to heal itself,
dialysis necessary within months.

On a Sunday afternoon her doctor answered
her frantic page, met her at his office.
The first drug led to seeing eighteen-wheelers
looming double in her lane.
Samples of another drug,
another when that didn’t work.
Doctor and patient wobble this cutting-edge world,
trying to keep her in balance.
Intent through glasses slipping on his nose,
paging his thick folder of their years together.

Six months believing, “Surely this will do it.”
Eight drugs, dozens of dosages.
Six months of side effects: nausea,
blackouts on the freeway, loss of balance,
an hour late to deliver a lecture.
His elbows sink on the desk, head in his hands.
Four months of diarrhea: dashing from offices mid-sentence,
driving desperate for a screen of weeds on the back blocks of town.
She’s overheard his calming voice with suicidal patients,
others who’ve overdosed again, emergencies that preclude
weekend workshops,
pictures him falling asleep exhausted, a pile of journals in his lap.



at Loughcrew Cairn

County Meath, Ireland

The pamphlet speaks of time before Stonehenge,
before pyramids, when people called Stone Age
hauled massive rocks great distances
with simple handmade tools,
positioned huge slabs, crossbeams precisely.
At the equinox a ray of dawn light
illuminated lines, spirals, waves on rock walls,
sky maps etched with chips of flint.
You stumble in the dark,
the rocky passage difficult as they intended.

Emerging in the center of the mound,
layers of earth above press your chest.
You cross a threshold, enter a dome,
womblike center of the cairn’s cruciform shape,
peer into three small tombs.
The guide moves back to the uneven doorstep,
shines his flashlight on the back stone of the largest recess,
across carvings like a galaxy of suns.

The pamphlet does not warn:
your chest will tighten, your breath will catch.
You step from the passage back into daylight,
cannot walk down the hill with others.
Voice crumpled in your throat,
you cannot mouth pleasantries. The grassy slope,
sheep droppings, the sleek, white bus below
are the same. You are not

You return to your own unhallowed age,
to shrinking glaciers,
salmon gasping on banks of drained rivers.
The technology for which they’re sacrificed
broadcasts to your home one image after another,
incised beneath the crossbeam of your mind—
plane crashing into a tower,
hooded man on a box, dangling wires.
The thread of light gropes its way down this dark passage.

NOT FROM HERE

Highways scorching through the Southwest:
Arizona, California, Texas.
Blotting relief in gas station restrooms,
pulling what comfort there was
from the damp, trapped towel,
headed toward treeless tracts
of duplicate homes,
skin peeling to expose another layer,
black-top embedded in my elbows.

Somewhere there must have been trees
upholstered with moss, dappled joy,
and cool water splashing through
more greens than I had names for.
How else explain the homecoming I feel
when sunlight filters through fir, spruce, redwood?
Under their canopy of stillness,
a slender memory uncurls, delicate as fiddlehead
arching toward the light.
I call this home.

Slick operator

... from page 8

in a drydock in Cordova, locked under ice, 12 hours away.

As a result, the oil from the Exxon Valdez, which could have and should have been contained around the ship, spread out in a sludge tide that wrecked 1,200 miles of shoreline.

And here we go again. Valdez goes Cajun.

BP's CEO Tony Hayward reportedly asked, "What the hell did we do to deserve this?"

It's what you didn't do, Mr. Hayward. Where was BP's containment barge and response crew? Why was the containment boom laid so damn late, too late and too little? Why is it that the US Navy is hauling in 12 miles of rubber boom and fielding seven skimmers, instead of BP?

Last year, CEO Hayward boasted that, despite increased oil production in exotic deep waters, he had cut BP's costs by an extra one billion dollars a year. Now we know how he did it.

As chance would have it, I was meeting last week with Louisiana lawyer Daniel Becnel Jr. when word came in of the platform explosion. Daniel represents oil workers on those platforms; now, he'll represent their bereaved families. The Coast Guard called him. They had found the emergency evacuation capsule floating in the sea and were afraid to open it and disturb the cooked bodies.

I wonder if BP painted the capsule green, like they paint their gas stations.

Becnel, yesterday by phone from his office from the town of Reserve, Louisiana, said the spill response crews were told they weren't needed because the company had already sealed the well. Like everything else from BP mouthpieces, it was a lie.

In the end, this is bigger than BP and its policy of cheaping out and skiving the rules. This is about the anti-regulatory mania, which has infected the American body politic. While the tea baggers are simply its extreme expression, US politicians of all stripes love to attack "the little bureaucrat with the fat rule book." It began with Ronald Reagan and was

promoted, most vociferously, by Bill Clinton and the head of Clinton's deregulation committee, one Al Gore.

Americans want government off our backs ... that is, until a folding crib crushes the skull of our baby, Toyota accelerators speed us to our death, banks blow our savings on gambling sprees and crude oil smothers the Mississippi.

Then, suddenly, it's, "Where was hell was the government? Why didn't the government do something to stop it?"

The answer is because government took you at your word they should get out of the way of business, that business could be trusted to police itself. It was only last month that BP, lobbying for new deepwater drilling, testified to Congress that additional equipment and inspection wasn't needed.

You should meet some of these little bureaucrats with the fat rule books. Like Dan Lawn, the inspector from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, who warned and warned and warned, before the Exxon Valdez grounding, that BP and Alyeska were courting disaster in their arrogant disregard of the rule book. In 2006, I printed his latest warnings about BP's culture of negligence. When the choice is between Lawn's rule book and a bag of tea, Lawn's my man.

This just in: Becnel tells me that one of the platform workers has informed him that the BP well was apparently deeper than the 18,000 feet depth reported. BP failed to communicate that additional depth to Halliburton crews, who, therefore, poured in too small a cement cap for the additional pressure caused by the extra depth. So, it blew.

Why didn't Halliburton check? "Gross negligence on everyone's part," said Becnel. Negligence driven by penny-pinching, bottom-line squeezing. BP says its worker is lying. Someone's lying here, man on the platform or the company that has practiced prevarication from Alaska to Louisiana.

This work by Truthout is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License. <http://www.truthout.org/slick-operator-the-bp-ive-known-too-well59178>

Israeli teen

... from page 6

them to take care of the younger ones and bring them to the hospital. It's still going on.

"This is what I decided after what happened to my cousin. I decided that war just brings more war, and the only way to fight war is with nonviolence and with action, and to be aware.

"This October I'm going to be a digital art student. Hopefully after I get my degree in four years, I'm going to be studying software design.

"My sister and I were always into things. Something tickles our bodies whenever injustice happens around us, so we have to get up and do something. I want to see peace in the place that I live, and if it's not going to be me then I hope it's going to be my child who will experience peace when it comes, but I'm not going to wait for it to come. I'm will work hard to bring it. No offense, but your generation is the one who created this entire problem, and left us with finding the solution.

"I just want to say that people are easily fooled to choose a side in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. And I just want to say that there's a big picture. Things are very very very complicated. For example, I have a story of a family member who died, and I'm pretty sure that a lot of my friends have stories about their Jewish family members died due to the war.

"I don't think war is the solution, of course. But just listen, and think about it. There's a big picture-for saying this guy's wrong and blaming everybody else. And blaming is not good. The most important lesson I've ever learned is, "Don't blame. Take responsibility."

CORRECTION

For the last issue of *Connections*, writer Ken Kohler attempted to correct an error in his reply to Dan Onorato's "Two-State Solution" article regarding the ethnicity of Mr. Onorato's wife. However, the paper had already gone to press. *Connections* apologizes for any embarrassment this caused Mr. Kohler.



Is someone you
love gay?

Parents, Families and Friends
of Lesbians and Gays

Modesto Chapter

meets on the
1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 7-9 pm
at the Emanuel Lutheran Church
324 College Ave.
Helpline: 527-0776
www.pflagmodesto.org

Visit the **Oakdale** satellite
Meetings on
3rd Wednesdays from 7-9 pm
"Golden Oaks" Conference Room
Oak Valley Medical Building
1425 West "H" St.
pflagoakdale@dishmail.net

WE GET
LETTERS



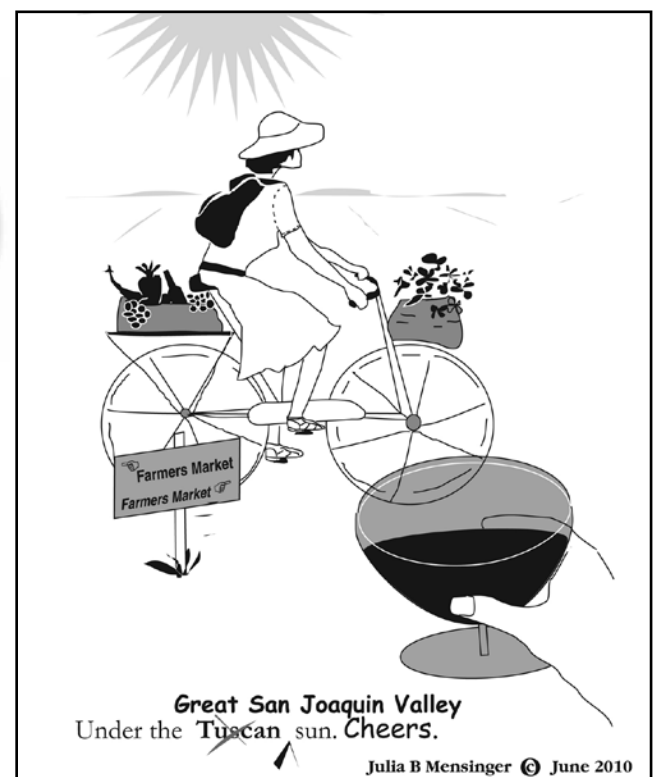
Thank You to Dan Onorato

A big thanks to Dan Onorato for his article, "Two-State Solution" about Palestine and Israel.

It made the current issues much clearer to me, especially the three maps showing the expansion of Israel over the 1946 agreement.

The article makes clear how the expansion subverts the possibility of peace. We are unfairly supporting Israel with money and not Palestine equitably. That makes peace in the entire Middle East impossible.

Ann Dutton
Modesto



Great San Joaquin Valley
Under the Tuscan sun. Cheers.

Julia B Mensinger © June 2010

Jamming: binding musical communities

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

So far I have been writing about performing here in the Modesto area, and performing is one of the reasons I love to play music. But not everyone who plays music wants to be a performer. For these folks, the first and best use of music is sharing. Indeed, whole organizations have been created so that peers with similar skill levels and similar tastes can play together. Members of these organizations meet at specific times, socialize, and usually eat too. But the reason they meet is to play music together, to jam.

Sometimes these organizations are formal: have member rosters, yearly dues, and planned events. For example, the California Bluegrass Association (CBA) sports a membership of thousands from all over the state. Yearly dues pay for event organizing and a monthly newsletter. Annual events include campouts and Bluegrass festivals. The festivals draw thousands of patrons who go to see national touring Bluegrass bands. But at each one of these events patrons get together and jam.

Sometimes these organizations are informal. Informal organizations can be created around a group of friends or a group on the internet dedicated to the discussion of music or musical instruments. There are hundreds of these internet-based groups including Usenet groups like rec.music.makers.guitar.acoustic, email lists like CoMando, discussion boards like the Unofficial Martin Guitar Forum, and social networking sites like Acoustic Friends.

The impact of the internet on both formal and informal music organizations cannot be understated. I started playing guitar in the 1980s and discovered how difficult it was to

find people of similar skills and tastes. It took months to find a group of people to play with and locating them included attending 'open mic' nights, going to local musician hang-outs, asking around at schools and in music shops. It was a lot of legwork for an uncertain return. And then, when I moved from Penn State to Davis, California in 1988, I had to start the process all over again. Years of contacts in central Pennsylvania became useless in the Central Valley, a new set had to be gathered and cultivated.

Since the mid 1990s things have been much different. The internet has allowed musicians to communicate with each other regardless of physical location. That contact creates groups of friends, people who have never met face to face, who know they share a love of, for example, Jim Croce or open-back banjos. Creating a local community or finding people to jam with is now as simple as opening an internet browser and using your location and a few key words as search terms.

But the best thing about this change is that people actually use it to get together and play! Knowledge of last month's annual spring campout, hosted by the CBA at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock, was disseminated through the CBA web site. Hundreds of people from all over the state arrived and staked out tents, camped in pickup trucks, and utilized RVs. Most of them brought at least one instrument to play and took up jamming with anyone who passed by and said, "Howdy."

I know this because I was there. I spent four and a half hours in the April sun with a mandolin strapped on. A group of about six of us, nearly all of us mutual strangers, stood in a circle and swapped tunes according to proper jamming

etiquette. I stood in one place so long that I acquired a painful sunburn on the back of my neck.

On May 8, 2010, I attended a bi-annual guitar party hosted by a friend in Walnut Creek whom I met on the internet. My friend, Fran, subscribes to numerous internet groups, loves guitars, and plays Hawaiian slack-key guitar. He also has a big house and a bigger heart. Every two years Fran invites all of his guitar buddies to a huge party where we to eat great food, play great guitars, and watch a touring acoustic musician or two perform. But for a lot of us the biggest draw is the opportunity to jam.

Even as someone who performs on a regular basis, supporting fellow jammers at Fran's is one of my favorite musical experiences. First, Fran's party offers a unique jamming experience. We play all kinds of music, some of which forces me to stretch as a musician. Second, a lot of the amateur musicians who come to Fran's write their own material. These songs stay in their writers' living rooms for months or years before being offered by their authors to fellow players. I consider it a privilege to listen intently, identify the key, feel the mood, and support the artist as he or she shares something deeply heartfelt.

Aided by the internet, people have created musical communities and found new friends. Communities like the one Fran has created are the fulfillment of the promise of the internet. Jamming is the glue that binds these communities for it offers all of us the opportunity to share our skills, our compositions, and our voices with one another. For many of my friends jamming, rather than performing, is their peak musical experience. I am honored that they share their music with me.

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.

Photos and ADS should be submitted as high-resolution JPEG or TIFF files. Do NOT submit as pdf files if possible.

EDITOR: Jim Costello

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Indira Clark, Jim Costello, Tina Driskill, Myrtle Osner, Alexander Brittain LAYOUT EDITOR: Linda Knoll ADVERTISING: Myrtle Osner ONLINE EDITION: George Osner

DISTRIBUTION: Edna Binner, Florence Baker, Jim Costello, Thelma Couchman, David Rockwell, Noel Russell, Tina Driskill, Martin Hermes, Alice Hoaglund, Susan Burch, Dan Onorato, Dorothy Griggs, Shelly Scribner and others.

ADS must be consistent with Peace/Life Center tenets. We do not accept ads for candidates for public office or for liquor. Advertisers do not necessarily support Peace/Life Center views nor does the center endorse advertised products or services. To ADVERTISE call 522-4967.

The Coffee Party: taking local action on national issues

By IRA WEST

Repelled by Tea Party rhetoric and looking for a way to support positive solutions? Upset by partisan gridlock, and wanting our elected officials to cooperate?

Then, the newly formed Coffee Party USA might be the place for you to take local action on national issues. Starting from scratch in January, we've grown to 200,000 people nationwide with around 500 chapters. Totally grassroots and unaffiliated with any political party, we are volunteers who have no connections to corporations and no paid lobbyists.

We don't think the federal government is our enemy or inherently bad, but rather can be the expression of our collective will. As President Obama said, "When our government is spoken of as some menacing, threatening foreign entity, it ignores the fact that in our democracy, government is us."

In Modesto, the first chapter in the San Joaquin Valley started in March. We presently meet every other week, with the next meeting on June 7 at 3713 Marsala Way, Modesto Call (209) 596-4574, or email Ira West at irajwest@yahoo.com for place and time. Or go to www.coffeepartyevents.com for more information.



Look for
CONNECTIONS
online at:
<http://stanislausconnections.org/>

Urban Sheep . . . from page 4

bitch to knitting services of the Church of Craft with enough participants to fill a lecture hall. These meet-ups are a way to see the same set of knitters again and again, compare progress on projects, and make friends along the way.

Finally, there are times when knitters just want to make a spectacle of themselves. Events like major or minor league baseball's Stitch N' Pitch and Worldwide Knit in Public Day are couple of examples. The Urban Sheep held its first WWKIPD last June and is looking forward to hosting this year's event on June 19th. Tables will be set up in the parking lot, refreshments provided and there will be a raffle. All that is required to attend is a desire to knit. We are also hoping to have a Stitch 'n Pitch event with the Modesto Nuts in the near future.

Contact the Urban Sheep at <http://www.theurbansheep.com/>