

## Civil Rights Attorney Maya Wiley to speak at 30th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration

By **JAMES COSTELLO**, The MLK Commemoration Committee

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Committee again invites you to our 30th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration on Saturday, February 10, 2024. Civil Rights attorney Maya Wiley will speak at Modesto Junior College’s Performing Arts & Media Center, 435 College Ave., Modesto at 7:00 p.m.

There will be inspirational music and the awarding of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award to retired Modesto High School teacher and founder of the annual Day of Respect, Sharon Froba.

Our keynote speaker, Maya Wiley, is the president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. A nationally respected civil rights attorney, Wiley has been a litigator at the ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the US Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York. She has created programs in philanthropy, non-profits, government, and higher education. She helped create a criminal justice program for a major foundation in South Africa.

Although Martin Luther King, Jr. died 56 years ago, his vision still uplifts and transforms countless people throughout the world. To keep that vision fresh and provocative locally, for the last twenty-nine years, a committee of community groups—the Modesto Peace/Life Center, the City of Modesto, Modesto Junior College, and California State University, Stanislaus have offered our community an inspiring Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration.

Over the years, we have brought a



stimulating array of powerful speakers to our community including actors Greg Alan Williams, Edward James Olmos, Danny Glover, and Mike Farrell; Dr. King’s daughter, the late Yolanda King; Congressman John Lewis; civil rights pioneers, Diane Nash, and Julian Bond; UN Ambassador and civil right activist Andrew Young; farm workers’ champion, Dolores Huerta to name a few.

Our event is free. However, we depend solely on monetary donations or services from our co-sponsors, individuals, caring groups, and businesses. Would you help us this year? Co-sponsors are highlighted in our printed program and in the PowerPoint presentation on Dr. King that is shown for an hour preceding the program amid the sounds of civil rights music.

To contribute, make your tax-deductible check payable to “Modesto Peace/Life Center-MLK” and send it to Jim Costello, 1849 Richard Way, Ceres, CA 95307-4504. The Peace/Life Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, tax EIN #94-2800825.

## Inside the Global Hospital: With Thanks

By **ERIC CAINE**, The Valley Citizen

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.”

— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Other than a major airport, there are few places more cosmopolitan than a Valley hospital. At every level of care, Valley hospitals represent a living reminder of America’s original motto, “E Pluribus Unum.”\*

I was reminded of our first national motto by the doctors and nurses whose competence, compassion, and good cheer brought me through a series of recent ailments that had rendered me helpless. Without them and the close circle of friends who provided necessities such as food when I couldn’t shop for myself, I doubt I’d be here. Those doctors and nurses represented cultures and ethnicities from all over the world.

An especially illuminating moment came when I learned one of my nurses was the child of parents who had left Tibet after the Chinese took over in 1959. Her story was typical of those that once provided the driving narrative of the American experiment with self-rule, a story that began with a flight from totalitarianism and continued when she found herself in the land of the free.

Freedom — especially freedom of speech and religion — has been a driving force in our nation’s identity. When coupled with American opportunity, freedom has been the irresistible beacon that beckons people

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### MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER ANNUAL MEETING

In Person and on Zoom  
 Saturday, March 2, 2024  
 829 13<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto

9:00 AM — Coffee, Conversation

9:30 AM — Business Meeting  
 Financial Report  
 Committee Reports  
 Nomination of Board Members

Discussion:  
 Action plans, ideas, and strategies  
 12:00 AM — Adjournment

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**IN MEMORIAM**  
**Sandy Clark Sample**  
April 17, 1939 - January 23, 2024

**California Audio Roots Project**

**AN OPPORTUNITY:** The California Audio Roots Project (CARP) is designed to involve community members in recording stories, poems, and songs about their lives and living in California. This season is focused on **social justice and community engagement**. Modesto Sound is looking for people to interview and will pay interviewees \$150. The interviews are playing on KCBP 95.5 FM and are archived on SoundCloud, Spotify, etc.

To participate, call 209-573-0533, or visit [www.modestosound.com](http://www.modestosound.com)

**SPEAK UP**

WITH THE  
**California Audio Roots Project**

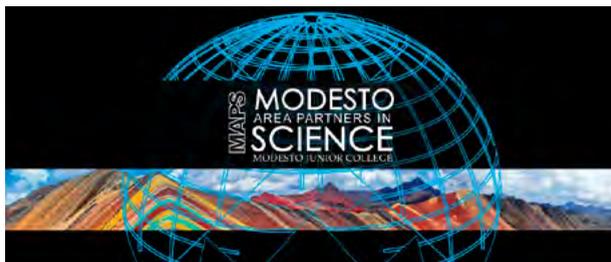
California Audio Roots Project (CARP) invites the 95354 area to share your poetry, stories & music about our community and social justice!

Sign up & find out more by calling (209)573-0533 or visit [ModestoSound.org](http://ModestoSound.org)  
Project Director: Janet Seay  
Producer: Lucky Lew

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**MAPS Spring 2024 Schedule**

The Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) lecture series fosters science education in our community for youths through adults. Once a month during the academic year, MAPS offers stimulating free science programming, bringing educators and local citizens into contact with scientists and mind-expanding ideas.

Presentations will be held LIVE in the MJC West Campus Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 p.m. unless noted otherwise.\*

**Fri., Feb. 23:** Dr. Benjamin Cottingham, <https://edpolicyinca.org/about/authors/benjamin-w-cottingham>. **The Impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) on Education.** His work focuses on the development of organizational conditions that support the continual improvement of student outcomes across California's education system.

MAPS receives funding and support from Modesto Junior College, MJC Foundation, Stanislaus County Office of Education, Modesto Teachers Association, Great Valley Museum. To make a fully tax-deductible donation in support of MAPS, please click [here](#) and select Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) under "My donation is for..."



**Modesto Science Colloquium Spring Semester 2024**

Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 pm, MJC West Campus, SCC 115. Free and Open to the Public. Check our website for updates, live, and recorded talks: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/colloquium.php>

Feb. 07: Jenny Macias, MSN Ed., RN, PHN; Professor of Nursing, MJC. **Become a Registered Nurse!** Career opportunities as a registered nurse will be discussed, including working as a RN in the Central Valley, and an overview of MJC ADN Program requirements. Current nursing students will be available for the Q&A portion of the program.

Feb. 21: Dr. Debi Bolter, Professor of Anthropology, MJC. **What's New with Homo naledi: Recent Discoveries at the Rising Star Cave in South Africa** Get up to date on the "graveyard" of these ancient hominins with Professor Bolter, who is part of the science team working to uncover the mysteries of these extinct relatives.



**People who get a 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine can now register in V-safe**

V-safe registration is now open to anyone who gets a 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine. Participants who enroll in V-safe within 6 weeks of vaccination will receive confidential health check-ins via text message or email to share how they feel after vaccination. V-safe helps the CDC let others know what to expect following vaccination and increases confidence in vaccination decisions.

People who get a 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine can now register in V-safe.

- 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine
- Anyone 6 months and older
- RSV vaccine for pregnant people (one approved vaccine):
- RSVpreF vaccine (ABRYSVO by Pfizer). ABRYSVO is the only RSV vaccine recommended during pregnancy.
- RSV vaccine for older adults, aged 60 and older (two approved vaccines):
- RSVPreF3 vaccine (AREXVY by GSK)
- RSVpreF vaccine (ABRYSVO by Pfizer)

Vaccine safety monitoring is a top priority at CDC. V-safe is one of several systems CDC uses to closely monitor the safety of vaccines in the United States. The information gathered through V-safe helps CDC communicate timely and transparent information about the safety of vaccines to public health officials, healthcare providers, and the public.

**MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER**  
Working for **peace, justice**  
and a **sustainable future**

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209-529-5750 / [stanislausconnections.org](http://stanislausconnections.org)

# A Chicana's Journey Through the Echoes of Civil Rights History

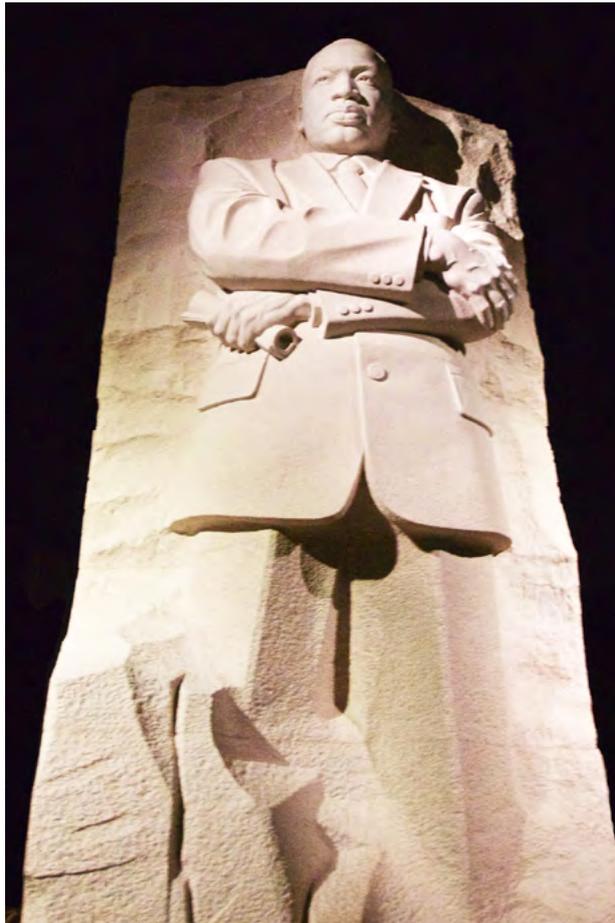
As a first-generation Mexican-American, my journey to the historic sites of Washington, D.C., and Memphis, Tennessee, was a profound exploration of America's complex civil rights legacy.

This pilgrimage was not just a visit; it was an emotional and reflective passage through the pivotal chapters of our nation's history, resonating deeply with my identity as a proud daughter of Mexican immigrants and an advocate for social justice.



In Washington, D.C., standing before the Lincoln Memorial, I was engulfed by a sense of awe and ambivalence. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, stands celebrated as the Great Emancipator, yet his legacy is not without its complexities. As I gazed upon his towering statue, I grappled with Lincoln's own racial biases—his words and actions were a reminder of the imperfections of our historical figures. As a proud American and a person of color, I felt the weight of this duality: appreciating the steps he took for our nation yet acknowledging the deep-rooted prejudices of his time.

Just a short walk away, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial stood as a stark contrast. Here, I was moved by the enduring spirit of Dr. King, a titan of the civil rights movement whose dream of equality and justice transcended racial boundaries. His powerful words etched into the monument were a testament to his unyielding commitment to civil rights—a dream that resonates with my own



aspirations for an inclusive society.

The journey then took me to Memphis, to the site of Dr. King's assassination—the Lorraine Motel, now the National Civil Rights Museum. This solemn ground, marked by tragedy, evoked a deep sense of sadness and

reflection. It was here that I was starkly reminded that the struggle for civil rights, signified by the 1968 Civil Rights and Fair Housing Acts, was just a moment in our ongoing journey toward equality. This realization was echoed in my experiences back in Stanislaus County, California, where I witnessed the persistent patterns of fear and discrimination that hinder economic prosperity for the working poor.

The resistance to change, the underinvestment in meaningful workforce training, and the reluctance to embrace diversity in my community reflect the broader challenges that still pervade our nation. Yet, standing at these historic sites, I found renewed inspiration and a deeper understanding of the continuous fight for civil rights. These monuments to Lincoln and Dr. King are not just relics of the past; they are beacons for the future, guiding us in our efforts to create a more equitable society.

My visits to Washington D.C. and Memphis were more than historical tours; they reaffirmed my commitment to equity and justice. They reminded me that the legacy of civil rights is a living, breathing movement requiring our relentless effort and vigilance. Inspired by the resilience and dreams of those who came before us, I am motivated to continue advocating for systemic change, to ensure that the voices of all marginalized communities are heard and valued.

This journey through the echoes of civil rights history, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to the site of MLK's assassination, has solidified my belief in the power of collective action. It reaffirms my resolve to be a beacon of change in my community, championing the cause for a society where every individual, irrespective of their background, has the opportunity to thrive.

**Siempre Adelanté,**

**Karlha Dannyce Arias**

## Brennan Center Introduces the Historians Council on the Constitution

Today the [Brennan Center for Justice](#) at NYU Law announced the formation of the [Historians Council on the Constitution](#), a group of historians who will work with Brennan Center attorneys to counter the U.S. Supreme Court's misuses and mischaracterizations of history to decide major constitutional issues.

“The Supreme Court is increasingly relying on what it calls ‘history’ to make key constitutional decisions. But the Court's sole reliance on the past distorts how we read the Constitution and govern our country. And too often, the history is simply wrong or misleading. We created the Historians Council to stem the tide that the Supreme Court has unleashed and to reverse it,” said Thomas Wolf, organizer of the Historians Council and deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center. “We'll correct the record when bad history emerges, but our bigger aim is to change the conversation about how history matters to the law.”

The [council](#) includes eighteen nationally renowned scholars in legal history and the Constitution, with expertise ranging from the Founding Era to the Civil Rights Era. The members

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represent many of the country's leading institutions and have won the Bancroft Prize, the Guggenheim Foundation

Fellowship, the MacArthur Fellowship, the Pulitzer Prize, and other high honors in their field.

The council will use amicus briefs, the media, public events, and scholarship to separate historical fact from fiction and push the legal world to adopt more responsible approaches to the historical record. Its members are:

- Holly Brewer, University of Maryland
- Tomiko Brown-Nagin, Harvard Law School
- Gregory Downs, University of California-Davis
- Laura Edwards, Princeton University
- Jonathan Gienapp, Stanford University

- Tera Hunter, Princeton University
- Alexander Keyssar, Harvard Kennedy School
- Jane Manners, Temple Univ. Beasley School of Law
- Dylan Penningroth, UC-Berkeley School of Law
- Farah Peterson, University of Chicago Law
- Jack Rakove, Stanford University
- Gautham Rao, American University
- Noah Rosenblum, New York University School of Law
- Rachel Shelden, Pennsylvania State University
- William Treanor, Georgetown University Law Center
- Jennifer Tucker, Wesleyan University
- Rosemarie Zagari, George Mason University

As one example of the council's work, three of its historians wrote an [amicus brief](#) that the Brennan Center filed on their behalf in *Relentless v. Department of Commerce*, which the Supreme Court is hearing today. The

continued on page 10

# Yokuts Group Sierra Club \$1000 Scholarship 2024

## Qualifications at the Time of Application:

- Shall be a resident of Stanislaus County.
- Shall have completed at least one semester of undergraduate work at a Stanislaus County College or University or be a Senior in a Stanislaus County High School.
- The applicant's overall college and university GPA shall be a minimum of 2.5. If the applicant is a high school senior, the high school GPA must be a minimum of 2.5.
- Shall attend an accredited Community/Junior College or University in the Fall of 2024.

## Application Letter Requirements:

- No form is required.
- Include the following information about the applicant in the application letter:
  - Full name and current home address, email address, and phone number.
  - If applying while a senior in high school, overall GPA.
  - For post-high school graduates, all colleges and universities attended, dates, degrees pursued, and completed.
  - For post-high school graduates, overall college and university GPA.
  - A statement that the applicant will attend an accredited Community/Junior College or University in the fall of 2024.
- The application letter shall include a 250-300 words essay about the applicant's classwork, related activities, and career pursuits related to the Sierra Club Mission Statement.

## Sierra Club Mission Statement:

*To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth;*

## Inside the global hospital from page 1

from all over the world, even from faraway Tibet, a land of Sherpas, Snow Leopards and towering mountains girdled with glaciers.

The American Dream has always been a fragile ideal, one that depends as much on the promise that hard work will be fairly rewarded as on our perilous journey toward justice for all. Hospitals, where doctors and nurses work only after earning their credentials through rigorous training, offer a proving ground for our enduring belief that success and achievement are not only for the privileged among us, they can also be had by those with the motivation and perseverance to find America's open doors of opportunity and work their ways through them.

The enduring lesson one learns after a stay in a local hospital is that competence and compassion are not the special attributes of any one nation, region, or culture. There are few examples more illuminating about the



*To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.*

- A college/university counselor or a high school counselor shall verify the information in the application letter by dating and signing at the bottom and with their printed name, title/position, and contact information.
- The applicant shall date and sign at the bottom of the application and with their printed name.

## Award Process:

- The Yokuts Group, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club must receive applications:
  - Via email by April 30, 2024, at [LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com](mailto:LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com)
  - Via U.S. Mail, postmarked by April 30, 2024, to P.O. Box 855, Modesto, CA 95353.
- A Yokuts Group Committee will review the applications and look for the strength of the applicant's classwork, related activities, and career pursuits related to the Sierra Club Mission Statement.
- The one winner ("Student") of the \$1000 scholarship will be notified by May 31, 2024.
- The other applicants will be notified by May 31, 2024, that they were not selected as the winner.
- By June 15, 2024, and before delivering the funds to the school, the Yokuts Group must receive an enrollment verification letter from the College or University stating

that the Student will attend the school in the Fall of 2024.

– The verification letter shall include the Student's student identification number, the school's address, and the Department/person receiving the funds (\$1000) to deposit for the benefit of the Student.

– If the verification letter is not received (postmarked to the P.O. Box above) by June 15, 2024, the Yokuts Group Committee will select another applicant for the scholarship.

- The Student is encouraged to attend the Yokuts Group 2024 Summer Picnic when the Yokuts Group publicly awards the scholarship. This picnic gathering is subject to any then-current Covid-19 restrictions.

For more information, contact Laura Stokes:  
(206) 371-4953 (Seattle Area Code),  
[LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com](mailto:LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com)

## New Artist at Kruse Lucas Art Gallery

The Kruse Lucas Art Gallery welcomes abstract and multimedia artist William Taylor, a new artist showing through February. The gallery is located at 525 Tully Road, Modesto, and is open Monday-Friday, 9-5, except holidays.



**Be informed!**

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

**MRB** MICHAEL R. BAUDLER

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

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human condition than a compassionate doctor or nurse, especially when one is helpless and afraid. Health care demands the best from us, and we find many of the best of us have dedicated their lives to it while helping others in the difficult environs of operating rooms, isolation wards, and intensive care units.

In America, those people, the ones on the hard proving grounds of health care, come from most every part of the world. They are the "many" out of whom our one nation has been constituted, united in pursuit of the ideals that animate our ongoing dreams for a world of peace and goodwill toward all.

Those of us who've been fortunate enough to find ourselves in the caring hands of global humanity during times of dire need can only give thanks. E Pluribus Unum.

\*Out of many, one.

# A Ukraine Delegation Visits Modesto

By **SERHIY SAMBORSKYI, PH.D.**

Modesto Sister Cities International (MSCI) organized a visit and hosted the six-member delegation from Ukraine from January 26 through February 3.

Prior to its arrival in Modesto, the group spent several days in Washington, D.C. meeting with the US Congress members, Veterans Affairs representatives, NGOs, and others.

This 10-day visit is a part of the Open World Program sponsored by the Congressional Office for International Leadership Senior Level Public Communications. The theme chosen for this group over a year ago was senior-level public communications. This particular delegation has experience in this area, but they were chosen specifically with a military focus. All are soldiers, ex-soldiers, government defense officials, or civilians working for veterans' rights.

The purpose of their visit to the United States is to expand and deepen the US-Ukraine cooperation and understanding in security, military, and veterans' affairs. The Ukraine delegation is scheduled to meet with officials from the City of Modesto, as well as visit Modesto Irrigation District, CSU, Stanislaus, California National Guard in Sacramento, and Stanford University.

Modesto became one of the first cities in the United States to be involved in these programs when Mayor Peggy Mensinger signed the Sister City Agreement with Khmelnytskyi back in 1987 when Ukraine was still under the authoritarian rule of the former USSR.

For security reasons because of the current war in Ukraine, I cannot provide their full names, but only a brief description of the delegates' duties:

Yurii, 40, is a battalion commander now but previously



was a strategic communications officer who worked to counter Russian propaganda.

Masi, 39, is a lawyer and founder of a human rights center focused on Ukrainian veterans. He was seriously injured and lost one eye fighting in the all-out war launched by Russia on February 24, 2022.

Maksym, 24, is a communications officer for an LGBTQ organization focused on the Ukrainian Armed Forces. He currently represents the rights of 400 service men and women.

Olena, 36, is head of a communications department for the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation in the Ministry of Veterans Affairs.

Volodymyr, 52, is a deputy head of the Foreign Policy Security and International Cooperation Service at the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine.

Yevheniia, 42, is a project manager at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

The first full day in Modesto ended with a wonderful potluck hosted by the most hospitable Deborah Steinberg



and Ross Redding, who prepared a most delicious Ukrainian borshch.

The visiting Ukrainians expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the dinner's hosts and the host families of Gary and Minh Beebout, Bob and Barbara Fromuth, John and Alison Peltier, Craig Stanley, and Solange and Steve Altman, organized by the MSCI John Mensinger, the Modesto-Laval Committee chair, and Richard Navarro, the Modesto-Khmelnytskyi Committee chair.

Richard Anderson, a retired MJC professor and a generous supporter of Ukraine's heroic effort to defend itself, is the newest member of the Khmelnytskyi committee. In this photo, he enjoys the company of his new friends, Yurii and Maksym.

Coincidentally, 6,000 miles away, a US Congressional delegation of senior advisors and experts visited Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, on January 26 and 27 to discuss security assistance for the civilian population during the unprovoked Russian aggression and regular Russian attacks on the civilian infrastructure.

Mutual visits like this are yet another proof that both American and Ukrainian people are determined to fight for freedom, democracy, justice, and world peace.



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## S.H.A.R.E.: Making A Difference

By **TOM PORTWOOD**

*Bleak, dark, and piercing cold, it was a night for the well-housed and fed to draw round the bright fire, and thank God they were at home; and for the homeless starving wretch to lay him down and die. Many hunger-worn outcasts close their eyes in our bare streets at such times, who, let their crimes have been what they may, can hardly open them in a more bitter world.*

— Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 1838

When Charles Dickens penned those powerful words almost two hundred years ago, he was already a successful author, but from his vantage point as someone who had experienced extreme poverty in his youth, he always had a keen eye and a wealth of empathy for the downtrodden people he encountered on the streets in London and other bustling, coal-begrimed cities of Industrial-age England. And one can easily apply Dicken's indicting passage to today's American cities and Main Streets, and - to our everlasting shame - we can also see Modesto hauntingly reflected in his words - the cold, rain-swept parks, and strip centers where our own un-housed neighbors seek shelter from the elements and the unforgiving perils of the night.

Now in its fifth year of operation, the Stanislaus Homeless Advocacy and Resource Enterprise (Or SHARE) was founded in 2019 by two community-minded individuals who saw the humanitarian crisis unfolding among so many of our neighbors and together decided to do something about it. From its inception, Co-Founder and CEO Steven K. Finch and Co-Founder and CFO Frank Ploof have been the driving forces behind the startup organization. With Lynelle Loeb Solomon joining the agency later, her inspiring outreach into the community has become a hallmark of the nonprofit's can-do approach to assisting individuals and families challenged by homelessness. At its core, SHARE "believes that all people deserve to have access to safe housing and/or safe shelters in order to have basic human needs satisfied in the community."

"We've done a bit of everything," CEO Steven K. Finch recently explained, "from giving people tickets home so they can go back to be with their family, to giving food to families that are temporarily sheltered. We've sheltered people temporarily in motels. We pay pet fees so that people can get into shelters, and pay people's shortfalls, so they don't lose their home - like electrical bills, gas, water. We pay partial payment on people's homes, so they don't lose their homes. A myriad of things. And that's important, because the system currently isn't set up for that - to assist people so they don't lose their homes.

"I've worked with a blind woman for a year, and it took nine months to get her off the street into housing," added SHARE CFO Frank Ploof. "I'm still working with her on a weekly basis because she needs ongoing support because of her disability. We can get people off the streets - but oftentimes, ongoing sustainability is hard to come by."

Altogether, SHARE was able to serve over 278 individuals



and families in 2023, a remarkable accomplishment for a tiny nonprofit agency with an all-volunteer staff - which tells you a lot about the level of compassion and depth of commitment that Mr. Finch and Mr. Ploof and Ms. Solomon and other SHARE volunteers feel about the work they do every day, whether the sun is shining or an atmospheric river is roaring across the Valley.

For both Mr. Ploof and Mr. Finch, the lessons in giving to help others arrived early in their lives. "My mother was a teacher, but she didn't teach very much because she came



down with Parkinson's," Mr. Ploof recalled. "By the time I was 12 or 13, she had been disabled by the disease. I had a younger brother who died of Leukemia when he was three. I was born into an environment where people needed a lot of help. So I learned about compassion and the importance of helping people early on." This was passed on to Mr. Ploof's daughter who works with the homeless in Tempe, Arizona.

"My dad was always community-involved," Mr. Finch recounted. "That was the way I was raised; my kids are raised that way - you give back, you do what you can. I met a young family one day going out to collect rent. They were living in the park, over by La Loma. A young man with three children. I saw them turning in to go into the park at evening time, so I picked them up and it just kind of started me. I started navigating the system with them and realizing how difficult it was - just trying to get them some sort of stability in their lives, and to help the young father get off drugs. It was just beyond difficult. I see how overwhelming it is for people. It literally is a full-time job. That's how I met everybody. Just a network of people - and

we have some superstars in that network, and we all know who they are. They are going to be here for the duration, so I figure I can support them."

Mr. Finch and Mr. Ploof are grateful for the strategic partnerships SHARE has been able to forge throughout the community including with St Vincent DePaul, CHAT, CAREs team, Turning Point, Salvation Army, and many others. "We really value each of these partnerships," Mr. Finch said, "and look forward to strengthening them in the future and building on new ones."

Since its founding, SHARE has largely existed on private donations and a few grants from charitable foundations, including a grant from the Stanislaus Community Foundation. But the type of specialized outreach and assistance that SHARE provides so well to our community is unconstrained funding that allows it to accomplish its flexible mission. Overall, expenditures for SHARE can average about \$60,000 a year.

"We virtually have no fixed costs - the costs are variable," Mr. Ploof pointed out. "And those are tied in with what's going on in the community, the time of year, the weather, availability of shelter space. So, there are a lot of variables, so it's difficult to predict. We attempt to put people in the shelter first, but the shelters have been basically full for all practical purposes. This is a humanitarian need. We don't want women and children sleeping on the streets or in cars if we can do something to help them for a night or two or three. It's as simple as that."

With another icy January taking its toll on those of our neighbors living out on the streets and by the rivers, we would do well to take a few minutes before watching the next pro football playoff game or Hallmark romcom and think back on the words Dickens wrote in 1838, and ask ourselves if we would feel comfortable to read what Mr. Dickens might say about Stanislaus County in 2024 were that somehow possible. Or, for that matter, John Steinbeck. I don't think either of them would spare our feelings after observing the way the unhoused fight to survive in our community.

We can't just leave it up to SHARE and a few other fine organizations. As Mr. Finch points out, "the system



is disjointed and very difficult to navigate." For far too many are living out on our streets; it's become a matter of life or death. That's why it's imperative for all of us to get involved - with SHARE - to link up with those who are

making a difference for those of our neighbors who are living at the very edge of existence. We can't just leave up to a few tireless souls. It's up to all of us.

SHARE, located at 1111 J St., Ste G101 Modesto, CA 95354, is a 501(c)(3) charity, so all donations are fully tax deductible. Contact SHARE at (209) 993-4984. Follow it on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/sharestanislaus>.

# Frank Ploof: Practicing Humanity among the Homeless

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Four people, two wheelchairs — back-to-back atmospheric rivers on the way — those were just some of Frank Ploof's concerns Saturday, January 20, as he piloted his 2001 Chevy truck through and around the potholes dotting the road that took him to people he sometimes refers to as the “deep homeless” — individuals and couples who'd been on the streets for years and most everyone had given up on. Overhead, dark clouds threatened rain.

Ploof was especially worried about Shonnia, a disabled woman he had last seen alongside the same bad road a day earlier. At that time, she was under a pile of blankets and belongings that hid her and her wheelchair so well he hadn't known she was there.

Ploof had been keeping track of Shonnia since 2017, when she was among several people with nowhere to go after the building she was living in was condemned by officials from the City of Modesto. He'd tracked her from a permitted campsite at the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES) to substandard apartments, to the streets and back again, often losing touch only to find her again. It's a common pattern among the deep homeless, especially since Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto have implemented their “accountability” program, which consists mainly of forcing them to move on from whatever places they might find to sleep or rest.

The sweeps and “move along” tactics make it even more difficult for volunteers like Ploof\* to track and help people whose ailments and illnesses need almost constant attention and monitoring. Averse to shelters and generally suspicious of officials, the deep homeless often have good reasons for preferring life on the streets.

Some have been shaken down and robbed while staying at shelters. Others resent the lectures and proselytizing. Still others become claustrophobic and restless after too long a stay in crowded, barracks-like facilities. They know that a stay at a shelter can easily last years, especially given our severe housing shortages.

Many have been through shelters and found that service providers are overburdened and the labyrinthine process for qualifying for assistance isn't only exhausting, it rarely results in action. They're mistrustful of authorities because they've found that promises of help too often result in bureaucratic impasse.

Generally dressed like a typical suburban senior on his way to the hardware store for a can of paint or sprinkler head, Frank Ploof's casual appearance offers a reassuring presence to homeless people who've given up on officials. He's a shorts and pullovers guy except when inclement weather forces him into a windbreaker and long pants. His encyclopedic knowledge of local systems of care includes the hard-earned wisdom that most lack the capacity to handle even a small fraction of homeless people's needs.

Because he stays in touch with dozens of them, the deep homeless know that Ploof is more friend than official; that's



why they're likely to call on him instead of authorities. It's also how Ploof learned that a friend was willing to take Shonnia and her partner in, at least during the winter months. Shonnia's friend asked Ploof if he could transport a bed and the couple's belongings to the residence, which was several miles from the industrial back road where Shonnia and Mike had been living under a tarp attached to a chain link fence.

Since he'd already been working with a man and woman camped nearby, Ploof readily agreed to help. He figured he could get the two other campers and their belongings to a local shelter even while helping Shonnia and Mike. He knew he had to act fast in both cases because people on the streets frequently change their minds about going in, often because it involves filling out lengthy forms, answering humiliating questions, and long delays.

As always, there were problems. The bed had to be transported across town; it was heavy and in bad condition. After collecting Shonnia's and Mike's belongings, Mike told Ploof that Shonnia could not be transported except by a vehicle with a chair lift; she was too disabled to get in and out of a truck or car. Mike assured Ploof he could push Shonnia to a bus stop, even though his own legs were so bad he too needed a wheelchair much of the time. He walked

only haltingly and with the use of a cane.

Ploof's schedule was getting crowded. He'd already been working with the two other campers to get their belongings moved, get them on the list for entry into a local shelter, and get them health care. One had cancer, the other serious health problems of his own.

“We need one of those giant medical tents they use during disasters,” said Ploof, reflecting on how many seriously ill and disabled people are among the homeless population. “A lot of the homeless problem is caused by breakdowns in our health care system.”

One such breakdown made local headlines a few days later when the owner of a Turlock nursing home announced it would be closing. According to the Modesto Bee.

Closure of the 145-bed Brandel Manor will eliminate 30% of the nursing home beds in Turlock, which threatens to create a dire shortage of those services in southern Stanislaus County.

While Ploof was dismayed by the news about the nursing home, he wasn't disheartened. After over a decade working with homeless people, Ploof had no illusions to lose about the lack of services for the ill and disabled. That was the major reason he had signed Shonnia and Mike up for a new enhanced healthcare program. He wanted to test whether the new program might actually help Shonnia where other options had failed.

“It's not enough to get someone inside or in the hospital,” said Ploof. “With many homeless people there's a need for further care. They won't be able to stay housed without monitoring and help and the hospitals just put them back on the street.”

Ploof's busy weekend extended from Saturday into Sunday as yet another disabled couple, Jeff and Lori, had also been told to move along. They'd been living in a small tent with two dogs and a cat, just across the road from

continued page 11

## Chanel Martins: Central Valley Poet, Lifelong Logophile

Chanel Martins is a lifelong logophile who resides in California's Central Valley. With an MA in English, she spends her time reading, writing, teaching, traveling, pondering the intricacies of the universe, and fueling up on good coffee and great eats. Her essays and poetry have been featured in Thirty West's *The Weekly Degree*, *The Modesto View* magazine, *In Our Hands: A Collection of Creative Nonfiction* (2010), and *Roach Print Anthology* (2017).

Most recently, she was a contest winner for the "Modesto Poet's Corner Contest" in 2023, as well as Burn and Rave's December 2023 haiku battle champion. *A Gathering of Voices* is very pleased to feature several of her fine poems in this issue of *Stanislaus Connections*.



### Medusa and Me

I am no demon, only the devil you made me in your head  
Flawed by my mortality, equally empowered by divine blood  
Protected by my sisters who know my soft soul  
I have no desire for destruction

But do not mistake the gentility of my womanhood for weakness  
I could end you with one stone-cold glance  
You are only here by nature of my neutrality  
I choose to let you live on

You implant yourself into my path, then call it my wrath  
You call me a monster, but make me your muse  
Curse me just because you can  
Make me the victim and the villain

You rewrite my history to become a hero; I become your trophy  
A symbol of power used by powerless men  
Weaponize my gift to forget your lack; take from me what you want  
In death, as in life, disregard me

In fact, discard me  
Simply sink me back into the sea  
Leave me to me  
Finally at peace and free

### My Father

My father is an immigrant  
Manipulatively rent from his fatherland  
Slow-sewn into the fabricated folds of artificial motherland  
Terra lingua outcast, casting nets of hope for a new home

Sometimes I imagine him as that little boy, aged 10  
Pulled into the foreign spotlight of American gaze  
Simultaneously pushed to the fringe of Otherness

Silent, scared, and willing to do whatever it took to survive  
He forged his teeth and claws in the jungle of inhumanity  
Blazed a trail of persistence in the face of all who thought he'd fail

But those wounds inflicted in a war against a world that wanted to hold him back  
Still bleed through the bandages of years and time  
Seep through, staining his internal meditations

I see his attempt to wipe them away  
He vigorously beats them back  
With tidal waves of aggressive assimilation into white capitalist patriarchy

It's at these times that I look into his eyes  
And just for a moment, in the glint of light  
We both pretend we can't see what might have been

## 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest

By LYNN M. HANSEN, Contest Chair: National League of American Pen Women & MoSt Poetry Center

Co-sponsored by MoSt (Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center) and the National League of American Penwomen (NLAPW), Modesto chapter.

This contest is offered to encourage young writers throughout Stanislaus County and to remember poet Aileen Jaffa, the founding President of the Poets of the San Joaquin and member of the Modesto Branch of the National League of American Pen Women.

**Eligibility and Deadline:** Any student enrolled in a Stanislaus County school, grades K through 12, is eligible to submit up to 3 entries, at \$1 per entry. Each entry, except for typing, must be the original creative work of the student, although parents or teachers may provide encouragement. Postmark deadline for submissions is **April 5, 2024**. Mail submissions to **MoSt Poetry, P.O. Box 578940, Modesto, CA 95357**. Find the entry form at <https://www.mostpoetry.org/contests/jaffa>. Information: [info@mostpoetry.org](mailto:info@mostpoetry.org)

**Categories:** Poems will be placed in categories according to the student's year in school.

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Grades K – 3 | 2. Grades 4 – 6   |
| 3. Grades 7 – 9 | 4. Grades 10 – 12 |

**Judging and Entry specifications:** Poems will be judged by adult poets who are knowledgeable about young people's work. Any poem that shows evidence of plagiarism will be disqualified. No simultaneous submissions. The poems you enter must not be submitted to other contests at the same time. Poems must not have been published nor winners in other poetry contests. Poems may be in any style, but no longer than 24 lines. Two copies of each poem must be submitted: one copy should contain the title and poem, but no identification of the author; the other copy should contain the student's name, a copy of the entry form, and the \$1 entry fee.

**Awards and Recognition:** First, second, and third-place winners in each category will receive cash awards from the **MoSt Poetry Center**. Prizes are: First Place \$25, Second Place \$15, Third Place \$10. In addition, the **Modesto Branch of the National League of American Pen Women** will award a \$60 *Aileen Jaffa Outstanding Poem* award in each of two combined categories, Categories 1 and 2, and Categories 3 and 4. The current president of the NLAPW Modesto chapter will present the awards, and the winning poems will be read at an **Awards Ceremony at 2 P.M. on Sunday, May 11, 2024, at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock.**

**StArt**  
Stanislaus Art Magazine  
the arts for kids and grown-ups

Preorder a copy of the next issue:  
**Elements**

Coming in April 2024

[lindaknollart.com/store](http://lindaknollart.com/store)

## The Definition of Shame

When you look up the definition, Google will tell you that shame is “a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior”

But what Google doesn't tell you, is the way shame hangs in the shadows of your daydreams, lurking, lingering, a paralysis demon for the waking brain, haunting your unconscious to incapacity.

Google doesn't tell you, that shame is the emptiness of shallow air in the lungs, the inability to take in a full breath during an unprovoked panic attack, leaving you choking on the memories your body refuses to exhale.

That shame really feels like bits of broken glass in your mouth as you reel for the relief of release, unable to swallow them away, afraid of the sting if you try to spit them out past years of tamped-down tongue and tightly-gritted teeth: a grimace becomes your permanence, where everyone else sees a smile.

Google doesn't tell you that shame tastes like the iron minerals in your blood as you hold those broken bits at the back of your throat, afraid to let them out, of course, but even more afraid of the long-term damage they do as you hold them away from the rest of the world for too long. Or even worse, when you finally let yourself relax and accidentally gulp down the shattered shards.

That shame is this invisible and silent haunting, gasping, choking on the fractured fragments of past that you try to power down through pressure, piercing tracheal cartilage, lacerating larynx, leaving you unable to ask for help, even if you wanted to. You didn't want to. You would rather drown in this gurgle of blood, because this is your own burden to bare, but only briefly, because surely now the shame will bleed you dry from the inside out.

## A Letter to the Sweater I Almost Bought

I remember when I first found you  
While scanning the aisles and skimming deals  
Unexpectedly, you caught my eye –  
The PERFECT fall sweater.

Oh, olive green sweater of Taylor Swift dreams,  
With horizontal stripes of cotton hugs:  
I shrug you on like a security blanket,  
Ready to claim you like stolen land.

But when you settle over my shoulders,  
I shrink from the static tingle beginning at my wrists.  
Adrenal rage races, numbing palm to fingertip at your fatal flaw:  
Sleeves that fit just right.

What do you mean by being the exact length you should be?  
What do you mean by looking tailor-made for me?  
How dare you drown me in your claustrophobic cling of perfect wrist placement?

Why won't you let me ball your extra length in my fists during moments of insecurity?  
Why can't I wrangle your dangling fabric into wads of distraction and dissociation?  
Why won't you cover my lack of confidence?  
Why won't you stretch to hide the tremble in my hands that matches the tremor in my voice?

You've let me down, sweater.  
I sulk, head sunk like a disappointed parent.

Do you wonder at your own worth now, sweater?  
Will the rejection of your perfection haunt you?  
Will this memory of sudden abandonment cause you to consistently question your value,  
The way I always do?

Don't worry, sweater.  
I'll rerack you amid the oversized others  
Where you can hide away this newly fraying thread  
Before it becomes our undoing.

## Vulnerability

What is that smell?  
These lines carry my perfume, an idealized aroma of authenticity  
Words wafting along the breeze of humankind  
Hoping to get hung up in the neural nostalgia of memory making  
Breathe me in; soak up the scent of what it means to be alive  
Hold me in your lungs for as long as you can  
Because when you exhale, the vapors fade with hot breath

Do you ever feel me when you midnight wake?  
The palpable pressure of my intent weighing on you like a down comforter on hot  
August nights  
Beads of sweat pool in the creases of the sheets you claw at blindly  
I only wrap tighter, attempt to force my softness over the hardest parts of your heart  
Eyes still closed, mid-dream, you kick me off, leave me wadded at your feet

Do you recognize this taste?  
Honeyed words drip like promises made for understanding  
Sugar sweet smiles turn bitter with cold reality  
My faith congeals  
I present this to you, a delicate dish of innermost me  
Fresh, raw, bleeding still  
I notice your nose upturned,  
Meaning unpleasant, meaning unappealing, meaning unpalatable  
I scrape my scraps into the trash, leave them rotting from the core

And can you hear me?  
I fling the noise of nothingness from jaw-wide silent screaming into the distance  
between us  
It evokes no meaning, no sound  
Only invites vulnerability into my mouth like the words you put there for me  
I feel you crack my teeth, seeking tangible value like treasure from a gold crown  
All you uncover is raw nerves  
Chipped portions of porcelain catch in my throat  
Stick like the phrases I can't ever seem to get out on time

Do you see me yet?  
Here I am, open, a Vitruvian woman,  
Vivisected, mind to heart, by the strangeness of your gaze  
Unfamiliar fingers pick through blood and bone  
Drag organs out, entrails trailing like last hopes for human connection  
Scratch at the marrow, search for meaning making  
Evaluate me in your journals like a scientific study  
I bleed out on the operating table, waiting for you to look deeper



# Great Programs on KCBP 95.5 fm, The Voice of the Valley

Streaming on [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

**Confetti Park** - Music, stories New Orleans style, Saturdays at 8:00 am; & Sunday's 12:30 pm.

**The Children's Hour** - Sundays 3:00 pm.

## SCIENCE

**Radio Ecoshock** – the latest scientific information on Climate Change – Saturdays, 9:00 am.

**Explorations** – Science explained with Dr. Michio Kaku - 9:00 am Sundays.

**Big Picture Science** - 1:00 pm Sundays.

**Planetary Radio** – 2:30 pm Sundays.

**Got Science** – 4:00 pm Sundays

## PROGRAMS

**Ukraine 2.4.2** - a collaboration between Anne Levine, WOMR, the Pacifica Network, and Kraina FM, a 26-city radio network in Ukraine that arranges weekly cutting-edge and exclusive interviews with key people in Ukraine – Thursdays, 10:00 am.

**Beethoven to Bernstein** - Classical music ranging from Beethoven to Bernstein. Big hits from well-renown composers - Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Ravel, Copland - and many more, mostly in the form of orchestral, chamber, and piano music - Saturdays, 10:00 pm.

**The Not Old – Better Show** - fascinating, high-energy program of big-name guests, inspiring role models, interesting topics, with entertaining host and former Modestan, Paul Vogelzang – Fridays, 2:00 pm, Saturdays, 12:30 pm.

**Down on the Farm** - topics important for our San Joaquin agriculture with Madera organic farmer Tom Willey - Saturdays, 6 am

**Sounds Irish** Music from County Wicklow - Saturdays, 7:00 pm.



*Various musical programs during the noon hour: Oldies, Old Piano, and International.*

**Dead Air** - Hear the Grateful Dead with Cory Daniels. Fridays, 6 pm; Saturdays, 3 pm.

**Attitude with Arne Arnesen** – 3:00 pm. Political and social issues.

**Sojourner Truth** - 4:00 pm – Tuesdays. Interviews and panels focus on issues that affect people of color.

**Democracy Now!** - 7:00 am, Monday thru Friday. Reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez.

**Flashpoint Magazine** - 10:00 pm, Monday thru Friday. Politics, social issues, from KQED's Dennis Bernstein.

**Alternative Radio** – 4:00 pm, Mondays. Interviews with prominent political and social people.

**Julian Taylor's Jukebox** – 4:00 pm, Thursdays and Fridays. Eclectic, contemporary music.

**Nuestra Música** – 4:00 pm, Tuesdays. Eclectic, Latin-flavored music with a beat!

## LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

**Triumphant Tuesdays** – Noon, Tuesdays. Inspirational thoughts & music with Catrice.

**Sports Talk Modesto** - Join Jay Freeda and Jimmie Menezes. Snappy banter to catch up on everything happening in the sports world. – Thursdays, 5 pm.

**Vib'n with the West Modesto Collaborative** - Jasmine Corena and Likhi Rivas. Engage, Educate, and Advocate on behalf of the West Modesto Community. Showcases Voices of the West Modesto Community – Wednesdays, 7 pm.

**AREA 5150 UFO RADIO** – Spooky music & sounds out of this world, Friday night, 11:00 pm.

**Cyber Stallion: Bucks Stallion's Radio Transmission Emporium** – Cyber Acoustic Music - Saturdays, 12:00 am, Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.

**I-On-Modesto** - John Griffin interviews local people who reveal their inspiring stories. Mondays & Fridays, 10 am and Wednesdays at 9 pm.

**Arts of the San Joaquin Valley** with Linda Scheller and Laura Stokes - Mondays, 8:00 pm; Tuesdays, 9:00 am & Wednesdays, 8:00 pm. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp> and on Spotify

**Women of the Valley** with Linda Scheller and Laura Stokes - 8:00 pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00 am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

**Modesto Sound** - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) – Tuesdays 5:30 pm, Wednesdays 11:30 am, & Sundays 11:00 am & 4:30 pm.

**Sunday Cruisin'** with your host, DeeJay Rig! Oldies hits from 1959 to 1999 – Sundays, 5:00 p.m.

**Faithful Fridays** – inspirational music and thoughts with Catrice – Fridays, 7:00 p.m.

**Why Not Nice?** - Showcases unique music from unique cultures and thinkers worldwide, focusing on world/

academic/jazz and roots music – Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

**Mars Radio – Hip-Hop Show** - Music, interviews from local & regional artists - Fridays, 8:00 pm. A new, second show plays on Saturday nights at 8:00 pm, with a third at 8:00 pm Sundays.

**Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA)** with Middagh Goodwin – Mondays 5:00 pm; Fridays 9:00 pm & Saturdays 6:00 pm.

**Freak Radio** with Christian E. Boyett, 6 pm Thursdays. Replays Saturdays, 9 pm & Tuesdays 11 pm.

**This is SKA** with Middagh Goodwin - Tuesdays, 9 pm; Fridays, 11 pm; Sundays, 5 am to 7 am.

**I'll Take You There** - A musical journey with Modesto's El Comandante - Saturday, 5:00 pm; Sundays, 9:00 pm.

**Penny Bloods** – Fun, Victorian melodrama radio plays, often performed by local actors, written by Arnold Anthony Schmidt, CSU, Stanislaus. As scheduled.

PSAs in English and Spanish produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

LISTEN TO OUR MUSIC PLAYLISTS AT SPINITRON <https://spinitron.com/KCBP/calendar>

Find a complete programming schedule on our website, [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

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Stanislaus Arts Council  
Sandy & Randy Clark Present

**Moody Moments in Music:  
The Possibilities for String Quartet  
by Synergy**

February 17, 2024. 7 p.m.  
Mistlin Gallery

Special Guest:  
Nicole Slater, Artist

**Synergy**  
QUARTET

Members:  
Kathy Mikki  
Kath Lawrence  
Paul Kim  
Eric Sheaffer

\$50 (VIP)  
\$40 (General Admission)  
\$20 (Student)

All tickets include refreshments and dessert  
Opens 6:30 pm  
Concert at 7:30 pm

Tickets at Mistlin Gallery  
and online @ [stanislausarts.org](http://stanislausarts.org)

Mistlin Gallery  
1015 J St, Modesto

STANISLAUS  
ARTS COUNCIL

## Humanity among the Homeless from page 7



Shonnia and Mike. They had belongings they couldn't carry or move; both also used wheelchairs; they could walk only short distances. After they asked for help, Ploof loaded his truck and hauled their things to a temporary storage location. With nowhere else to go, Jeff and Lori remained in their tent alongside the road, hoping authorities would forget about them. By this time, Ploof's original mission to help two homeless campers get into a shelter had become a service for six.

By Monday, Ploof assumed Shonnia and Mike had gotten inside and out of the rain. He was stunned to learn someone had seen Mike along the same road he had supposedly left two days earlier. Mike had been standing next to Shonnia's wheelchair; it was once again piled with tarps, blankets and assorted belongings.

Already busy transporting the two other campers and their belongings to the local shelter and helping them get



on the waiting list for entry, Ploof now had to contend with Shonnia's ongoing plight. Mike had told people that help was on the way, and Ploof hoped it was true. Tuesday, Ploof learned Mike and Shonnia were still in the same place.

"I went out and found them and that was enough. They had been out there during a heavy rainstorm and no one had come along, so I called an ambulance. The paramedics told me they had taken Shonnia in earlier in the month, so it'll probably be another case of 'treat and street,' but at least she'll get a few days in the hospital for evaluation."

Two days later, Ploof checked on Shonnia. She was still in the hospital. Always hopeful but rarely optimistic, Ploof was ready to pursue Enhanced Care Management, a new state program.

"Maybe it'll work," he said.

He'd convinced Shonnia and Mike to fill out the required forms, and he was ready to take whatever other measures might get his friends to a better place. In over a decade of practicing humanity among the homeless, Ploof had learned his best allies in his service to the forsaken and forlorn were patience and persistence. If and when there was an open door of any kind, he would be ready to push his homeless friends through it, even if he had to build it himself. Broken systems of care and bureaucratic thickets hadn't defeated him yet. And, at least for the time being, Shonnia had a place to go when released from the hospital.

Frank Ploof decided his next Saturday would be a day off. He figured he had earned one.

\*Frank Ploof is a co-founder and volunteer for [Stanislaus Homeless and Advocacy Resource Enterprise \(SHARE\)](#), a Modesto non-profit that provides material assistance for homeless people.

## Brennan Center Introduces from page 3

historians challenged the notion that the Court should be relying on history at all to decide the important questions before it and explained the true history of the relationship between federal agencies and federal courts.

The council will tackle various constitutional issues that the Supreme Court is facing or will face soon, such as whether a president has immunity from criminal prosecution, whether the country may use race-conscious remedies for longstanding racial discrimination, and what powers the people have to ensure their right to vote.

Reactions from members of the council:

"Arguably more than ever, the United States Supreme Court is turning to history to interpret the Constitution's meaning and resolve major controversies arising under it. Yet the Court often does violence to the very past it appeals to for authority. More than ever, we need to hear from those who know how to accurately recover the legal past on its own terms." — **Jonathan Gienapp**, Associate Professor of History, Stanford University

"As courts increasingly rely on accounts of the past to justify their decisions, the scholarship of professional historians has become important in new ways. Yet it often seems historians and the courts are operating in completely different realms. Enter the Brennan Center's Historians Council. I'm honored to be part of a group that will spread the word about what historians do and build bridges between historians and the legal profession." — **Kate Masur**, Professor of History, Northwestern University

"Now, more than ever, the Supreme Court is turning to history to try to figure out some of the most important questions facing our country. What are our rights? What should the role of government be? As historians, our goal is to use our training and expertise to cut through the loudest partisan and ideological voices in the public square to present the relevant history of the founding era and beyond." — **Gautham Rao**, Associate Professor of History, American University

"At this fraught moment in our national history, Americans need informed knowledge of how and why different clauses of the Constitution made their way into the text. It is not enough to play language games with the spare wording of the Constitution. We also need to know why the framers of the original document and its crucial amendments acted as they did. Historians now have both an opportunity and indeed a civic responsibility to elevate our public debate, to identify when the decisions of public institutions — notably including the rulings of the Supreme Court — rest on problematic or flawed interpretations of the historical past that should unite us. That is the true mission of the new Historians' Council on the Constitution, which I am delighted to join." — **Jack Rakove**, Professor of History and Political Science, Emeritus, Stanford University

More information about the council and its members is [here](#).

# calendar

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

## february 2024

The **Kruse Lucas Art Gallery** is located at 525 Tully Rd., Modesto and is open Monday-Friday, 9 am -5 pm, except holidays. 209-529-9111.

**Modesto Science Colloquium** Spring Semester 2024. Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 pm, MJC West Campus, SCC 115. Free and Open to the Public. Check our website for updates, live, and recorded talks: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/colloquium.php>

**Feb. 07: Jenny Macias**, MSN Ed., RN, PHN; Professor of Nursing, MJC. Become a Registered Nurse! Career opportunities as a registered nurse will be discussed, including working as a RN in the Central Valley, and an overview of MJC ADN Program requirements. Current nursing students will be available for the Q&A portion of the program. **Feb. 21: Dr. Debi Bolter**, Professor of Anthropology, MJC. What's New with Homo naledi: Recent Discoveries at the Rising Star Cave in South Africa Get up to date on the "graveyard" of these ancient hominins with Professor Bolter, who is part of the science team working to uncover the mysteries of these extinct relatives.

**MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science)**: Free MJC science programs on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 pm. unless noted otherwise. \* SPRING 2024. Fri., Feb. 23: Dr. Benjamin Cottingham, <https://edpolicyinca.org/about/authors/benjamin-w-cottingham>. *The Impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) on Education*. His work focuses on the development of organizational conditions that support the continual improvement of student outcomes across California's education system.

**The Prospect Theatre**: 23/24 season has continuing offerings: Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/>

**1 THURS: Peace/Life Center ZOOM** Monthly Board Meeting, 6:30 pm. Email [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org) for login.

**3 SAT: The MoSt Poetry Festival**, "Writing the Way Through Wild Spaces," at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock, 10 am to 2 pm.

**4 SUN: Peace Vigil**. College Avenue UCC, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. Hosted by Multifaith Leaders in Community. 2 pm. Info: 209-495-4377.

**6 TUES: VIGIL: PEACE-ISRAEL-GAZA** at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five Points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 209-529-5750 or email [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org) NOTE DAY CHANGE.

**10 SAT: 30th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration** with Maya Wiley, 7 pm, MJC Auditorium. See article this issue.

**17 SAT: Moody Moments in Music with Synergy Chamber Players** at Mistlin Gallery, 7:00 p.m. Live painting by Nicole Slater. Tickets at [stanislausarts.org](http://stanislausarts.org)

**18 SUN: The State Theatre** and Modesto Film Society presents Godzilla at 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/godzilla-022024/>

### LOOKING AHEAD

**Saturday, March 2; Modesto Peace/Life Center Annual Meeting**, 9 am.

**March 23: Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Team**, National Champions. Benefit for KCBP 95.5 FM Community Radio, 1 pm, Modesto Junior College Gym.

### REGULAR MEETINGS

#### SUNDAYS

**D&D Champions Group**, Noon. Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto.

**Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship**, 10:00 am at the

MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email [modestovineyard@gmail.com](mailto: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. All are welcome. For more information, please email [charlie@imcv.org](mailto:charlie@imcv.org). Our mailing address is IMCV, P.O. Box 579564, Modesto, CA 95357.

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** of Stanislaus County meets in person and on Zoom every Sunday at 10:30 am at 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Info: 209-788-3720; [www.stanuu.org](http://www.stanuu.org)

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

**Unity of Modesto** meets in person every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. at 2467 Veneman, Modesto. Information: 209-578-5433

#### MONDAYS

**Queer Cuts**, last Monday of the month, 10 a.m., Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto, 209-408-8848.

**The Compassionate Friends**, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter meets on the second Mondays at 7:00 pm at 2201 Morill Rd., Riverbank. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in this support group for families whose children have died at any age, from any cause. Call 209-622-6786 or email for details: [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com); <https://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org/>

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

**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. Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email [WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com](mailto:WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com) or call 209.577.1604.

#### TUESDAYS

**Women's Support Group for Women** in all stages of life. Join us in a safe and judgment-free environment where you can give and receive support for the many issues that we struggle with as Womxn. Every Tuesday from 1 pm-2 pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto (Ages +18). Contact Sandra Vidor- 209.652.3961 or Kellie Johnson 209.918.0271.

**Climate Action Justice Network-Stanislaus** meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Link-<https://tinyurl.com/CJAN-FirstTuesday>

**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](mailto: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; For ZOOM link, visit <https://www.naacpmoestostanislaus.org/> email: [naacp.branch1048@gmail.com](mailto: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/24765549018387/>

**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.,

## 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, 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom. Email Jim Costello for login information, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

**PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO**, 829 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

Donation. 209-505-3216, [www.Funstrummers.com](http://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](mailto:info@imcv.org)

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

#### WEDNESDAYS

**Retired Public Employees Association**. All seniors welcome! Meetings every third Wednesday. Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave. 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Call (209) 324-2060. Pay \$8.00 and order from the menu.

**The Almond Blossom Sangha**. Wednesdays, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, Zoom, and sometimes hybrid, for meditation and Dharma discussions. Call Anne at 209-404-4835 for more information.

**The GAP**. A place of support for Christian parents of LGBTQ+ or questioning kids every Wednesday 6:30pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church 1528 Oakdale Rd. Instagram: [Thegapmodesto](https://www.instagram.com/Thegapmodesto)

**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](mailto: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: [mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org](mailto:mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org) - 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. [www.mercedlgbtcenter.org](http://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/>

**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](mailto:info@stanpride.org), or [tgssupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgssupport@stanpride.org)

#### THURSDAYS

**LGBTQ+ Senior** (age +55) Coffee Club Every Thursday @ 1 pm. Weekly social group to provide connectedness and community inclusion for LGBTQ+ Senior Citizens. Refreshments, snacks provided. Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

**Laughter Yoga**, Every other Thursday at The Bird's Nest, 422 15th St., Modesto. The dates are February & March 7th & 21st, April 4th & 18th, May 2nd & 16th. 5:30pm-6:30pm. \$15.00 per class. To register, call or text Nicole, 209-765-8006 or visit [www.nicoleottman.com](http://www.nicoleottman.com)

**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

**IMCV Grupo de Meditación** en Español, cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172.

**Green Team** educational meetings the 3rd

Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. [www.StanislausGreenTeam.com](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)

**3rd Thursday Art Walk**, Downtown Modesto, art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 529-3369, [www.modestoartwalk.com](http://www.modestoartwalk.com)

**Valley Heartland Zen Group**: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

**Pagan Community Meeting**, 1st Thursday, Cafe Amore, 3025 McHenry Ave, Suite S., Modesto, 8 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

#### FRIDAYS

**Trans Support Group**, 1 pm, Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

**International Folk Dancing with Village Dancers**, Friday 7:30-9:30 pm (Sept thru May) Carnegie Art Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock \$7. No experience or partner needed. 209-480-0387 for info.

**Overcoming Depression**: small group for men & women. Every Friday, 7:15 pm. Cornerstone Community Church, 17900 Comconex Rd, Manteca, CA 95366, (209) 825-1220.

**Funstrummers**: A Fun-loving Ukulele group gets together live to practice and play. Play along with us or work up to playing out in gigs. Friday mornings, 10am to Noon at the Telle Classrooms, Trinity Presbyterian, 1600 Carver Rd., Modesto.

**Latino Emergency Council (LEC)** 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Lynnette Lucaccini, (209) 338-5700. [lluc@elconcilio.org](mailto:lluc@elconcilio.org)

**Sierra Club**: Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 300-4253. Visit [sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts](http://sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts) for info on hikes and events.

#### SATURDAY

First and Third Saturdays - **Gay Men's Group**, 1 pm. Positive Support Group for folks living with HIV, 12 pm. All at Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

**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, 11 am to 12:00 pm, Gallo Center for the Arts, 10th & I St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. [drum-love.com](http://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](mailto:RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com)

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

Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to [Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org) Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.

JOIN US FOR A

# PEACE VIGIL

Together, we'll make a  
collective call for a ceasefire,  
advocating for peace in Israel  
and Palestine

Hosted by Multifaith Leaders  
in Community

**FEBRUARY 4, 2024**

**2:00 PM**

**COLLEGE AVE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1341 COLLEGE AVE. MODESTO, CA**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
LATRICIA@FAITHINTHEVALLEY.ORG OR CALL  
(209)495-4377

# CRAB & TRI TIP DINNER



**HOSTED BY  
GRACE DAVIS  
ATHLETIC BOOSTERS**

**MUSIC  
RAFFLES  
AUCTION  
NO HOST BAR**

**DINNER INCLUDES:**

**CRAB, TRI TIP, PASTA, SALAD, DINNER ROLL**

**TICKETS: \$75**

**GROUP ROUND TABLES \$800**

FOR TICKETS CONTACT:

Samantha: (209) 613-1780

Veronica: (626) 354-8376



**MUST BE 21 YEARS OF AGE -  
NO OUTSIDE ALCOHOL PLEASE**

**SATURDAY  
MARCH 2, 2024**

**BAR/DOORS OPENS AT 5:00P.M  
DINNER SERVED AT 7:00 P.M**

**ST. JOSEPHS  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

1813 Oakdale Rd,  
Modesto, CA 95355

CESAR CHAVEZ COMMUNITY  
CELEBRATION COMMITTEE PRESENTS

CORPORATE  
SPONSOR

WEST 111  
MODESTO  
*Community Celebration*

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## EMPOWERMENT LUNCHEON

**ANTOINETTE** CHAMBERS  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
MODESTO CITY SCHOOLS

**MICHAEL** BALDWIN  
CEO  
LIBERTY ALLIANCE

**ERNEST** RICHARDSON  
RETIREE  
CITY OF MODESTO

**SYNTHIA** LOFTON  
PRESIDENT  
WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

FRIDAY  
FEBRUARY  
9TH

11:30AM  
TO 1:30PM

\$30  
PER PERSON

\$25  
SENIORS  
VETERANS  
STUDENTS

**RSVP**  
MAGGIE MEJIA  
(209) 303-2664

**KING  
KENNEDY  
CENTER**

601 MARTIN  
LUTHER  
KING DRIVE  
MODESTO





*Invitation to Meet the  
Open World Delegation from Ukraine*

*Sponsored by*

*Modesto Sister Cities International &  
The Congressional Office of  
International Leadership*



On Thursday 1st February 2024  
At 1015 J Street (Mistlin Gallery)  
5:00 - 7:00 PM

RSVP email: [modesto.MSCI@gmail.com](mailto:modesto.MSCI@gmail.com)



BETH SHALOM MODESTO, THE CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE, PRESENTS

# L'CHAIM

AN OCCASIONALLY JEWISH CONCERT SERIES

23RD ANNUAL

Grace Lieberman, David Bradford,  
Aggie Anker Memorial

VALENTINE'S CONCERT

**FEATURING GOLDEN BOUGH**

*with love songs from around the world*

**FEBRUARY 4, 2024 • 3PM**

*limited tickets available and must be purchased by January 31, 2024*

TICKETS: \$35  
(\$30 FOR STUDENTS AND  
SENIORS)

TABLE OF 8: \$250

DOORS OPEN AT 2:30 PM

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM  
1705 SHERWOOD AVENUE  
MODESTO, CA



*In addition to beautiful music, attendees will enjoy a "High Tea"! Which will consist of: Tea Sandwiches, Scones, Baked Sweets and Chocolates. Hot tea, Sparkling Wines and Cider will also be served.*

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT [HTTPS://CBSVALENTINES.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://CBSVALENTINES.EVENTBRITE.COM)

MORE INFORMATION AT [CBSMODESTO.ORG/CONCERT-SERIES](https://CBSMODESTO.ORG/CONCERT-SERIES)