

*The Modesto Peace Life Center invites you to*

## A Harvest Gathering

*A benefit for the Peace Essay Contest*

*Saturday, October 29, 2011, 6:00 p.m.*  
*at the home of*  
*Nancy Smith & David Rockwell*  
*520 Helen Ave., Modesto*

*Enjoy Delicious Hors d'oeuvres, Desserts,  
Good Wines, Special Coffees and Teas*

*Suggested Donation: \$15 per person*  
*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 events.*

*We look forward to seeing you and your friends!*

## A decade after 9/11: We are what we loathe

By CHRIS HEDGES

I arrived in Times Square around 9:30 on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. A large crowd was transfixed by the huge Jumbotron screens. Billows of smoke could be seen on the screens above us, pouring out of the two World Trade towers. Two planes, I was told by people in the crowd, had plowed into the towers. I walked quickly into the New York Times newsroom at 229 W. 43rd St., grabbed a handful of reporter's notebooks, slipped my NYPD press card, which would let me through police roadblocks, around my neck, and started down the West Side Highway to the World Trade Center. The highway was closed to traffic. I walked through knots of emergency workers, police and firemen. Fire trucks, emergency vehicles, ambulances, police cars and rescue trucks idled on the asphalt.

The south tower went down around 10 a.m. with a guttural roar. Huge rolling gray clouds of noxious smoke, dust, gas, pulverized concrete, gypsum and the grit of human remains enveloped lower Manhattan. The sun was obscured. The north tower collapsed about 30 minutes later. The dust hung like a shroud over Manhattan.

I headed toward the spot where the towers once stood, passing dazed, ashen and speechless groups of police officers and firefighters. I would pull out a notebook to ask questions and no sounds would come out of their mouths. They forlornly shook their heads and warded me away gently with their hands. By the time I arrived at Ground Zero it was a moonscape; whole floors of the towers had collapsed like an accordion. I pulled out pieces of paper from one floor, and a few feet below were papers from 30 floors away. Small bits of human bodies—a foot in a woman's shoe, a bit of a leg, part of a torso—lay scattered amid the wreckage.

Scores of people, perhaps more than 200, pushed through the smoke and heat to jump to their deaths from windows that had broken or they had smashed. Sometimes they did

The dead in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania were used to sanctify the state's lust for war.

this alone, sometimes in pairs. But it seems they took turns, one body cascading downward followed by another. The last acts of individuality. They fell for about 10 seconds, many flailing or replicating the motion of swimmers, reaching 150 miles an hour. Their clothes and, in a few cases, their improvised parachutes made from drapes or tablecloths shredded. They smashed into the pavement with unnerving, sickening thuds. Thump. Thump. Thump. Those who witnessed it were particularly shaken by the sounds the bodies made on impact.

The images of the "jumpers" proved too gruesome for the TV networks. Even before the towers collapsed, the falling men and women were censored from live broadcasts. Isolated pictures appeared the next day in papers, including The New York Times, and then were banished. The mass suicide, one of the most pivotal and important elements in the narrative of 9/11, was expunged. It remains expunged from public consciousness.

The "jumpers" did not fit into the myth the nation demanded. The fate of the "jumpers" said something so profound, so disturbing, about our own fate, smallness in the universe and fragility that it had to be banned. The "jumpers" illustrated that there are thresholds of suffering that elicit a willing embrace of death. The "jumpers" reminded us that there will come, to all of us, final moments when the only choice will be, at best, how we will choose to die, not how we are going to live.

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2012

# Peace Essay Contest



Every person is deserving of respect and has a responsibility to respect others.



## INTRODUCTION:

Respecting others is an important part of getting along, whether at home, with friends, with co-workers or among countries. Consideration and high regard for others shows respect for them. If we value other people, we do not intentionally hurt them in any way. Every person is deserving of respect and has the responsibility to demonstrate respect for others. Communication in our world today is often done electronically through the use of social media and other internet applications. Cyber-bullying is a new form of disrespecting others that can reach a world-wide audience at the click of a keystroke.

## DIVISION II (grades 9 & 10)

With the expansion of technology, positive opportunities to become and stay connected with others and expand your understanding of the world abound. However, there are also negative aspects in the form of cyber-bullying: using social media such as Facebook, You Tube and My Space, etc. to attack, insult, ridicule or verbally harass others through comments and photos posted on public space. Even if disguised as humor or friendly teasing, such posts can instantly spread to large numbers of people who may accept them as accurate. Cyber-bullying may have devastating effects on the emotional safety, reputation, and well-being of the person being targeted. The misuse of social media to gain a sense of power while disrespecting others is another form of bullying.

The 2012 Peace Essay Contest invites you to reflect on your own experiences observing firsthand or hearing about hurtful/ disrespectful cyber-bullying, which might include name calling, spreading rumors, using discourteous language, posting photos without permission, etc.

In your essay of 500-1000 words:

- Briefly discuss what you consider to be positive aspects of using social networking technology as a way to become and stay connected with others.
- Choose and describe an incident you have heard about or experienced yourself where others use social media in a disrespectful way, i.e. cyber-bullying. Tell how you felt about the incident and why you consider this to be bullying.
- Explain how the ways people treat each other on social media affect their ability to live and work respectfully and peacefully face to face.
- Close your essay by describing how you can contribute to a more peaceful world by raising awareness among your peers about the harmful effects of cyber-bullying so that their use of technology is respectful of others.

Deadline for entries:

**November 18, 2011**

Notification of winners:

**Mid-February 2012**

*Awards*

	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Honorable Mention
Division II	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50

## DIVISION I (grades 11 & 12)

Social media and technology can be used to reach a wide audience to promote a particular point of view or agenda. It can be used to rally people and promote peaceful social change. Because of its ability to disseminate information instantly, messages and posts can reach a large audience and encourage others to join and support a plan of action. The results can be a large scale force for positive social or political change.

It can also be used by organizations, interest groups, corporations and governments to threaten and intimidate in order to gain political advantage or maintain power, taking cyber-bullying to a more organized and even global level. The quest for power may be pursued through threats or provocative actions, claims and counter claims, or language that ridicules or appeals to fears, but is not rooted in factual reality.

The 2012 Peace Essay Contest invites you to reflect on how advancements in technology are being used as a means of rallying support for peaceful social change **OR** as a method of gaining advantage and maintaining power through intimidation and threats.

In your essay of 500-1000 words:

- Explore how media and technology can be used to reach a wide audience to promote a particular point of view or agenda.
- Then choose **one** of the following options:
  - A.** Give an example of how social media or technology has been used on a regional, national or international level to encourage a cause or to rally people to stand up to bullying and promote a more peaceful resolution of issues.
  - OR**
  - B.** Give an example of how social media or technology has been used by organizations, interest groups, corporations or governments to bully or spread disrespectful agendas that threaten others and prevent a peaceful resolution of issues.
- Describe the intended outcome and whether or not the objective was achieved.
- Close by exploring what you think is both the value and limitation of social media and technology in striving for a more respectful and peaceful world.

For more information, email:  
peaceessay@juno.com

*Awards*

	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Honorable Mention
Division I	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50

## Spooky Dance-Off Fundraiser for Modesto Sound

By **BRENDA FRANCIS**

Modesto Sound, under the fiscal umbrella of the Stanislaus Arts Council, holds an annual fundraiser to support its non-profit music recording, live sound service, and job training for teenagers. Building on the MTV "Made" show that featured a local high school student being made into a fancy dancer, this year's Modesto Sound annual fundraiser will feature a dance-off and a Halloween costume contest!

Modesto Sound's DANCE DANCE HALLOWEEN will be held on Sunday, October 30, 2011 from 5-9 PM at the Stanislaus County Office of Education's (SCOE) Petersen Event Center, 720 12th St. (between G and H) Modesto (free parking in the SCOE parking lots). Suggested donation is \$10.00. This event is for ages: 13-22 (family members are welcome to watch the dance and costume contests).

Over 500 people filled the Davis High School gym last winter when Emily Bruce, who was selected to be on MTV's popular "Made" show, was featured in a dance-off. Modesto Sound's youthful sound crew brought in and ran the sound system. This successful event included dancers from schools all over the region.

Open since 2005, Modesto Sound has helped several hundred teens with their music career endeavors, and is located at Gregori High School. Music camps, music lessons, a radio team and free job training have been given to students from all around the region. To keep Modesto Sound financially sound, staff and volunteers work on audio projects, apply for grants and hold an annual fundraiser.

This fun event is designed with teens and college students in mind and has a myriad of activities including: a haunted house, costume contest, structured dance-off and free-style dance-off, a bead craft table and refreshments. The winners of the costume and dance-off and will be eligible to win both cash prizes and tickets donated by Gallo Center for the Arts, Townsend Opera Players, The State Theatre and McHenry Bowl.

To find out more or to get involved, visit [www.modesto-sound.com](http://www.modesto-sound.com) or call 573-0533.

## Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Costs money for electronics, printing, postage.

☐ Send me CONNECTIONS. Here's my \$25 DONATION.

☐ Keep sending me CONNECTIONS.

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# Green Tips for a Green Planet

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

As a public voice of the Modesto Peace/Life Center, Stanislaus Connections is committed to sharing information about how we can all work to create peace, justice and a SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT. To that end we applaud all you who help create sustainability in your corner of our beautiful planet. Most of us are aware of the 3 simple guidelines to that work: first REDUCE, then REUSE, and finally RECYCLE.

We are creating Green Tips for a Green Planet to inform you of new opportunities you can add to your everyday green efforts. We invite you to send YOUR Green Tips to [seeker@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:seeker@sbcbglobal.net) for future Green Tips columns.

GREEN TIP: I began Green Tips after learning about how the United States Postal Service has gone green. To find out more, visit the USPS website <http://about.usps.com/what-we-are-doing/green/innovation.htm>. There, you can order eco-friendly packaging for shipments. The Postal Service is the first shipping company to achieve Cradle-to-CradleCM certification for its packaging. It's recyclable but it's much more. This is environmental "big picture" certification. It starts at the design stage, considers energy and water use through manufacturing, and ends with a product that can be safely recycled. Cradle-to-CradleCM certification comes from McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry. You can send "greener" packages across the country or around the world — and it won't cost you any more.



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- Buy stamps and order supplies — they'll be delivered with your mail. Stamps are recyclable and stamp adhesives are environmentally benign and recycling compatible.

The mail is an easy way to recycle items so they don't cause environmental harm. The USPS is piloting a mail-it-back program to mail used electronics such as PDAs, cell phones and ink cartridges. It is also helping consumers recycle used compact fluorescent light bulbs. And Hewlett Packard, Dell, and Sprint are using the mail to help customers return empty ink cartridges, cell phones, other wireless devices, old computers and computer equipment.



2012

## Peace Essay Contest



Every person is deserving of respect and has a responsibility to respect others.



### INTRODUCTION:

Respecting others is an important part of getting along, whether at home, with friends, with co-workers or among countries. To respect someone is to show consideration and high regard for the worth of that person. If we value another person, we do not intentionally hurt him/her in any way. Every person is deserving of respect and has a responsibility to respect others.

Small children are often encouraged to "use their words" to solve their relationship problems instead of hitting others. While learning to control ourselves physically is an important part of growing up, we also need to learn to control our words. We can be just as violent by using words to attack others as we can by using our fists. Verbal violence has become a common means of bullying others in our world. Verbal violence is not only the use of "mean" or "ugly" words, but the use of words chosen and spoken intentionally to intimidate, manipulate or hurt another person. The use of threats, put downs, name-calling, teasing, gossiping, starting rumors and purposely embarrassing others are all forms of verbal violence in our society from the playground to the workplace. Even if disguised as humor or friendly teasing, using words to gain a sense of power over others is simply another form of bullying.

### Division III (grades 7-8)

The 2012 Peace Essay Contest invites you to reflect on your own experiences observing verbal violence. (This may occur in your home, at school, or in public places such as a park or store). Think about a time when you heard someone else being bullied verbally. In your essay of 250-500 words:

- Briefly describing the situation you observed.
- Tell how you felt as a bystander.
- Explain several reasons why you or others might hesitate to intervene when you see or hear someone being bullied.
- Thinking back over the situation, describe something that you or someone else might have done to prevent or end the bullying.
- Wrap up your essay by expressing how working to prevent and/or stop verbal violence will make the world a better and safer place in which all people are treated with respect.

### Division IV (grades 5-6)

The 2012 Peace Essay Contest invites you to reflect on your own experiences observing verbal violence. (This may occur in your home, at school, or in public places such as a park or store). Think about a time when you heard someone else being bullied verbally. In your essay of 250-500 words:

- Describe the situation you observed.
- Tell how you felt as a bystander.
- Thinking back over the situation, describe something that you or someone else could have done to prevent or end the bullying.
- Wrap up your essay by expressing how working to prevent and/or stop verbal violence will make the world a better and safer place in which all people are treated with respect.

### Awards

	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Honorable Mention
Division III	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25
Division IV	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25

Deadline for entries:  
**November 18, 2011**  
Notification of winners:  
**Mid-February 2012**

For more information, email:  
[peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)

## Peace Essay Contest 2012

### Rules

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of Stanislaus County or attend 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, teacher's name and principal'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. Entries may be mailed or delivered to the Modesto Peace/Life Center. Mail all entries, postmarked no later than **November 18, 2011**, to:

2012 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.

Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

#### I. Content:

- A. Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
- B. How 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?



Email: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)

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 2012, 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.

**2012 Peace Essay Committee:** Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner, and David Tucker

This 25th Annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by:  
Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

## Connections fundraiser and auction a success!

By JAMES COSTELLO

A small but mighty group of *Stanislaus Connections* supporters feasted on delicious food and participated in our annual *Connections* fundraiser auction. Our grand total was \$2596.00!

Many thanks to everyone who made this small but fun event a success. We thank all of the bidders as well as those who brought great food, and those individuals and businesses who donated auction items. A special thanks to Maria Arevalo and John Frailing for opening up their cozy backyard to us and offering glasses of John's fine, rare estate-bottled wine. Hmmm...

If you were not able to attend, there is still time to donate. Our paper can always use your financial help. Make your checks payable to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353-0134. Write "Connections" in the check memo.

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a suggested donation of \$25.00/yr.



# The dangers of A Fib

By JENIFER WEST

Sometimes we tell ourselves a little fib. Something along the lines of, "It's nothing – probably just a little anxiety. It'll go away". And sometimes it does. So we get in the habit of telling ourselves, and others, that little fib. "I'm fine," we say, hoping, believing, that if we think and say it long and hard enough, it'll be true. Women, especially. We "don't have time" to be sick. And we certainly don't want to worry anyone. So we tell a fib.

But that little fib just might land us in a whole lot of trouble. In fact, I'm writing this from a hospital bed. The other night, I experienced, again, chest pain, tightness, really. Only this time, no matter how hard I wished or thought or willed it, it didn't go away. Although I had all the classic symptoms of a heart attack, I didn't have the sense to go the emergency room. Despite tightness that made it impossible to take a deep breath, despite a little nausea, despite the sensation that someone was boring with about a 1/2" drill into the middle of my shoulder blade, I didn't go. Even when the pain radiated up into my neck and jaw, and kept me awake most of the night. I toughed it out, thinking 'it'll go away – it has the other couple of times it's happened. Besides – I'm too young to have any real problems'. (I'm not quite 50). But it didn't. When I finally went to my regular doc the next day, the nurse practitioner ran an EKG. And said I needed to see a cardiologist on Monday – the soonest they could get me in. So I went about my business – I had a booth to run the next day at a big community event in the city next door.

But that wasn't in the cards. Something startled me awake the next morning, which started my heart fluttering. I laid quietly awhile, assuming it would settle down on its own. But it didn't. Finally, I realized I'd better make alternate arrangements for the booth, and get myself into the ER.

A funny thing happened when I said the word "heart" to the nice lady at the front desk in the emergency room. Without another word, she picked up the phone & called for a bed for "heart palpitations." Next thing I knew, I was being whisked (by wheelchair, no less!) to a room with a whole lot of equipment in it. Mind you, aside from the sensation that my heart was fluttering, and I got a little short of breath if I moved around very much, I felt FINE. Suddenly, there were four different people in the room, besides my dear, frightened husband and me. I was hooked up to monitors, answering about a thousand questions, and just generally having a swell time. At various times, I saw three different doctors while I was there, plus assorted technicians. And every one of them was kind and caring. In fact, everyone who's taken care of

me since I've been here has been wonderful. But I never had so much attention in my life – and hope I never do again! My heart rate was very erratic – jumping from 80 or so to as high as 150 or more in a few seconds. Once I even saw 184. Each time it hit a high spot, the monitor would chime and the lights on it would flash yellow or red, depending on the number. A couple of times it went on so long, they just shut the chimes off. That's when I first heard "A-fib", applied to me. I'd heard it before – it's not hereditary, but a close relative



Feather design by ~i-r-annet <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

has it – but I never knew exactly what it meant.

A-fib, it turns out, is short for "atrial fibrillation." In plain English, it means that the atrium, the top two chambers of the heart, is fluttering or shivering, instead of pumping in a nice, regular rhythm. Because it doesn't pump in a good, solid way, blood can be left in the chamber. And that's where problems can start. If a little blood left in the atrium clots, the clot(s) can travel to various parts of the body and cause major problems – heart attack or stroke being the biggest concerns. Which is why, if you say the word "heart" in the ER, you get attention – immediate, up close and personal.

So after several hours in the ER, the cardiologist told me what they wanted to do – and that I'd have the pleasure of staying for at least 2 – 3 days. Lucky me! But I was lucky, and got a private room, with a lovely view of some pine trees across the parking lot. I always feel closest to God in the mountains, so I felt comforted by those trees. Despite being

poked and prodded frequently, I read and relaxed the rest of the afternoon. And I realized that, despite being a serious reader, I couldn't remember the last time I just sat and read. Ironically, I felt more relaxed than I have in a long time.

I awoke early the next morning, as I generally do, and opened the blinds to watch the start of the day. After awhile, I got up and walked out of the room for a minute. When I came back, a pair of pigeons was perched on my windowsill. I smiled, thinking of my husband. And realized, to my surprise, that I felt better than I have in a very long time. I thought of a pigeon's feathers, which are iridescent and lovely – even though I couldn't see it in the light just then. And I thought how each of us is like that – beautiful in some, and usually many ways, whether it's obvious to others at a given moment or not. And that's when I realized that some good can come out of this experience. For me, personally, I know a warning when I'm clobbered by one (shot through the heart, more accurately). I'm going to reassess my priorities, prune an unnecessary responsibility or two – and spend more time in the garden. Just as importantly, I plan to use this experience to help others – particularly other women. If even one woman decides to look into why she's experiencing some nagging symptom or other, it will have been worth going through it myself. If you ever experience any of the symptoms below, please get medical help immediately!

Heart attack symptoms in women:

Pain: Chest, Upper Body, Stomach, can make it difficult to take a deep breath (may be experienced as tightness)

Shortness of Breath

Anxiety, Lightheadedness, Sweating

Nausea and/or Vomiting

Ed, Note: Jenifer is home, doing well.

## Even in 2011...

It's hard to hear that your child is gay  
It was hard for your child to tell you, too  
**PFLAG Modesto is here to help...**

Since 1993, we - **Parents, Friends, and Families of Lesbians and Gays** - have promoted the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons through support and help to end discrimination. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

**Helpline**

209-527-0776

**Meetings:**

**1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7-9 PM**

Emanuel Lutheran Church  
324 College Ave., Modesto  
[info@pflagmodesto.org](mailto:info@pflagmodesto.org)

**3rd Wednesday 7-9 PM**

1425 West "H" St., Oakdale  
[pflagoakdale@dishmail.net](mailto:pflagoakdale@dishmail.net)



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# Celebrate 100 Years of Women's Suffrage in California

By LUELLA COLE

In March, 1776, Abigail Adams warned her husband John, "...remember the Ladies.... If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice or Representation."

On October 10, 1911, after years of "rebellion", and almost a decade before the Amendment enfranchised all American women, California became the sixth state in the United States to grant full voting rights to women. This month, to commemorate the centennial of women's suffrage in California, celebrations are being held statewide, as well as here in Modesto. At 7:00 P.M. on October 13, 2011 at the Peterson Event Center, 750 12th St., the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County will sponsor a Celebration of the Centennial of Women's Suffrage in California.

Advocates of voting rights for women struggled for more than 50 years before gaining much support. While women were told throughout history that their place was in the home, increasing numbers of women in the first half of the 19th Century found vocations in addition to home and children. As they did so, female writers began to advocate for better working conditions for their counterparts in industry, admittance to institutions of higher learning, and full recognition in professions such as law and medicine. The activity of woman's suffragists in England inspired Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott to organize the first American convention for women's voting rights in 1848 at Seneca Falls, New York.

Despite the efforts of Stanton, Mott and many others, the cause of women's suffrage gained little support in the years leading up to the Civil War. After the war, the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, with its gender-neutral language, encouraged 172 women in New Jersey to attempt to vote. Their ballots were ignored, and some women were arrested for their civil disobedience. When Wyoming Territory granted women the vote in 1869 without a campaign or any involvement of the national suffrage movement, the leaders of the suffrage movement went to Wyoming to celebrate. Susan B. Anthony even urged women from the east to emigrate to Wyoming.

Within the next 25 years, three more Western states and territories, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho, granted women full voting rights. In 1878, the first Women's Suffrage amendment was introduced in Congress; it wound its way through Congress for eight years, finally being defeated by the Senate in 1886. At this setback the leaders of the national women's suffrage movement decided to focus on winning the vote state-by-state, although they continued to bring the women's



suffrage amendment before every Congress until 1919.

The women's suffrage movement did not officially begin in California until 1869, when the California Woman Suffrage Association was founded and presented an equal suffrage amendment to the legislature. The following year a petition bearing 3,000 signatures was presented to the legislature requesting a constitutional amendment. Similar requests were made regularly, and in 1893, the California legislature voted in favor of women's suffrage. Unfortunately, the bill was vetoed by Governor Harry Markham as unconstitutional. Two years later, a constitutional amendment granting full voting rights for women passed both houses of the legislature. The proposed amendment went before the male voters of California to be ratified in 1896. The leaders of the California

suffrage movement organized local campaign committees, accepted help from other organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Leaders of the national suffrage movement, Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt, came to California to campaign for the ratification. However, the amendment was defeated, primarily by two populous Northern California counties, San Francisco and Alameda.

The 1896 defeat caused the suffrage movement in California to regroup and strengthen, and by 1906, the California suffragists were ready to try again. During the intervening years, California had become a much more populous and less provincial state. Women's clubs sprang up among the educated and professional classes of women in cities all over California, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Los Angeles. With such names as the College and Professional Women's Equal Suffrage League, and the California Equal Suffrage Association, the women of California banded together to achieve their goal. Through lobbying efforts of such women as Lillian Harris Coffin, the chairperson of the state central committee of the California Equal Suffrage Association, a suffrage amendment was presented to each political party's 1906 convention with the intention of making it a part of the party

platform. The Republicans, under investigation for corrupt political practices, rejected the suffragists' request, but the Democrats endorsed it. The following year, a suffrage bill was introduced in each house of the State Legislature. According to Selina Solomons, in her memoir "How We Won the Vote", the Assembly bill was allowed to pass as a "sedative" for the women's movement, for the Senate had no intention of passing it. The women's lobby persisted throughout the legislative session, only to lose by two votes. In the meantime, the Governor, James W. Gillett, who had voluntarily offered Mrs. Coffin his support for the suffrage bill, reneged on his promise and told her to 'go back home where she belonged'.

Undeterred, the following year Mrs. Coffin organized a parade three hundred women strong through the streets of Oakland and into the Republican Convention. The delegates agreed to give the women a hearing in the Resolutions Committee, to consider a suffrage plank for their platform. The Republican men kept the women in suspense throughout their session of speechifying, until just before adjournment of the convention, when they announced that the suffrage amendment had been "lost in committee" and thanked the ladies for their interest. When the 1909 legislative session opened, no lobbying was permitted on the floor of the legislature, and the large contingent of suffragists were barred from attending legislative sessions. This deliberate affront galvanized the movement into even more militant action.

By 1910, the Republican Party political machine had been routed, and the Republican State Convention was dominated

by the Progressives. The women were successful in placing a suffrage plank into the Republican party platform. However, the Democrats had fallen prey to "machine" politics, according to Solomons, and refused to consider such a proposal. Nevertheless, suffrage amendments were introduced into both houses of the Legislature, and in spite of the presence of an anti-suffrage lobby, both bills passed their houses by wide margins.

The campaign to ratify the suffrage amendment began on March 2, 1911. Plans made by a gathering of women from all the state's suffrage groups formed committees to write press releases, create brochures, arrange speakers, and generate support for the cause among such groups as the WCTU, the Socialist Party, and the Grange. An important convert to the suffrage cause was the Federation of Women's Clubs, whose non-political policy had previously kept them

neutral. With the support of these more conservative women, one aim of the campaign was to change the image of the suffragists to combat the opposition's characterization of them



A drawing in the Oakland Tribune in 1909 captured the spirit of the campaign for women's votes—Equal Suffrage—in California



# Celebrate 100 Years of Women's Suffrage in California

continued

as militant homewreckers.

Even before the suffrage amendment passed the legislature, Selina Solomons, a middle-class Jewish woman, realized the need to broaden the appeal of the suffrage campaign to younger working women. She founded the Votes for Women Club, rented a loft at 315 Sutter Street, in the heart of the retail district, and opened a reading room. A variety of suffrage literature was provided in the reading room, and a buffet lunch was served on workdays. Women who worked downtown flocked in and joined the movement. During the campaign, these women canvassed the working-class neighborhoods of San Francisco to help get out the vote.

The campaign for the suffrage amendment, Proposition 8, made good use of the latest technology. The telephone aided communication; the radio was used to broadcast pro-suffrage speeches and theme songs written by some of the suffragists using familiar tunes. The College Equal Suffrage League used a brand-new bright blue seven-passenger open touring car dubbed "The Blue Liner" to travel up and down the state. Everywhere they went, men flocked to see the car, and college women stood in the auto to give pro-suffrage speeches. The campaign also made good use of public advertising: billboards, posters, pamphlets, banners and postcards, all in various shades of yellow, covered the state.

The women's movement made appeals to newspapermen, novelists and every other sort of writer, gaining the support of such authors as Ina Coolbrith, Gertrude Atherton, Mark Twain, Frank Norris, Joaquin Miller and Jack London. Luther Burbank joined the cause, as well as David Starr Jordan, first president of Stanford University. Their efforts in the newspapers of the state helped the cause reach multitudes; however, the *San Francisco Chronicle* maintained its opposition throughout the campaign.

As the date of the special election grew nearer, suffrage rallies, some with brass bands and even fireworks, were held nightly in San Francisco and other major cities, drawing thousands. At the final rally, the night before the election, famous opera singer Lillian Nordica, standing in the Blue Liner, gave a concert, ending with singing one of the movement's theme songs, adding the words, "Flash the news from West the East, that your women are free!"

On election day, suffragists monitored polling places around the state, on guard for fraud. Others maintained the appropriate distance from the ballot box, handing out leaflets. When the ballots were counted in San Francisco, the early returns were disappointing. Headlines all over the state on October 11 proclaimed the suffrage amendment's defeat, and opponents took to the streets in celebration. The leaders

of the suffrage movement began making plans to take their fight to Washington D. C. But the following morning, after the rural counties had reported their election results, it was the suffrage movement celebrating. Although San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo and Marin counties' male voters had overwhelmingly voted No, the voters of the rest of the state had given the suffrage amendment a 3,500-vote margin. California had become the sixth state in the union to give women full voting rights, almost a decade before the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution gave all American women the right to vote.

**ACTION:** Join the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County at the free Centennial Celebration of Woman's

Suffrage in California Thursday, October 13, 2011, at 7:00 PM in the Peterson Event Center, 750 12th St., in downtown Modesto. More information on the history of women's suffrage can be found

at <http://www.ca2011centennial.com/>, at [http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suff\\_resource.html](http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suff_resource.html), at [http://members.authorsguild.net/eelinson/\\_soup\\_\\_salad\\_\\_suffrage\\_\\_how\\_women\\_won\\_their\\_right\\_to\\_vote\\_in\\_california\\_\\_60936.htm](http://members.authorsguild.net/eelinson/_soup__salad__suffrage__how_women_won_their_right_to_vote_in_california__60936.htm), and at <http://dpsinfo.com/women/history/timeline.html>



## Hiroshima Remembrance

Indira Clark, Sandy Sample, Dan Onorato, Jim Costello, and James Driskill remember Hiroshima on the banks of the Tuolumne River on August 6.  
Photo: Tina Driskill

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# A decade after 9/11: We are what we loathe

from page 1

And we can die before we physically expire.

The shock of 9/11, however, demanded images and stories of resilience, redemption, heroism, courage, self-sacrifice and generosity, not collective suicide in the face of overwhelming hopelessness and despair.

Reporters in moments of crisis become clinicians. They collect data, facts, descriptions, basic information, and carry out interviews as swiftly as possible. We make these facts fit into familiar narratives. We do not create facts but we manipulate them. We make facts conform to our perceptions of ourselves as Americans and human beings. We work within the confines of national myth. We make journalism and history a refuge from memory. The pretense that mass murder and suicide can be transformed into a tribute to the victory of the human spirit was the lie we all told to the public that day and have been telling ever since. We make sense of the present only through the lens of the past, as the French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs pointed out, recognizing that “our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present. ... Memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources and is sustained by social and moral props.”

I returned that night to the newsroom hacking from the fumes released by the burning asbestos, jet fuel, lead, mercury, cellulose and construction debris. I sat at my computer, my thin paper mask still hanging from my neck, trying to write and catch my breath. All who had been at the site that day were noticeable in the newsroom because they were struggling for air. Most of us were convulsed by shock and grief.

There would soon, however, be another reaction. Those of us who were close to the epicenters of the 9/11 attacks would primarily grieve and mourn. Those who had some distance would indulge in the growing nationalist cant and calls for blood that would soon triumph over reason and sanity. Nationalism was a disease I knew intimately as a war correspondent. It is anti-thought. It is primarily about self-exaltation. The flip side of nationalism is always racism, the dehumanization of the enemy and all who appear to question the cause. The plague of nationalism began almost immediately. My son, who was 11, asked me what the difference was between cars flying small American flags and cars flying large American flags.

“The people with the really big flags are the really big assholes,” I told him.

The dead in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania were used to sanctify the state’s lust for war. To question the rush to war became to dishonor our martyrs. Those of us who knew that the attacks were rooted in the long night of humiliation and suffering inflicted by Israel on the Palestinians, the imposition of our military bases in the Middle East and in the brutal Arab dictatorships that we funded and supported became apostates. We became defenders of the indefensible. We were apologists, as Christopher Hitchens shouted at me on a stage in Berkeley, “for suicide bombers.”

## The Quran – although it forbids suicide as well as the murder of women and children – was painted as a manual for fanaticism and terror.

Because few cared to examine our activities in the Muslim world, the attacks became certified as incomprehensible by the state and its lap dogs, the press. Those who carried out the attacks were branded as rising out of a culture and religion that was at best primitive and probably evil. The Quran—although it forbids suicide as well as the murder of women and children—was painted as a manual for fanaticism and terror. The attackers embodied the titanic clash of civilizations, the cosmic battle under way between good and evil, the forces of light and darkness. Images of the planes crashing into the towers and heroic rescuers emerging from the rubble were played and replayed. We were deluged with painful stories of the survivors and victims. The deaths and falling towers became iconographic. The ceremonies of remembrance were skillfully hijacked by the purveyors of war and hatred. They became vehicles to justify doing to others what had been done to us. And as innocents died here, soon other innocents began to die in the Muslim world. A life for a life. Murder for murder. Death for death. Terror for terror.

What was played out in the weeks after the attacks was the old, familiar battle between force and human imagination, between the crude instruments of violence and the capacity for empathy and understanding. Human imagination lost. Coldblooded reason, which does not speak the language of the imagination, won. We began to speak and think in the empty, mindless nationalist clichés about terror that the state handed to us. We became what we abhorred. The deaths were used to justify pre-emptive war, invasion, Shock and Awe, prolonged occupation, targeted assassinations, torture, offshore penal colonies, gunning down families at checkpoints, massive aerial bombardments, drone attacks, missile strikes and the killing of dozens and soon hundreds and then thousands and later tens of thousands and finally hundreds of thousands of innocent people. We produced piles of corpses in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, and extended the reach of our killing machine to Yemen and Somalia. And by beatifying our dead, by cementing into the national psyche fear and the imperative of permanent war, and by stoking our collective humiliation, the state carried out crimes, atrocities and killings that dwarfed anything carried out against us on 9/11. The best that force can do is impose order. It can never elicit harmony. And force was justified, and is still justified, by the first dead. Ten years later these dead haunt us like Banquo’s ghost.

“It is the first death which infects everyone with the feelings of being threatened,” wrote Elias Canetti. “It is impossible to overrate the part played by the first dead man in the kindling of wars. Rulers who want to unleash war know very well that they must procure or invent a first victim. It needs not be anyone of particular importance, and can even be

someone quite unknown. Nothing matters except his death; and it must be believed that the enemy is responsible for this. Every possible cause of his death is suppressed except one: his membership of the group to which one belongs oneself.”

We were unable to accept the reality of this anonymous slaughter. We were unable because it exposed the awful truth that we live in a morally neutral universe where human life, including our life, can be snuffed out in senseless and random violence. It showed us that there is no protection, not from God, fate, luck, omens or the state.

We have still not woken up to whom we have become, to the fatal erosion of domestic and international law and the senseless waste of lives, resources and trillions of dollars to wage wars that ultimately we can never win. We do not see that our own faces have become as contorted as the faces of the demented hijackers who seized the three commercial jetliners a decade ago. We do not grasp that Osama bin Laden’s twisted vision of a world of indiscriminate violence and terror has triumphed. The attacks turned us into monsters, grotesque ghouls, sadists and killers who drop bombs on village children and waterboard those we kidnap, strip of their rights and hold for years without due process. We acted before we were able to think. And it is the satanic lust of violence that has us locked in its grip.

As Wordsworth wrote:

Action is transitory—a step, a blow,

The motion of a muscle—this way or that—

’Tis done; and in the after-vacancy

We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:

Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,

And has the nature of infinity.

We could have gone another route. We could have built on the profound sympathy and empathy that swept through the world following the attacks. The revulsion over the crimes that took place 10 years ago, including in the Muslim world, where I was working in the weeks and months after 9/11, was nearly universal. The attacks, if we had turned them over to intelligence agencies and diplomats, might have opened possibilities not of war and death but ultimately reconciliation and communication, of redressing the wrongs that we commit in the Middle East and that are committed by Israel with our blessing. It was a moment we squandered. Our brutality and triumphalism, the byproducts of nationalism and our infantile pride, revived the jihadist movement. We became the radical Islamist movement’s most effective recruiting tool. We descended to its barbarity. We became terrorists too. The sad legacy of 9/11 is that the assholes, on each side, won.

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## Women's Issues Conference

“Welcome everyone.

This workshop will focus on FOOD INSECURITY, an omnipresent condition in the poorest of nations. (A club, that if deficit and debt were part of the membership application, we surely would belong to). A condition that now affects millions of Americans, who are quite unaccustomed to measuring out (rations) required to stretch the pantry's meager contents until payday or until the credit card now in use since actual food stamps became obsolete, gets loaded again with more assistance money. Meanwhile, will the federal and/or state government shut down? for a day or a week? giving the saying “a day late and a dollar short” a grim new meaning.

But I digress.

We will break at ten for our mid morning snack. Lunch will be from twelve to one. Our last break will be at three for a nosh and a spot of tea. We've a lot of material to cover. With your help we'll get it all done. After each break, I implore you to scurry back, but no need to run!

So. Everyone is settled in. Let's begin.”

Dateline: New York, Feb. 5, 2011, Fashion Week

The Fall styles are being displayed on the backs of coat hanger thin teens. Their look has been called “heroin chic”. In this country, where for many, food is so available that a majority of children and adults are either overweight or obese. Dateline: Your town or mine At school, fourth grade girls throw away their lunches, packed by Mom, at the crack of dawn, and are dieting their way thru the rest of the day. (Source, the front page of The Wall Street Journal, sometime in the 90's)

(reference note: The Greatest Generation\*, by Tom Brokaw.) In this country they\* puffed with pride, as it was oft' referred to as “the land of plenty”. We're talking food, people. What used to be for most is now just for many.

In this country, not long ago the fattest cats all the cream AND cows did steal.

Shhhh! If you listen closely you can hear their greedy slurps as they lap your cream and mine from their oversized saucers that tip and spill what's left when they just can't drink any more right now. Then, in unison, they utter huge burps just before settling down for a carefree stretch and a nap, on their hammocks in the Hamptons.

The peaceful slumber of the morally corrupt, oblivious to the hunger, anxiety, depression, wife beatings, increase in alcohol consumption, suicides, murder-suicides, homelessness, joblessness, hopelessness their excessive greed has caused millions to suffer. And yet, to my knowledge, not a single one has served time. (now THAT's a crime).

And I pose this question rhetorically: Just how much greed does it take to be called excessive? I think we know the answer. Meanwhile, a growing number of our FAMILIES are experiencing a new condition (for middle America): food insecurity. Simply put, they don't know the what, where or when re: their next meal.

And middle America is a growing misnomer, As the demographic is rapidly shrinking. The squeeze is on. The seeds are mostly sewn for an all-out war between the classes.

The party that proudly gathered under the banners “Mission Accomplished” and “Family Values” will be burning the midnight oil as they frantically toil to crank out books, articles & columns, appear on FOX, and travel the lucrative speaking engagement circuit, hastily spinning their revisionist history, beginning with their deity, whom they refer to reverently as “The Great Communicator”.

By harvest time, most of the planters will be long gone, but their children & grandchildren will bear witness as the Christian Right reaps all they've sewn, while singing their beloved hymn “Bringing in the Sheaves”, suitably accompanied by Brahms “Requiem”.

Dateline: Washington, D.C., March 2011 Enforcing the newest tenet they are extolling as The Obama Doctrine, we are now bankrolling a no-fly zone over Libya, to the tune (I've heard some say), of \$100 million dollars a day. Whatever happened to pay as you go?

Or, in our case,

Go, as you pay (down the drain).

Dateline: D.C. again, post mid-term elections (Shrilly, with a whole lot of passion), the Family Values pack of wolves (an animal now found at the door of many decent, hardworking American families that apparently they no longer value) offer up draconian bandaids designed to save a million here a million there (dollars, of course!) while feeding raw meat to the ravenous upper class TEA party backers. (One lump or two?) “Here's to crushin' all them slackers. You betcha!” (wink, wink)

Grasping the podium tightly with both hands, a huge Old Glory displayed as the backdrop, a sarcastic suggestion, in the form of a question, she screamed at the whipped up audience: “Why should you (WE) be providing breakfast to the kids of other people (THEM)?”

Currently, we (the U.S. taxpayers) host a juvenile version of a continental breakfast (a banana, a piece of toast, a glass of milk, and perhaps some jellies) to little poor children as they arrive at school to learn their lessons with empty bellies.

A recurring concern of the Family Values crowd has long been that the families of some of the children partaking of this lavish feast might earn more than the cutoff amount for the child to qualify for this thing which will, no doubt, end up being called “another entitlement”. A ridiculous fix would be to curtail this benefit, thereby throwing the babies out with the bananas, toast and milk. Net benefit: a few million dollars saved. Hip Hip Hooray! Now THAT's a bandaid that really hurts when you rip it away!

Clearly, the better these kids learn, the better (eventually, God willing!) they'll earn, and be able to repay the federal coffers. “That's a no brainer”, you might say, But then, I had a good breakfast today.

“Everyone, our morning session has ended. Enjoy your lunch break. I've tried to provide you with plenty of food for thought. (Pun intended.) This afternoon, when next we meet, we'll tackle how global warming IS, and will CONTINUE to have a profoundly negative impact on the world's food supply.

Bon appétit!”



## Poet: Joan Lucas

### Activist History:

Anti War activities re: Viet Nam, Operation Desert Storm, Iraq "Shock and Awe" and Afghanistan  
Pro Choice activities - ongoing  
Frequent communicator with representatives in Washington, D.C.

### Poetry History:

Has enjoyed reading poetry all her life.  
Frequently read poetry written for the enjoyment of children to her children.  
Starting in her forties, she wrote numerous poems for my own enjoyment.  
Joined MeterMaids in March, 2011.  
Mother, grandmother, active in local charities.  
Lives in Oakdale, CA.

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# Shedding light on a dark subject

By LAURA CAMPBELL & AARON RABY  
Stanislaus County Prevention Network

Suicide is a subject that most people consider taboo. Just saying the word "suicide" causes some people to feel uneasy. Many people are unwilling to recognize that in today's day and age many still see it as a "way out". The World Health Organization estimates that "approximately 1 million people die each year from suicide." If that number is correct then the next question that should be asked is, "How can we understand and prevent suicide?"

Most people who commit suicide don't really want to die; they just want to stop hurting. Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs and taking these signs seriously. Signs include: talking about suicide, seeking out lethal means such as guns, pills, knives, etc., preoccupation with death, no hope for the future, self loathing/hatred, getting affairs in order, saying goodbye, withdrawing from others, self-destructive behavior such as increased alcohol or drug use, reckless driving, etc., and a sudden sense of calm. A sudden sense of calm and happiness after being depressed can mean that the person has made a decision to commit suicide.

There are many common risk factors for suicide. Some of these include; mental illness, a family history of suicide, previous suicide attempts, terminal illness or chronic pain, recent loss or stressful life event, social isolation and loneliness, a history of trauma or abuse, and alcoholism/drug abuse. According to the Suicide and Substance Abuse from Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco, about 50% of all suicide attempts involve alcohol and illegal drugs (including those who use alcohol or drugs in their attempt or test positively for alcohol or drugs at the time of the attempt). About 25%

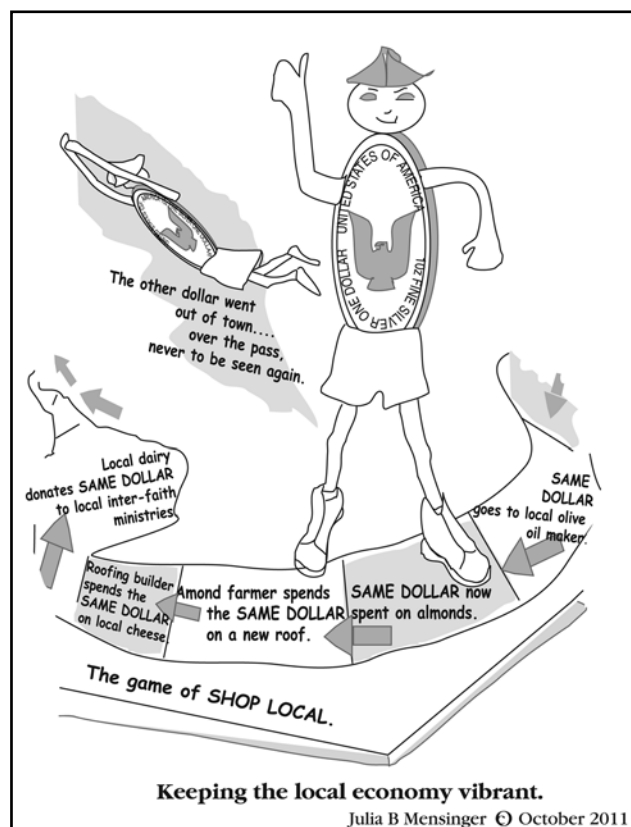
of completed suicides occur among drug abusers and those with alcohol abuse. Studies have shown that young adults who drink heavily have an increased risk of suicide in middle adulthood. In fact, suicide is among the most significant causes of death in both male and female substance abusers. In addition, SAMHSA reports that the combination of alcohol and depression increases the rate of suicide attempts by 12 percent, while the combination of drug abuse and depression raises the figure to almost 20 percent.

So, what can you do if you think someone is contemplating suicide? Here are some tips. Speak up if you are worried. It may feel uncomfortable at first but this may provide some relief to the person contemplating.

You should also respond quickly in a crisis. If someone tells you that they are thinking about death/suicide it is important to have them evaluated as quickly as possible. Someone who is high risk in the near future to attempt suicide will have a plan, the means to carry out the plan, a time set for doing it, and an intention to do it.

Offer help and support which can include an ear to listen and/or getting professional help.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide or is feeling desperate or hopeless, there is help. Suicide does not have to be an option or way out. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). It's free and available 24/7. There is also local mental health crisis, treatment, recovery and peer support services through Behavioral Health & Recovery Services at 1-888-376-6246. For additional information visit us at: [www.stancounty.com/bhrs](http://www.stancounty.com/bhrs)



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# Love, music, reverie

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

I haven't ridden my bicycle since I met you. I've been running from pillar to post trying to stay busy enough to cope with the lack of your presence in my day-to-day existence.

I go to work early to avoid the emptiness of my apartment and to keep my mind busy. Even so, thoughts of you can be powerful distractions. I may sit at my desk staring into space for a full minute just holding your image in my mind. Then I shake myself awake and get back to the task at hand.

Fall semester has begun and I am teaching again. Two nights a week I am occupied by class preparation and teaching. It's work I love, and a subject I enjoy enough to sustain me for my entire professional life. But every once in a while in the middle of class I look down at my phone and touch the screen so that I can see your face.

The picture I snapped at the Mexican restaurant in Santa Cruz lights up. I am fully aware that you don't like this picture. But I love it. You didn't smile or pose. You weren't aware I was taking your picture. The image takes me to a point in time when you were sitting beside me, enjoying my company, and sharing a meal.

In a perfectly candid moment you're not looking at me. You're looking off into the middle distance forming a thought, and about to say something that I am deeply interested in hearing. The ability to step into that moment, whether I want to relive the past or anticipate the future, is a gift I will never take for granted.

I continue to dive into every opportunity to play music. My weekends, since you left, have been filled with practices, jams, and gigs. I have stayed busy and kept moving. Our friends in Niles have been supportive and comforting while they have watched me fall in love with you and then wrestle with my anguish at your departure.



Matt and I played for nearly 12 hours on a Saturday and let it bleed into a Sunday. We started in his driveway, practicing while he and the rest of the town conducted an annual yard sale. We played for you via Skype. (Thank God for Skype!) After that we attended a party in Oakland where we played a few more hours, pulling out songs I had no idea we both could play. And by 10:30 p.m., we were back in Niles at another party where we closed the evening.

Gluttons to the last, that Sunday Matt and I hosted a jam. But I have to admit that I was not up to form. Fatigue had set in and my mind was not in full contact with either my ears or my fingers. I was so exhausted that I am not sure how I made the trip home.

Do you remember the day we met? You came to Matt's jam and played "West Country Girl" in the key of G-sharp, with a capo on the first fret of your guitar. As a mandolin player I avoid the use of capos, which made my job a little bit more difficult when you snapped one on. G-sharp is a devilish key for me. No open strings except the 7th note of the scale on the G strings. Playing the 7th note all the way at the lowest end of the mandolin's range usually requires a little more musical bravery than I can muster.

But I was in tune --or attuned-- that day. The melody seemed to float about me. I caught pieces of it under my

fingers and explored their musical implications between your lyric phrases. I played either with my eyes closed or focused on the fret board of my mandolin. At the instrumental break I simply kept following wherever the melody led me. Eight bars went by, then 16 bars.

After 24 bars I decided everyone liked what I was doing enough to give me two breaks (32 bars), so when that ended I forced myself out of my musical reverie and looked up to see if anyone else was going to jump in or if we were going to end the song. When I opened my eyes, it seemed like everyone was quietly agape: as lost in the moment as I was.

I have always been of two minds at jams, practices, or even gigs. One mind was in the moment, focused, and loving the task of playing music with --and for-- people. The other mind was pinned to obligations to someone who could not understand let alone share my passion for music. My second mind kept an eye on the clock or looked for non-verbal cues to see if it was time to go.

But that day no second mind appeared, all my attention was focused on your song. For the first time, I did not watch the clock and I did not need to be aware of someone else's impending impatience and boredom. I was free to dig deep into myself and discover where the act of playing music could take me.

For the moment I have two minds again. You went home to England, and now a bigger part of me than ever watches a clock in the middle of a jam and counts days out of a calendar, aching for your return. This time, though, I do not feel conflicted about keeping one mind somewhere else when I play music. I know you will return, and I know that when you do I will be never need to divide my musical attention again.

I keep myself busy until that day comes.

So the bike has stood in the corner of my dining room patient and insistent. It waits for the day when I am home, the sun is shining, and the morning air is cool. A day just like today.



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