



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

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Lockdown

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in
a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.



But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.
March 13th 2020
Brother Richard Hendrick, OFM is a [Capuchin Franciscan](#)
living in Ireland.

Love in the Time of Coronavirus: What Living Through the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Taught Me

By KEVIN FONG

Pandemics are powerful phenomena. One moment, life proceeds per usual routines, and the next, we find ourselves scrambling over toilet paper. The coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected our lives in every way, and preventing transmission, while far from assured, appears to be straightforward.

An equally daunting challenge, however, is about how we are going to interact with one another as this crisis unfolds.

I remember a similar dynamic in another pandemic I lived through. The first cases of HIV/AIDS were reported when I was 19 years old. In those days, the modes of transmission were not widely known, prompting a widespread panic. We saw a proliferation of people wearing masks and gloves in public. People hoarding supplies. Acts of blatant discrimina-

KCBP's Response to COVID-19

During these unprecedented times, we are all entering new territory together. As your local community radio station, we want to provide you with timely, accurate information to help you and your family through this global crisis.

KCBP 95.5 FM will be airing informative Public Service Announcements that will provide resources and information to keep you up to date on the latest developments.

Resources for Comprehensive Information:

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
[Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
[State of California COVID-19 Website](#)
[State of California Department of Public Health](#)
[California Department of Education](#)
[California Employment Development Department](#)
[Stanislaus County Department of Public Health](#)
[San Joaquin County Department of Public Health](#)
[Stanislaus County Department of Education](#)
[San Joaquin County Department of Education](#)
[211 Stanislaus County](#)
[The Modesto Bee](#) has frequent, local updates.

tion and hatred abounded. Like today, the White House was more harmful than helpful. In fact, then President Reagan did not mention the words HIV/AIDS publicly until 1985, four years after the first cases were reported. In other words, we were on our own.

For the next dozen years, HIV/AIDS became my vocation and avocation. By day, I directed a project in Oakland Chinatown that offered everything from prevention/education to clinical care. After work, I facilitated support groups, delivered meals and meds to friends and clients, provided outreach at bathhouses and sex clubs, and took to the streets in protest. On weekends, I attended funerals.

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38th Annual Peace Camp June 26, 27, and 28, 2020

Camp Peaceful Pines
near Pinecrest, California

Registration Form



Adults \$75 before May 1; \$85 before June 4; \$95 after June 4

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Total \$ _____

Youth (ages 4 -18) \$55 before May 1; \$60 before June 4; \$65 after June 4

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____

3. _____ Age _____ 4. _____ Age _____

Total \$ _____

Child (ages 3 & under FREE)

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____

Voluntary Donation to provide a camper scholarship = \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

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

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

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

MEALS: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan ☐ Gluten-free Other dietary needs: _____

☐ I have a special need for a cabin assignment: _____

☐ I can offer a ride Friday/Saturday. ☐ I need a ride Friday/Saturday

Parent authorization for minor children

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 _____

I authorize the Modesto Peace/Life Center to photograph and/or videotape my child, and reproduce my child's photographs and videotapes for publicity and/or educational/promotional purposes related to Peace Camp.

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. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

For camp information and scholarship availability: Call Marian McBride-Luman, (209) 765-0604; mmcbrideluman@gmail.com

38th Annual Peace Camp, June 26-28, 2020

By **MARIAN McBRIDE-LUMAN**

Note: this event has not been cancelled yet.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's 38th Annual Peace Camp in the Sierras will take place on June 26-28, 2020 at Camp Peaceful Pines. We'll enjoy a weekend of workshops, good food, singing, drum circle, crafts, talent show, recreation, and stimulating people of all ages in a beautiful mountain setting. Families and individuals are welcome. *Register early for a discount.*

Leng Power will present the Saturday workshop "Joy: The Secret Sauce of Self-Renewal and Community Transformation." "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution." - Emma Goldman, Russian Feminist Activist.

Leng will explore the work of social movements that use centered-joy and lightheartedness as a subversive and effective strategy to create collective resiliency. Participants will learn practical ways in which joy can be incorporated into their lives as a critical component towards building a resistance to fear and despair. This workshop will incorporate movement of body and breathing exercises.

Leng is a mindfulness practitioner and draws upon her experience as an American Leadership Forum Senior Fellow as well as her time with the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

Camp Peaceful Pines, on Clark Fork Road off Hwy. 108 in the Stanislaus National Forest, is the venue for Peace Camp. In 2018, the Donnell Fire burned much of the surrounding area but the Camp itself remains intact and is still a place of beauty and tranquility surrounded by Mother Nature's continuing restoration.

Camp Peaceful Pines features a kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work.

The camp fee covers the program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$75 before May 1st, \$85 before June 4 and \$95 after June 4. Young people, 18 and under, are \$55 before May 1st, \$60 before June 4 and \$65 after June 4. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated. The camp opens with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes after the morning gathering on Sunday. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp. Registration forms are available online at www.stanislausconnections.org and www.peacelifecenter.org to download and mail. The online registration payment option can be done by searching for Peace Camp 2020 at www.brownpapertickets.com. There will be a wait list if registration becomes full.

Information: Marian McBride-Luman, 209-765-0640, mmcbrideluman@gmail.com

Be informed!

Read the Valley Citizen at
<http://thevalleycitizen.com>

Creating a Peaceful World One Hand at a Time

Note: The Peace Essay Awards Ceremony has been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak. *Connections* will print the winning essays in each division. The first place winning essay in Division I follows. A list of winners can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest/>.

Division I - 1st Place Winner, 2020 Peace Essay Contest

Maryam Sabri

School - Whitmore Charter

One of the most befitting quotes that describe the work of a local community member was once said by the American Journalist Dorothy Thompson; "Peace has to be created, in order to be maintained. It is the product of faith, strength, energy, will, sympathy, justice, imagination, and the triumph of principle. It will never be achieved by passivity and quietism." Mohammad Yasir Khan, a Muslim American strives to bring peace and justice to this world by implementing these very values. Yasir's actions have led to building a more peaceful and just world, including creating a non-profit organization that specializes in helping refugees while also bringing communities together through various events to establish bonds between the people of neighboring counties through family activities such as camping, community picnics, and basketball tournaments. Leading by example perhaps is the method to spark inspiration because of viewing and partaking in some of the projects Yasir leads, I strive to help create a more peaceful and balanced world.

With the guiding principles of Islam and its many lessons of peace, including Islam's equivalent of the golden rule,



faith is simply one ingredient in the simple recipe called peace. Just as a horse has the will power to move mountains upon the sight of delectable treats like rosy apples and bright carrots, Yasir is the same. Upon the sight of surrounding communities he filled the need to help with new families seeking refuge from the terrors of wars, he sprang into action by establishing a non-profit called Al-Misbaah to provide "a foundation for a home" for each refugee family so they could become a proper, functional unit of society (Al-Misbaah). As part of "a foundation for a home" basic necessities like hygiene products, food, and clothing. In addition, they help by providing transportation services that were gathered from donations via monetary donations and physical new or gently used items. A statistic from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) showed that during the years of 2013 to 2017, Stanislaus County alone received 1,087 refugees.

Just as Thompson said, "Peace is not created through passivity and quietism and in order to aid in the building of a peaceful and just world", Yasir did the exact opposite. He assists in this vision by getting involved and rallies for

these families to be helped by sharing the situation of these hardships struck families and how anyone everyone can help.

Yasir's fierce sense of dedication and strength has inspired in many ways; I could fill a book. I had the opportunity to work beside him for many aspects of Al-Misbaah's Resettlement projects in the initial stages of the non-profit and every step taught me a lesson. Upon seeing a need for something that would bring peace, even to one person, you should seize the opportunity and make it happen. Al-Misbaah wasn't built overnight, it was through hard work, dedication, faith, strength, and perseverance.

After experiencing the surge of refugees in real-time, Yasir gathered up the strength and will power to be a change in this momentous event. With an imagination that was the sky's limit, Yasir used his strong sense of justice to turn his sympathy for these displaced families into energy that would fuel his vision and succession of Al-Misbaah. All of his continuous efforts have made me realize that I and anyone can work together to create a more peaceful and just world by simply taking action.



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Coronavirus Brings New Challenges for Haven Emergency Shelter

By TOM PORTWOOD

While many of us are making often radical adjustments to our lives during this tragic time, those people living in an abusive environment at home can find themselves even more isolated than ever before. May Rico, the Executive Director at the [Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus](https://www.stanislausconnections.org/), shared her thoughts on that issue in a telephone interview the other day:

"If someone is living in a violent relationship, they have few safe places in their lives, and they have child care issues, and other people around them may not know of what's going on in their lives," Ms. Rico explained.

"Sometimes they'll share with others that they're in a violent relationship, but often they don't. Now that we have all been told to stay at home, the victims of domestic abuse suddenly see that many of the safer parts of their lives are getting smaller and smaller, and their access to those safe places is drastically reduced and that adds to their sense of

isolation, which can become quite overwhelming. We now find ourselves in a situation where isolation is a necessity for safety from this disease, but for people who are in an abusive situation, isolation will make that home all the more dangerous."

As Ms. Rico points out, the services offered by the Haven's emergency shelter program are particularly crucial at this time. "We have six families in the shelter, which puts us at full capacity. But we're trying to help everyone in need, and we can temporarily house some of our clients in hotels during times of overflow at the shelter."

The Haven Emergency Shelter has long provided a vigorous level of support to "survivors seeking safety and healing." Services offered include the provision of food and clothing; peer counseling; case management services; parenting and support groups for adults; youth programs; and restraining order assistance.

The onset of the Coronavirus pandemic sent Ms. Rico and the staff at the shelter scrambling for masks last week. Given that the shelter is located in a relatively small building for the number of people living in close quarters, she realized that Haven needed to act quickly to protect the safety of clients and shelter staff alike.

"We knew we had to do something as a precaution to stop the spread of droplets from one person to another at the shelter. But we didn't have anything at the shelter," said Ms. Rico. "Then, I heard the Rachael Maddow show when they were talking about this, and how hospitals and the health care community we're putting out a call urging people who knew how to sew to make masks, so I went online and found the link to some instructions, and posted that on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/havenwomenscenterofstanislaus/>). And people have been responding. I had one person whose wife works in a nail salon, and she donated a box of masks. I've already received one packet of ten homemade masks, and there are other people who have contacted me who want to help – so people are definitely responding. We have about 35 people (staff and clients together) who would need 5 - 10 masks a person (assuming regular weekly laundry) in various sizes. If we get more than we need I will contact other shelter providers in our community to see if they can use them."

The Haven's main office is located at 618 13th St., Modesto 95354 but is closed due to the emergency. To hear of ways to support the shelter program, call the 24-Hour Crisis Line at 209.577.5980 and ask for Venesa.



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<http://stanislausconnections.org/>

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Frank Ploof: Martin Luther King Legacy Award

By **ERIC CAINE**, [The Valley Citizen](#)

Last Saturday, at the conclusion of his remarks after receiving the Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Award, Frank Ploof offered a quotation from Congressman John Lewis that urged people to, “speak up, speak out, and get in good trouble.” Ploof’s own version of “good trouble” includes consorting with derelicts, drug addicts, drifters and ne’er do wells, people who are alternately scorned, shunned, and demonized by the general public.

Naturally, Ploof himself doesn’t share these predominant public labels for people experiencing homelessness. His default approach to people, all people, is respect and equal treatment. One of his prime principles, expressed in his “10 Learned Guidelines” for the expression of agape love is, “There are no others.”

“Agape,” a Greek word that appears over 200 times in the New Testament, often means love in the sense of “charity” or “empathy.” Ploof applies agape by befriending people in need. He’s the guy with the pickup truck when you need a pickup truck, the guy who gives you a ride when you need one, the guy who figures out how to get your disability payments started when no one else can.

Like Martin Luther King, Ploof believes agape must be applied actively, always working to restore what he sees as lost community. King wrote, “Agape is a willingness to go to any length to restore community... It is a willingness to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven to restore community.”

Ploof’s dedication to community was most evident during the operation of the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES). Working almost entirely on his own, Ploof facilitated help for dozens of people, arranging everything from replacements for lost identification, to reinstating Medical payments, to driving people to and from the hospital. Following one his own firm principles for agape love, Ploof was “fully present” for MOES’ residents, offering friendship to all.

Ploof shared the stage at Modesto Junior College’s Performing and Media Arts Center with Dr. Harry Edwards, the UC Berkeley Emeritus Professor of Sociology who pioneered studies in the Sociology of Sports. Dr. Edwards reminded his audience that though Martin Luther King is best known as the preeminent leader of the Civil Rights Movement, King’s enduring interest was in human rights, which he believed were universal and rooted in the community of humankind.

Like Martin Luther King and Harry Edwards, Frank Ploof believes that establishing the community of humankind is an ongoing project. He’s prepared to accept failure as a temporary condition on the way to a better world.

And following his own dictum to avoid judgment, Ploof has learned that in the midst of the awful tragedy of homelessness there is a resilient humanity that rises above the grinding poverty, addiction, abuse and shame that haunt the people of the streets. Even in the direst of circumstances, most homeless people remain generous, pursue justice, and seek the peace and comfort of family and community. And, as often as possible, Frank Ploof is there to help them, always ready to, “get in good trouble.”

Frank Ploof accepts the MLK Legacy Award

My thanks to:

Leng Power for her very kind introduction.

The Peace/Life Center for sponsoring the Annual MLK event.

The nominating and selection committee for the Legacy award.

My family of which many are here today.

My colleagues and friends who support me in my work.

On my first Outreach Business Card, I have this message:

HOPE It might fade to a dim light, but it's never gone. We are here to bring light back into your life.

I didn’t fully understand depth of this message when I came up with it 6 years ago, especially: to bring light back into your life!

Fast forward 6 years and in the spirit of MLK, the way I now view getting light back into a homeless persons life is best expressed in this quote of his.

“Agape Love does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others for their sakes. It is an entirely “neighbor-regarding concern for others,” which discovers the neighbor in every man it meets. Therefore, agape makes



Beauty in the Dark

By **LENG POWER**

In the middle of all of this, the lights went out last night right as I was finishing the soup. The whole court and street beyond were all dark when I stepped outside to check things out. The rain we had earlier lightened to just barely a drizzle. I was on the phone calling the non-emergency sheriff’s number. The crackling of the line and periodic beeping sound while on hold made the scene all the more surreal. Here we were, every house was full of all of its members, now sitting in the dark.

Slowly I could see flickers of candles being lit and flash-light beams cut across windows as neighbors peered out windows. Signs of living. The early evening sky displayed some incredibly bright stars against the silhouette of dark homes like little reminders of our eternal source of illumination. I entered the house now aglow with more candles than before. The girls had brought together all the ones we had. Luckily the soup was done so we dined by candlelight, filling the noise void with jazz from my fully charged phone and joking about the absurdity and chances of it all. My dad who is prone to worry, even found amusement in such an untimely ordeal and teased the girls that it was because they finally cleaned their room. I told the girls that we could all stay in the living room and I would read stories to them. Dahlia who is normally aloof with teenage indifference, was actually excited about the idea.

I was finishing up the dishes when all the lights came back on. The hum of the fridge, the whir of the hot water dispenser, the TV, the call of our charging devices. We looked at each

no distinction between friend and enemy (housed/unhoused) it is directed toward both.”

In my practice of Agape Love, these are 10 learned guidelines that I follow to the best of my ability:

You must accept homeless people as fellow human beings or brothers: There are NO others.

You must meet them where they are in their life.

You must not judge them.

You must not sell them/offer them ‘your’ solution: it’s not about you.

You must listen often and attentively and never ‘preach’.

You must have patience, lots of it as progress can take a long time.

You must accept failure as an option: relapse in recovery for example.

You must be fully present for them when they need you.

You must embrace these relationships as long term relationships.

You must be open to learning new ideas/approaches of healing.

In closing here are some more guiding quotes:

Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality. - MLK

Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’ - MLK

The time is always right to do what is right. - MLK

History will not be kind to us. So you have a moral obligation, a mission and a mandate, to speak up, speak out and get in good trouble. You can do it. You must do it. Not just for yourselves but for generations yet unborn. – John Lewis

Let’s go forward and unconditionally love our unsheltered neighbors! – Frank Ploof

other, deciding on how to greet the moment of restoration that pierced the cozy closeness of the dark. Dahlia already sprawled out on her mat with her blanket ready for my reading. I crouched down and whispered that we can still do story time.

So we closed the eventful evening with stories they wanted to hear of themselves when they were little babies and children (because they are so old now).

I’m not comparing one evening to what we are all going through but I think about the house of all of us. After this dark period. How much of the many beautiful things will we keep once all the lights come back on? 🌸

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Green Tips for a Green Planet: Lessons to learn – A new virus put into perspective

By **TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL**

Our attention is taken with coronavirus (COVID-19) as we batten the hatches and stay close to home, joining a global population in fear and uncertainty. As the pandemic progresses we are reminded of green practices that were wise long before this current wake up call.

Mitch Ratcliffe in Earth911 suggests in his article, [Use Coronavirus to Reset Your Life for Sustainability](#), that “COVID-19 is a shock, but not unprecedented. Previous generations have dealt with Spanish flu, cholera, and bubonic plague, among others. The difference is that today these diseases fly around the world with us instead of passing months on boats between distant shores, journeys on which the carriers of infection often died. The result was a slower spread, yet each of these diseases killed millions.

And then humans go on. The question we can ask ourselves this time is: How would we like to use the COVID-19 disruption to our lives to improve the world? We can move beyond the narrow-minded pursuit of survival and become more sustainable by examining our lifestyles and the assumptions they rest on.

The many individual tragedies of lost life caused by coronavirus can contribute to changes that help heal the planet, if you act on this opportunity to examine your life with an eye to improved sustainability.”

In China alone the virus has led to a major decrease in pollution, as 750 million people were locked down and manufacturing and commuting came to a lengthy halt. As we here in the United States face similar interruptions to our daily lives, we can rethink and consider green actions we may already have been practicing and be sure to promote sustainability

through awareness and sustainable action going forward.

Ratcliffe offers consumer options that can help us now and into the future through opportunities to find new ways to cope when faced with the scarcity of many things we take for granted.

Panic buying

As the virus has brought about the cancellation of global and personal interaction until further notice, fear has spurred a rampage of stock up buying, especially toilet paper. Ratcliffe points out that we tend to use large volumes of paper goods, even pre COVID-19. According to the U.S. Census and Simmons National Consumer Survey, we use an average of 141 rolls per person per year! In comparison the rest of the world uses far less. The French use 71 rolls and in Brazil the annual count per person is only 38 rolls.

Ratcliffe suggests being aware of how many sheets you use per restroom visit and cutting that amount up to 50%. In the long run you will save money and reduce the millions of tons of paper that goes unrecycled each year. Hint: if you buy a more expensive 2 -ply, or better yet, 3-ply, you will find you need many fewer sheets...especially if you fold rather than crumple...saving money and resources.

Commuting vs. working from home

During the caution shutdowns people have been encouraged to work from home whenever possible. This experience may have offered an opportunity to save on fossil fuel emissions, as well as wear and tear on our vehicles and the stress of the commute. Ratcliffe says telecommuting is simple and affordable for most businesses. Several formats are available, including Zoom (which I recently used), Webex, Google, Hangouts and more. Only one person needs to have an account and can host a team of up to 50 or 100 at a fee of \$9 to \$19 per month. These formats often include collaboration tools.



Earth911®

Shop sustainably

Even if you are not panic buying, there is still much anxiety about going into a store and whether there will be stocked shelves. A WinCo manager explained that mid-March shopping was at a level comparable to the Christmas/New Year holiday season, and the chain had to suspend warehouse deliveries to stores around Sacramento for a 24-hour period at least once during that time.

The WinCo company has suspended all bulk food bin shopping in favor of items that can be dispensed with turn knob units to avoid customer handling of bulk foods with the use of a scoop or tong. A call to Sprouts in Modesto informed that Sprouts was preparing to do the same with its bulk items.

At this writing I have not learned of safeguards to selecting fresh produce, so would guess the best bet would be to use a safe method for produce washing and eating cooked vegetables, as opposed to raw.

This is the perfect time and season to plant a garden where you have full control of sustainable, pesticide free produce. Hopefully the Farmer's Markets will be open soon so we have more sources for locally sourced foods. Lesson here: you can eat safely, sustainably and reduce the carbon footprint through your personal diet.

Learn a new shopping strategy

“Shopping Therapy” never was sustainable or financially sound. COVID-19 impels us to embrace new consumer attitudes and practices. Concerns over global availability of products, and awareness of other's coughing or of touching items and setting them back on the shelf probably already has you rethinking how you shop.

Ratcliffe points out the long-time need to reduce “the entertainment value of shopping – the basis of expensive retail markups - and concentrating on the essentials,” rather than wandering the aisles for extended periods and acting on impulse. He suggests planning a route that covers all needs in one trip.

He also weighs the pros and cons of at-home shopping and offers guidelines that can outweigh the environmental costs including converting staples purchases to scheduled deliveries and reducing online shopping deliveries to the absolute minimum each month. Less online deliveries per household will mean far less CO2 emissions...a global concern. He further suggests that you may find less need for a second car or a car per person of driving age in each household by creating less need to shop.

ACTION: There is much to be aware of and much more to put into practice with or without a global pandemic to heighten our personal awareness and global action.

Visit Earth911 [here](#).

Love Art & Music?

Want to help people in your community grow and prosper through music?

At Modesto Sound we empower youth with real-world job skills to create music and artistic media. This benefits everyone!

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- Held many community concerts
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- Network in the community
- Help others
- Have fun

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IN MEMORIAM

REV. JOSEPH E. LOWERY

October 26, 1921 – March 27, 2020

Dean of the Civil Rights Movement

Leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Speaker, Modesto's Martin Luther King, Jr.

Commemoration

Allison Casandra Carr Muhammad

October 28, 1951 - March 17, 2020

Teacher, Stockton Unified School District

Wife of Tommie Muhammad

Coronavirus? Just Chase it Around Town

By ERIC CAINE, [The Valley Citizen](#)

Imagine some of the most vulnerable residents in your town being chased from place to place during a pandemic. Imagine that their only access to hygiene is public restrooms, back alleys, and the great outdoors. Fanciful as it may sound, that's exactly the case with members of Modesto's homeless population who didn't make it into the county's new 182 bed shelter on 9th and D Streets in Modesto.

When the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES) closed last fall, it had accommodated well over 400 people. Most hoped to enter the new low-barrier facility in the Salvation Army's Berberian building, but the numbers worked against far too many of them. For a while, some camped nearby, but they were soon chased away as city authorities began enforcing their new "accountability" policy.

For close observers, "accountability" seemed much like the city's policy prior to establishing MOES and permitted camping in Beard Brook Park, when homeless people were chased from place to place in an endless round of warnings, tickets, and do-it-all-over-again. Though nobody in an official capacity was saying it out loud, reliable sources were reporting many city and county officials were highly displeased when some MOES residents actually seemed to be enjoying having a place to stay.

These same officials were said to have feared homeless people would get too comfortable with life in a tent and fail to improve their lot by finding work and becoming self-sufficient. Most of these "authorities" know as little about homelessness as they do about local job prospects. Were they better informed, they'd have realized that only twenty-five percent of available jobs in Stanislaus County pay a living wage, and the chances of a homeless person landing one of those jobs is about as likely as the Modesto City Council receiving an award for teamwork and unity.

And even in those rare cases when a homeless person does find a job, the lack of transportation, housing, laundry and bathing facilities tends to make it difficult to stay employed.

Local leaders are quick to say homeless people don't take advantage of the many services available for help, but a quick check of the people in the new shelter should dispel that notion. Many have been seeking help since the establishment of Beard Brook Village, back in 2018. They've gone from Beard Brook to MOES to the new shelter and are still waiting for "services."

The single greatest need—housing—just isn't available. But in addition to housing, many need assistance for disabilities, both physical and mental. The notion most will find jobs and become self-sufficient is just wrong. Acknowledging the number of homeless people who are mentally ill or on disability should provide evidence enough to realize the largest part of our unsheltered population represents fallout from decades of cuts to social services, housing support, and paying jobs.

Now, in the midst of the nation's greatest health crisis in recent memory, many of these same people have been told to scatter. Whenever they are lucky enough to find a place to pitch a tent, hang a tarp, or rest their head, they're rousted and told to move on.

Already treated by many people as morally deplorable untouchables, homeless people will now be seen as carriers,

avoided and shunned even more than usual. But under the new accountability policy, they will have no choice but to keep moving along our streets and sidewalks, through our parks, beside our rivers, behind our houses and businesses, and through whatever vacant lots might offer temporary refuge.

Virtually all authorities agree that rapid response and containment are keys to limiting the spread of COVID-19. Santa Clara County and the City of San Jose have already written and distributed a plan for mitigating the effects of the virus among homeless people. As part of its rapid response, the City of San Jose, "has delivered handwashing stations, portable toilets, clean water and arranged for refuse pickup at 14 locations with relatively large groups of unsheltered persons."

When MOES was open, Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto were able to provide, "handwashing stations, portable toilets, clean water, and...refuse pickup," at one central location. Service providers, charities, and volunteers were able to locate and assist people in need far more efficiently when they were in one place. Thomas Reeves, speaking for the City of Modesto, said at the time,

"We've seen a direct correlation between allowing for our homeless individuals to go into one location and the calls for service and the quality of life crimes that we would otherwise experience in other parts of the city go down."

Ironically, just adjacent to the new shelter, there's ample space for hundreds of tents, both in a large parking lot behind the building and at the terminus of 10th Street. Both sites would be ideal staging areas for assessment, triage, and transition as more housing opens up.

But instead of utilizing available space and capitalizing



on the experience gained when managing MOES and Beard Brook Village, Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto have chosen to chase unsheltered people around town. The increase in quality of life crimes will seem like nothing compared to the increased potential for spreading a highly contagious disease throughout the region.

Local Emergency Rooms and hospitals already serve a disproportionate number of homeless people. At a time when people across the nation have been advised to self-isolate, hundreds upon hundreds of the most susceptible members of our local communities are being forced to keep moving along, greatly increasing the chances of overburdening our health care systems. Though "accountability" is assuredly the wrong policy for addressing homelessness during our current crisis, it will be precisely appropriate come Election Day.



The Berberian Shelter – A Harbor for Those in Need

By TOM PORTWOOD

The stark reality of the Coronavirus Pandemic has brought new hardships to one of our community's most vulnerable populations – our fellow homeless residents.

But while the pandemic presents a fresh set of terrifying challenges to those living on the street, the staff at the Berberian Shelter, on the corner of 9th and D Streets is vigorously responding to the health crisis in this time of “all hands on deck.” “We have signs posted showing everyone to frequently wash their hands,” noted Captain Samuel Snyder who took his post as the Corps Assistant Officer of the Salvation Army's Berberian Shelter some nine months ago. “And we've informed our staff to make sure the sanitizer stations are filled, bathroom areas are double-scrubbed, and that tables are continually wiped down. And, of course, we constantly check to make sure dishes are cleaned and sanitized. We also have medical offices here too – today we are providing shots. A few days ago, a team came in to do dental work. We have an examination room and an x-ray room.”

Captain Snyder knows what it's like to be out on the streets cold and hungry and without a home. Without hope. The remarkable trajectory of his life is a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit. “I struggled with substance abuse for about fifteen years,” Captain Smith reflected. “I ended up trying to run with the wrong crowd. I thought I could try anything once, but I couldn't handle it and I got hooked on crack cocaine. I was in and out of jail and ended up being homeless and on skid row. I moved to Denver, Colorado, and wound up homeless there as well.”

“Then I went into the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center and that's where it started to change. I was hired as a resident manager, operating a center for 125 men. I did that

for a little over two years. They saw something in me that I didn't see in myself and asked me if I wanted to go to officer school, so there you go! They sent me to Crestwood College, which is an accredited two-year college for Salvation Army officers. I worked extremely hard and the next thing you know I was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Salvation Army. I look back at my life and say, ‘Look what the Lord has done’ – but it wasn't easy. It had never been that easy in my life, because of the color of my skin, and the way people would look at you if you had an addiction problem. So I had to work with some of those struggles and battles.”

Captain Snyder has a deep reservoir of empathy for the clients he serves. He also appreciates that the epidemic of homelessness in Stanislaus County can only be ended through a strong commitment to collaboration, particularly with the epidemic becoming graver over time. According to Stanislaus County, there were 1,923 homeless individuals at the time of the 2019 Point in Time Survey, an increase of 66% in just five years. “Collaboration is the key,” stresses Captain Snyder. “We cannot just be status quo.”

In early February, Stanislaus County opened the 182-bed low-barrier shelter on the same property where the Berberian Shelter is located. In addition to operating the 206-bed emergency shelter, as it has since 2007, the Salvation Army also operates the new shelter through a contract with the county.

“We have to stagger the dinners because we feed the County shelter first,” explained Captain Snyder about the services. “Dinner for the clients in this (Berberian) shelter is about 6 p.m. Books are available for reading, and TV. We had a Super Bowl Watch party, and it was fantastic! They all enjoyed themselves. We did intake early that day, as we do on other special occasions. We have church groups who



come and provide meals. We have a lot of volunteers, even on Saturdays to come and serve meals.”

“Our intake starts at 4 p.m. The clients are required to take a shower before going into the dorms. The shower shuttle comes every Thursday, but there are three community showers and two sets of private showers as well. We have these private showers for the transgendered.”

“We trying to do something about the homeless population in Modesto, and that's getting them off the street,” he continued. “But we don't want to be just a bed and breakfast, we want to transition them and move them up into employment and housing.”

“We recently had a transitional client from the Salvation Army's Adult Rehabilitation – he came here, stayed five weeks, saved up his money, and is in an apartment today. We're going to have a GED program here, which has long been a dream for many of the volunteers. We've been able to find most of the clients who are vets jobs. We're going to do forklift certification. There are a lot of forklift jobs available that don't take a lot of education. We're also going to be doing food safety certifications, since we do so much cooking here. Counting both shelters, we provide well over 1,300 meals a day.”

“And we have a chapel service here every Sunday morning at 8 o'clock. A lot of the clients attend, we have about 35 to 40 who come, sometimes as many as 50. And they tithe, sometimes as much as twenty dollars. Sometimes our offering is eighty or a hundred dollars. People ask me – do homeless people have money? Some of them do, some of them collect Social Security. But to see them tithing when they don't really have anything is an emotional feeling for all of us.”

“Our clients are very grateful for the opportunity to have a roof over their heads, hot food to eat, and a place where they can shower and change clothes,” concluded Captain Snyder. “Many people have gotten their lives together through our program,” “It gives people hope. I think we're doing our part, and the work is fantastic. You pour a lot of work into it, and you pour out a lot of yourself to help people. But it's so rewarding – to help people and see them succeed in life.”

The Salvation Army's Berberian Shelter is located at 320 9th Street in Modesto, 95351. Intake for clients begins at 4 p.m. each day. Phone number: (209)525-3750; https://modestocitadel.salvationarmy.org/modesto_citadel_corps/provide-shelter/



'Take This Seriously': Digital Rights Group Urges Americans to Beat Back Attempts to Exploit Coronavirus Crisis to Erode Civil Liberties

"We shouldn't have to choose between our health and our basic human rights."

By JULIA CONLEY, staff writer Common Dreams

As President Donald Trump and other Republican leaders called on Americans to flout the advice of public health experts and consider returning to work amid the coronavirus pandemic, digital rights group Fight for the Future launched a campaign on Tuesday urging supporters to help "flatten the curve" and slow the spread of the respiratory virus while warning that government agencies are liable to use widespread anxiety about the pandemic to undermine civil liberties and human rights.

The group's "Take This Seriously" campaign calls on the public to do just that—listen to public health officials who warn that slowing the spread of the coronavirus by staying at home as much as people are able to and avoiding large gatherings is essential to keeping the pandemic from overwhelming U.S. health systems.

Adherence to public health guidance, the group noted, should not replace vigilance in the fight for civil liberties and human rights, which may come under attack by the police and government agencies as more Americans commit to helping "flatten the curve."

"Our core message is that this virus is extremely serious and that we need to take it seriously," Fight for the Future



Deputy Director Evan Greer said in a statement. "We encourage the public, governments, and corporations to heed the recommendations of public health officials... We also must remain vigilant and beat back attempts to exploit this crisis to undermine fundamental rights and freedoms."

At Fight for the Future's [campaign website](#), supporters are invited to sign a pledge reading, "I will do my part to slow down COVID-19 and fight for everyone's basic rights."

As *Common Dreams* reported Tuesday, state governments in Ohio and Texas are already using the pandemic to curb the right to safe, legal abortion, claiming abortion care is "non-essential."

U.S. officials are examining other ways to suspend basic rights, Fight for the Future said. Proposals that have already been implemented or are under consideration include:

Increasing invasive surveillance by working with tech companies to track Americans' location data through smartphones and social media networks, as Israel, Australia, and Singapore have already.

Censoring speech about the coronavirus pandemic, as the White House did when it [barred public health officials](#) from speaking about the disease without clearance as it began spreading across the United States.

Undermining due process and the rule of law, as Trump's

Department of Justice has suggested it will when it requested over the weekend "that Congress grant the Executive Branch even more sweeping powers, such as the ability to detain people indefinitely without a trial, and to suspend court proceedings in the event of 'any natural disaster, civil disobedience, or other emergency situation.'"

Unnecessarily restricting movement with random stops, checkpoints, and criminalization of people who leave their homes during shelter-in-place orders.

"It's one thing to encourage people to stay home and close down businesses in order to reduce the reasons for people to gather, but people should still be free to go outside, drive places, and move freely without having to justify their movements to the government," Fight for the Future said. "People should not be stopped by police or military officers asking people where they are going, or be forced to get approval just to leave their house."

Accepting an erosion of civil liberties in a time of crisis will result in more restricted movement, surveillance, and other invasions of privacy after the coronavirus pandemic is under control, the group warned.

"We shouldn't have to choose between our health and our basic human rights," said Fight for the Future. "If we allow our government officials and corporate leaders to violate our civil liberties now, it will only empower them to continue violating our human rights under the guise of 'security' once this pandemic has passed."

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Love in the Time of Coronavirus: continued from page 1

While my friends back home were getting married and starting families, this pandemic defined my 20s as a decade of grief and loss. I was 26 years old when, after being asked for the 18th time, I promised myself that I would never be a pallbearer again. When I was 28, I had to decide whether to attend Michael's or George's funeral—because they were happening at the same time. At 29, I stopped recording in my journal the names of friends, lovers, clients, and colleagues who had died. The last entry—Robbie—was my 175th.

It was an unimaginably hard time—one that I would not wish on anyone. How ironic that my sons, who are now in their 20s, are facing a pandemic, the ramifications of which are still unknown. Rafa is working at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, arguably the epicenter of COVID-19 in the U.S. Santi just returned home to finish the remainder of his semester online. Given what I had lived through, what guidance would I give them?

When fear and othering are the norms, how might we act with love in the time of corona?

Practice Social Solidarity

"Social distancing," the term used to describe proximity restrictions to prevent transmission of viruses is a disruption of our cultural and social norms, and many people are still struggling with that. My family, friends, and hula brothers normally greet each other with hugs and kisses. We join hands in prayer. New greetings, such as the elbow and foot bump,

are becoming acceptable and commonplace, but it's going to take some time before we reach the level of connection, respect, and joy that a hug, handshake, or kiss express. If social distancing leads to isolation, fear and othering, this is a condition that can be as dangerous as the virus itself.

In the midst of practicing social distancing, it is important to practice social solidarity. In his *New York Times* op-ed, Eric Klinenberg writes:

In addition to social distancing, societies have often drawn on another resource to survive disasters and pandemics: social solidarity, or the interdependence between individuals and across groups. This an essential tool for combating infectious diseases and other collective threats. Solidarity motivates us to promote public health, not just our own personal security. It keeps us from hoarding medicine, toughing out a cold in the workplace or sending a sick child to school. It compels us to let a ship of stranded people dock in our safe harbors, to knock on our older neighbor's door.

Stories of social solidarity are emerging everywhere.

- My friend Vonnie gift-wrapped rolls of toilet paper and delivered them to neighbors with a note saying – If we can ease a worry or lend a hand – a cup of sugar or flour, some relief meds or tissue, cleaning products, yes, even TP, please don't hesitate to reach out. We'll get through this together.

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One Month After Japan's Tsunami

She stares out the classroom window,
her teacher's voice a whirring fan,
her village, a twisted jumble of wood and metal,
wrath of the sea. Beyond is the ocean,
where her best friend, Koshi, was swept away,
bobbing like a tiny apple. Still missing.
Did her voice call out?

Sorrow slices her heart, crawls into her throat,
swallows her words. Night after night,
restless sleep, dreams of falling leaves.
She looks at the world with frightened eyes,
wonders who will map her pain,
watches the April sky where cobalt blue
swells above the lapping sea.
Discourse with Crows

A murder of crows wrangle overhead
flocking to Modesto's tree lined streets,
hanging out like high school hoods. Nuisances.
The way some people view the homeless,
who also rise early, invading our neighborhoods
in dark hooded sweatshirts, identities obscured.
Ghosts wandering alleys, collecting treasures:
used clothing, food scraps, a few recyclables;
baby strollers overflowing with society's discards.
Others shuffle along toting great black bags
over stooped shoulders, shiny hunchbacked beetles,
passing the day in city parks, swapping stories,
smokes, and if lucky, cheap wine.

At dusk, they slip into shadowy recesses
far from bright lights -- deserted doorways,
hidden reaches of Kewin Park and camps
beneath the Tuolumne River bridge. The jumble
of crows also retreats, dwindling black threads,
iron filings on glass, zigzagging across twilight's
red apron, returning to roost in a walnut orchard
on the outskirts of town, retiring for the night:
heads bent, wings tucked in, pieces of plump fruit
ripening in the still of winter,
where nobody watches them grow, but me.



Newcomers

Cement gray clouds open,
an elevator door, flood the
junior high field in shafts
of amber light.

Mobs of gulls weave through
fabric of sky; hundreds more
congregate on the ground, worshipers
chatting after a Sunday sermon.

Heads bob up and down,
keeping time in slow jazz,
gray and white bodies illuminated,
wads of shiny newsprint.

Words peel off their crinkled bodies
and fall onto the grass,
the hushed whispers of bored teachers
at a Monday faculty meeting.

Later, they flock to a farmer's field,
where the salty night air tastes of sea
and freshly plowed earth curls row upon row
waves washing toward shore.

Biding Their Time

On a cold, steel blue January day
at Grey Lodge Refuge thousands
of northern pintails, shovelers, widgeons
and cinnamon teal mingle with snow,
Ross and speckled belly geese, their
reflections mirrored on flooded rice fields.
Skeins of ducks stitch the fabric of sky
while giant V's of calling geese,
as if they stole that letter of the alphabet,
prepare to land, hovering, feet extended forward,
wings back flapping.

Thirty yards from the viewing platform,
thirteen turkey vultures sit stoically
in the mast of a dead cottonwood tree,
silent like vacant houses, eyes the color
of asphalt, folded wings funeral umbrellas.
They stand biding their time,
"wise guys" in trench coats.

Before dusk, the great flocks of birds lift,
thread across the tapestry of sky to feed
beyond the refuge. The vultures also take wing,
sail to water's edge where they walk solemnly,
judges in dark robes,
handing out their verdict to those left behind.

Ravens in Sequoia National Park

They have gathered in a grove
in the Great Forest, walking on logs,
meandering the ground, pecking seeds,
raising beaks to swallow. Caws, chortles
and deep gulps erase the quiet – coins
dropped into a slot. They glide on wings,
oars on a boat, to a new location.

A lone raven stands on a snag, wearing
black armor, ruffled throat feathers;
sun illuminates his iridescent back,
glare off a rear car window. His throat
expands guffawing, head bending down,
his wings scissor wider, capturing more light,
retracting as his head pops up. Repeats six times.

The late afternoon sun, a dull red flower,
molten and misshapen, warms the giant redwoods,
straight backed sentinels listening to the beat
of the raven's wings soft as a mother's sigh,
reverberating deep in the great trees' bones.



POET: Tom Myers

Tom Myers is a retired teacher who grew up in Modesto in the 50's when it was still a small agricultural community. Much of his poetry is framed by a sense of place. He enjoys walking his dog, birding, hiking and the quiet of wild places. He currently is a board member of MoSt, Audubon and Modesto Neighbors, Inc.

Peace/Life Center Golden Anniversary Party for Peace, Oct. 10



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What a year 1970 was! Not only was the first Earth Day established, our local community gained an important resource for promoting peace in many ways: Your own Modesto Peace/Life Center.

To commemorate our 50th year, a committee began planning a golden anniversary and fundraising dinner event scheduled for the fall. Current and future Covid-19 concerns

may bring changes, but the exact nature of those changes will not be known until a future time.

For now, please save the date: **Saturday, October 10, 2020, 5:00 p.m.** Watch for updates in *Connections*, on the Center's social media pages, and in your email inbox.

Stay well. We look forward to celebrating with our community!

Jane Manley

Love in the Time of Coronavirus: continued from page 8

- Several of my clients and fellow consultants have reached out to me to discuss how we can support each other through the coming months of canceled gigs and financial hardship.
- Friends who run organizations and businesses are doing the right thing by enacting compassionate policies for their employees.
- Neighbors in Italy are singing from their windows to counter their isolation.

All of these examples prove that, even though we have to practice physical distance, we don't have to be socially distant. Social solidarity reminds us that we are not alone.

Could this be a turning point for you?

It was just another night out in San Francisco with my cousin Allister. I was 23 years old and starting my career in the corporate management program at Macy's. Allister mentioned that we were going to visit Billy before dinner. My heart raced. Billy was a model with thick brown hair, deep blue eyes, an arresting smile. I had a crush on Billy the moment I laid eyes on him seven years earlier.

When we arrived at his apartment, I expected Billy to answer the door as he always did, with his megawatt smile and perfect hair, surrounded by equally beautiful people, music blaring in the background. Instead, the place was quiet and dark. We walked down the hall to his bedroom and there was Billy, emaciated and covered with lesions. It had been days since anyone had visited.

I left that apartment resolved that I would no longer pursue a career at Macy's, and set my course on community service. Even though I never had the opportunity to tell Bill Richmond how he changed my life for good, I hope he knows that his passion for joy and beauty live on through me.

What do these times have to teach you? How might this pandemic inform your life's work? How you are leading your life? No matter how old or young you are, keep your eyes, ears, and heart open, and be ready to receive some deep lessons that can affect your life for good.

There is no fear in love; Perfect love casts out all fear.

This bible passage from 1 John 4:18 became one of my guiding lights during the pandemic. As a young gay man coming up in the AIDS years, I had so much to fear. I had to navigate relationships, media hysteria, concerned family and friends, and the prospect of surviving this epidemic and growing old alone. When Father John McNeill delivered

his sermon on this scripture, my perspective shifted, and I began to seek out moments of perfect love in the midst of the sadness, chaos, and fear. Singing hymns with my buddy Tom in his final days at Coming Home Hospice sustained me. Making brownie sundaes with my best friend Scott to keep his weight up sustained me. Leaving notes of appreciation on my colleagues' desks after another long day at work sustained me. Dancing with my partner Gerard sustained me.

We have so many ways to practice moments of perfect love. A simple wave or smile to a stranger can make a difference. Thanking folks at the grocery store, police folk, first responders, and health care providers who are working extra hard to provide for our needs makes a difference. We all have elders in our lives, whether they are our relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers and mentors. Reaching out to them regularly (via phone, social media, other communication platforms such as FaceTime, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, etc.) so they don't feel othered and isolated makes a difference.

In spite of the lack of support from the world at large during those early years of HIV/AIDS, our small community made it through by holding on to hope and conquering our fear with perfect acts of love.

I don't know how this pandemic will unfold. But I do know that the entire global community is in high alert. We have the power, choice, and potential to practice social solidarity, embrace turning points, and treat each other with moments of perfect love.

The scientists, researchers and health care providers will find the ways to vanquish this virus and heal our bodies. It is up to the rest of us to vanquish the pandemic of fear and hatred, and heal our souls.

Questions for Reflection and Consideration

Make a list of the elders in your life. What can you do today to let them know that they are loved, valued, and cared for?

Think about what you are reading and sharing on social media. How might you shift from an orientation of fear and othering to one of love and belonging?

What is one thing you want to learn or do at this time of retreat and reflection? Some things on my list—Compose a Hawaiian chant, Clean out that dreaded closet. Read two books. Cook. Write, write, write.

This article was originally published on *Medium*.

KEVIN FONG is a nationally recognized cultural translator, facilitator, trainer, and speaker in transformative justice leadership development and organizational design. He is founder and principal of Elemental Partners, and a former a board member at YES! Media.

Why Coronavirus is Humanity's Wake-Up Call

By DAVID KORTEN

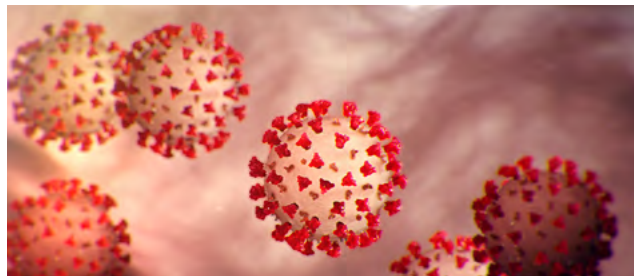
The rapid spread of novel coronavirus has prompted government, business, and civil society to take dramatic action—canceling events large and small, restricting travel, and shutting down major segments of the economy on which nearly all of us depend. It is a demonstration of our ability, when the imperative is clear, for deep and rapid global cooperation and change at a previously unimaginable speed and scale.

There is an obvious desire to protect ourselves and our loved ones. But we are also seeing something more as communities mobilize to address the crisis—a sense of mutual responsibility, born of a recognition that we are ultimately bound to a common fate. The speed of the resulting global shift is beyond any prior human experience.

At the same time, the crisis of the coronavirus pandemic focuses attention in the United States on the disastrous deficiencies of a profiteering health care system. Corporations are competing only to increase their take from health expenditures while minimizing the amount of money they spend on providing care. This system is reasonably proficient in providing boutique care for the very rich at exorbitant prices, but it is disastrously deficient in addressing the health care needs of ordinary people affordably. It is similarly deficient in anticipating, preparing for, and responding to public health emergencies such as the one we are in now.

I sense that as our eyes open to this reality, we are seeing a simultaneous awakening to the imperative to deal with a host of other system failures that imperil our common future. For example:

- An economic system that values nature only for its market price, ignores Earth's limits, and wantonly destroys the stability of its climate and the health and purity of its air, water, and soil. This directly imperils our survival and well-being.
- Military expenditures that consume more than half of all federal discretionary funding to prepare for conventional wars of the past and engage us in unwinnable conflicts born of environmental and social collapse. This represents wasted resources that would be better applied to addressing the underlying sources of current security threats.
- A financial system devoted to generating speculative profits for the richest without the burden of contributing to meaningful livelihoods and security for those who do useful work. Money must serve us, not enslave us.
- An education system that promotes maximizing personal financial returns as the highest moral obligation to society. Education should prepare us to transform a self-destructive system into one that will support our long-term future.



For far too long, we have ignored the failures of a system that reduces ever more people to homelessness, incarceration, refugee camps, permanent indebtedness, and servitude to institutions devoted to conflict and the generation of unearned financial returns. The challenges are monumental and are likely to be addressed only as we begin to understand that business as usual is simply not an option.

This is humanity's wake-up call. As we awaken to the truth of the profound failure of our existing institutions, we also awaken to the truth of our possibilities and interconnections with one another and with Earth. With that awakening comes a recognition that we must now learn to live lightly on the Earth, to war no more, and to dedicate ourselves to the well-being of all in an interdependent world.

We in the United States also face a special challenge. We have much that the world admires. But far from being a model for others to emulate, we represent an extreme example of what the world must now leave behind.

As a nation, we have for too long battled over simplistic political ideologies that limit our choices to granting ultimate power either to government or corporations, both of which are controlled by the richest among us. The coronavirus pandemic is a powerful reminder that effective government committed to the common good is essential to our well-being, and that there is no place in our common future for politicians committed to proving that government cannot work.

We need leaders committed to effective government of, by, and for the people. These leaders must simultaneously recognize that the collective well-being of all depends on institutions in all three sectors—government, business, and civil society—that are effective at, committed to, and accountable for serving the well-being of the communities that create them.

These are challenging and frightening times. As we respond to the coronavirus emergency and the immediate needs of the people and communities impacted by it, let us also keep in view the systemic needs and possibilities that crisis exposes. Despite the trauma all around us, let us embrace this moment as an opportunity to move forward to create a better world for all.

DAVID KORTEN is co-founder of YES! Media, president of the Living Economies Forum, a member of the Club of Rome, and the author of influential books, including “When Corporations Rule the World” and “Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth.” His work builds on lessons from the 21 years he and his wife, Fran, lived and worked in Africa, Asia, and Latin America on a quest to end global poverty.

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Earth Day Network Announces Shift to Global Digital Mobilizations for 50th Anniversary

Amid the recent coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic, Earth Day Network, the global organizer of Earth Day, will mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day with the first Digital Earth Day, a global digital mobilization on April 22 to address the most urgent threats to people and the planet.

“At Earth Day Network, the health and safety of volunteers and participants in Earth Day events is our top concern. Amid the recent outbreak, we encourage people to rise up but to do so safely and responsibly — in many cases, that means using our voices to drive action online rather than in person,” said Kathleen Rogers, President of Earth Day Network.

The pandemic will affect regions and countries differently... Earth Day Network urges everyone to assess their situation individually, take precautions and follow the recommendations and advice from the [World Health Organization](#) and the [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

“Whether it be coronavirus or our global climate crisis, we cannot shut down,” said Rogers. “Instead, we must shift our energies and efforts to new ways to mobilize the world to action.”

Earth Day's updated digital-first strategy will leverage the global power of some of the world's most innovative digital media platforms to mobilize millions in a collective call for transformative action for our planet. The coordination will deliver an Earth Day unlike any other in history as the movement marks its 50th anniversary.

The global conversation will be unified and tracked by the shared hashtags #EarthDay2020 and #EARTHRISE. Earth Day Network will provide live coverage of the global digital mobilizations from its social media accounts (@earthdaynetwork). Plans are underway to develop a major global event, coordinated across digital platforms to mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22. **A full scope of digital actions will be available at earthday.org.**

Whether online or in person, the goal of Earth Day remains unchanged: to unite hundreds of millions of people around the world to pressure world leaders to act on environmental degradation and climate change.

“Our current pandemic demonstrates that governments must embrace science early. As we see now, many governments were slow to respond or even indifferent about the science of the coronavirus pandemic,” said Rogers. “But the last few weeks have also demonstrated that our society, even at the international level, is capable of mass shifts across all sectors to meet a crisis head-on. We must apply the same scale and urgency of our response to climate change.”

“We hope you will stand with us as we fight for a safer, healthier and more just future for all,” added Rogers. “Together, we can build an Earth Day unlike any other — an Earth Day that defines us as a global community, united by our challenges yet unshrinking from the bold, urgent action needed to overcome them.”

How much do you know about Earth Day? Take Quizzes here: <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-quizzes/>



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Help keep our readers informed. We urge people participating in an event to write about it and send their story to Connections.

APRIL 2020

CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.

Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., Science Community Center, Rm. 115, MJC West Campus. Free; \$2 parking fee.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science). Free, engaging community science programs. Fridays, 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132.

1 WED: VIGIL: NO VIGIL THIS MONTH McHenry & J St., 4:00-5:00 pm.

26 SUN: Sundays at CBS presents California Zephyr. Back by popular demand, we bring back local favorite, California Zephyr. The band, featuring Modesto natives Alan Arnopole and Steve Ewert, is still rolling along, 40-plus years on. Their album "Snakes 'n Gators" has been praised as the "Rubber Soul" of Americana recordings. 1705 Sherwood Ave. Modesto. Purchase tickets at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4280413> or at the CBS Office, 209.571.6060.

LOOKING AHEAD

June 7: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. 8:00 am to Noon.

June 26-28: Peace Camp at Camp Peaceful Pines on the Sierra. For all. Leng Power will be a presenter. See article, this issue.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email modestovineyard@gmail.com; All Welcome.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

Food Addicts Anonymous in Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

MONDAYS

Suicide Loss Support Group: Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, nandrews6863@charter.net.

Monday Morning Funstrummers Beginner Ukulele Lessons. Modesto Senior Center. 10:45am to Noon. Free Scenic and Bodem.

Walk with Me, a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

Silver & Gold Support group for our senior LGBT communities' unique concerns and experiences. Come to a group that will understand and accept you where you are. For LGBT folks over 50 yrs. old. Every Monday at 3 pm to 4 pm at the various locations in Modesto. Information: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: stevencullen@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAYS

Teen Tuesdays every week from June-August, 2-5 pm., Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St. Peer Support, Games & movies. Safe space for teens to socialize, work together on projects, and learn about LGBTQ history. Each week will be a little different as we want YOU (youths) to guide the direction this group will go!" Info: Maggie Strong, Political Activist Director/ GSA Liaison, mstrong@mopride.org, 209-284-0999.

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am – 11 am

NAACP Meeting. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; email: naacp.branch1048@gmail.com

Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/247655549018387/>

Pagan Family Social, third Tuesdays, Golden Corral, 3737 McHenry Ave, Modesto, 6:00 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

Tuesday Evening Funstrummers Ukulele Jam. Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., Donation. 209-505-3216, www.Funstrummers.com.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

Adult Children Of Alcoholics, Every Tuesday, 7 pm at 1320 L St., (Christ Unity Baptist Church). Info: Jeff, 527-2469.

WEDNESDAYS

Ongoing meditation class based on Qi Gong Principals. Practice a 3 Step Guided Meditation Process I have been doing for over a decade. Fun and Easy. JOIN ME! Donations accepted but optional. Call 209.495.6608 or email Orlando Arreygue, CMT RYT, orlando@arreygue.com

Merced LGBT Community Center offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: merced-board@gaycentralvalley.org – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

Merced Full Spectrum meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.lgbtmerced.org/> Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

Modesto Folk Dancers All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 480-0387.

GLBT Questioning Teen Support Group (14-19 years old). 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, College Ave. Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 7 – 9 pm. Safe, friendly, confidential. This is a secular, non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

Transgender Support Group, 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email info@stanpride.org, or tgsupport@stanpride.org

Mindful Meditation: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Anne, 521-6977.

Compassionate Friends Groups, 2nd Wed., 252 Magnolia, Manteca.

THURSDAYS

CA10 Progressive Coalition Monthly Meeting, third Thursdays. Inclusive group of progressive activists to share resources, ideas, and information in order to support all the great organizing work happening in the Valley! Feel free to invite trusted allies. Meet-up and social hour: 5:30 pm-6:30

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

MEDIA: Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the "Voice of the Valley" also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING, FIRST Thursdays, 720 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750.

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace/Life Center. Meetings TBA.

PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO, 720 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

SATURDAY

12-Step/Buddhist Meeting starts with a 30-minute meditation and then open discussion. Held monthly every second Saturday, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto at the UUFSC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

Free Community Drum Circle every third Saturday, 3 pm, Deva Café, 1202 J. St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. <https://drum-love.com/>

Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. @Friends Coming of Age., 1203 Tully Rd., Ste. B., Modesto. Saturdays 8-9 am. FREE (donations accepted). Info: RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

Divine Feminine Gathering. Join us for a time of ritual, song and conversation as women come together to celebrate one another and the Divine among us and within us. 3rd Saturday of the month, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Stockton, CA. Contact Rev. Erin King, 209-815-0763, orkingenne@gmail.com

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabe Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of every month. Info: Kathy Haynes (209) 250-9961 or email kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

ONGOING

Great Valley Museum of Natural History: Classes for children. Museum exhibits and store open Tues. to Fri., 9 am to 4:30 pm. Info: 575-6196. Call for info about classes.

A.r.t.s. Educational Resource Center: All things recycled free arts materials for teachers, scout leaders, childcare, artists for their projects. Open M - F 8 to 4:30, 917 Oakdale Rd. Modesto, Media Center behind Ross Store. Volunteers needed. Info: 567-4516.

Central Valley Democratic Club. Monthly meetings: Modesto, Patterson, and Oakdale. For more information, call Neil Hudson, 847-0540.

Childrens Story Hours Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, WiggleWorms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Preschool StoryTime, Cuentos en espanol. Times vary. Info: http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtm

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. 630 Kearney Ave, Modesto. Mon-Sat., 9:00 AM - 6:00 pm. Closed Sunday. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org>

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month.

Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org
Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.