



# stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

A MODESTO  
PEACE/LIFE  
CENTER  
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## The Hill We Climb

[Written and read at the Inauguration of President Joseph Biden on January 20, 2021 by its author Amanda Gorman]

When day comes we ask ourselves,  
where can we find light in this  
never-ending shade?  
The loss we carry,  
a sea we must wade  
We've braved the belly of the beast  
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace  
And the norms and notions  
of what just is  
Isn't always just-ice  
And yet the dawn is ours  
before we knew it

Somehow we do it  
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed  
a nation that isn't broken  
but simply unfinished  
We the successors of a country and a time  
Where a skinny Black girl  
descended from slaves and raised by a  
single mother  
can dream of becoming president  
only to find herself reciting for one  
And yes we are far from polished  
far from pristine  
but that doesn't mean we are  
striving to form a union that is perfect  
We are striving to forge a union with  
purpose  
To compose a country committed to all  
cultures, colors, characters and  
conditions of man  
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands  
between us  
but what stands before us  
We close the divide because we know, to  
put our future first,  
we must first put our differences aside  
We lay down our arms  
so we can reach out our arms  
to one another  
We seek harm to none and harmony for all  
Let the globe, if nothing else,  
say this is true:  
That even as we grieved, we grew  
That even as we hurt, we hoped  
That even as we tired, we tried  
That we'll forever be tied together,  
victorious  
Not because we will never again know  
defeat  
but because we will never again sow  
division  
Scripture tells us to envision  
that everyone shall sit under their own vine

and fig tree  
And no one shall make them afraid  
If we're to live up to our own time  
Then victory won't lie in the blade  
But in all the bridges we've made  
That is the promised glade  
The hill we climb  
If only we dare  
It's because being American is more than a  
pride we inherit,  
it's the past we step into  
and how we repair it  
We've seen a force that would shatter  
our nation  
rather than share it  
Would destroy our country if it meant  
delaying democracy  
And this effort very nearly succeeded  
But while democracy can be periodically  
delayed  
it can never be permanently defeated  
In this truth  
in this faith we trust  
For while we have our eyes on the future  
history has its eyes on us  
This is the era of just redemption  
We feared at its inception  
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs  
of such a terrifying hour  
but within it we found the power  
to author a new chapter  
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves  
So while once we asked,  
how could we possibly prevail over  
catastrophe?  
Now we assert  
How could catastrophe possibly prevail  
over us?  
We will not march back to what was  
but move to what shall be  
A country that is bruised but whole,  
benevolent but bold,

fierce and free  
We will not be turned around  
or interrupted by intimidation  
because we know our inaction and inertia  
will be the inheritance of the next  
generation  
Our blunders become their burdens  
But one thing is certain:  
If we merge mercy with might,  
and might with right,  
then love becomes our legacy  
and change our children's birthright  
So let us leave behind a country  
better than the one we were left with  
Every breath from my  
bronze-pounded chest,  
we will raise this wounded world  
into a wondrous one  
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills  
of the west,  
we will rise from the windswept northeast  
where our forefathers first realized  
revolution  
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of  
the midwestern states,  
we will rise from the sunbaked south  
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover  
and every known nook of our nation and  
every corner called our country,  
our people diverse and beautiful  
will emerge,  
battered and beautiful  
When day comes we step out of the shade,  
afame and unafraid  
The new dawn blooms as we free it  
For there is always light,  
if only we're brave enough to see it  
If only we're brave enough to be it

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## The Modesto Peace/Life Center gratefully acknowledges the generous sponsors of the John McCutcheon Virtual Benefit Concert

The Modesto Peace/Life Center is grateful to all the generous sponsors who supported our January virtual concert with John McCutcheon. We thank all who purchased tickets and enjoyed John's many new songs written in the past year. Thanks to all of you we were able to raise over \$2100 to further the peace and justice work of the Center, including maintaining our community radio station, KCBP 95.5 FM. We look forward to having John back in Modesto when it is safe to do so.

### Sponsors

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"This is our charge:  
To answer ugliness with beauty,  
Hatred with love,  
Despair with hope,  
Isolation with openness."

John McCutcheon

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## Modesto Junior College Science Programs for the Community

MAPS offers free, informative and engaging community science programs.

7:30 pm, participate by logging on to <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/maps.php> to sign up for notification of the link. Archived MAPS talks: <https://share.yosemite.edu/view.aspx?i=1E7L>



**Friday, Feb.19:** Justin Fisch. *A Land Dedicated to Science - The Antarctic Treaty and its Environmental Protocol.* Mr. Fisch holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability Studies from the University of Florida, and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Degree from McGill University, in Canada. Mr. Fisch has worked extensively in forestry research, and geography education throughout his studies. Mr. Fisch is an environmental attorney and also a lecturer & guide with Quark Expeditions. He has been an Arctic Youth Ambassador with Canada Parks. <https://www.quarkexpeditions.com/staff/justin-fisch>

## Sierra Club Yokuts Group offers \$1000 Scholarship for Fall 2021

### Qualifications:

- Must be a resident of Stanislaus County.
- Must have completed at least one year of undergraduate work at a college or university at the time the application is submitted.
- The applicant's overall college and university GPA, at the time the application is submitted, must be a minimum 2.5.
- Must be attending either Modesto Junior College or California State University, Stanislaus, in the fall of 2021.

### Application:

No form required. The following information about the applicant must be included on the application:

- Full name, home address, email address and phone number.
- All colleges and universities attended, dates, degrees pursued and completed.
- Overall college and university GPA at the time the application is submitted.
- A statement that the applicant will be attending Modesto Junior College or California State University, Stanislaus, in the fall of 2021.

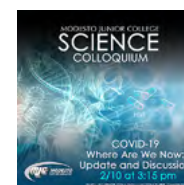
Apart from the required information above, the application must include an essay, of 250-300 words, about the applicant's higher education classwork, related activities and career pursuits as they relate to the Sierra Club Mission Statement.

### Sierra Club Mission Statement:

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

The information contained in the application must be verified by a college and/or university counselor, by dating and signing (also printed name and title/position) at the bot-



**SCIENCE COLLOQUIUM:** Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., MJC via Zoom. Access the program: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmaymqgHqzxhsAa0RJmYwVg/>.

When the live program appears, click on it. Feb 10: COVID-19: Where Are We Now: Update and Discussion with MJC Professors: Erynn Lucas, Microbiology; Deborah Martin, Anatomy-Physiology; Elizabeth McInnes, Biology. An update on the testing, treatments, variants, and vaccines of Sars-CoV-2. Panelists will present the newest data and facts from current research.

**Feb 24: Science, Policy, Innovation, Action.** Giana Amador, Co-founder and Managing Director, Carbon180. It is possible to create a world where climate change and economic prosperity are driven by Innovation. The discussion will cover innovation and implementation by farmers, foresters, and business to reduce as well as sequester carbon from our atmosphere. Ms. Amador will share her experience as an advocate for carbon sequestration.

tom of the application. Also include the counselor's contact information.

The applicant must also date and sign at the bottom of the application.

### Award Process:

The application may be submitted on or after January 1, 2021.

The application must be received by the Yokuts Group, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club via U.S. Mail (P.O. Box 855, Modesto, CA 95353) or email ([YokutsSierraClub@gmail.com](mailto:YokutsSierraClub@gmail.com)) by April 15, 2021. If sent by U.S. Mail, it must be postmarked by April 15, 2021.

A Yokuts Group Committee will review the applications and will be looking for the strength of the applicant's higher education classwork, related activities and career pursuits as they relate to the Sierra Club Mission Statement.

The one winner ("Student") of the \$1000 scholarship will be notified by May 28, 2021. The other applicants will be notified by May 28, 2021 that they were not selected as the winner.

By June 15, 2021 the Yokuts Group must receive an enrollment verification letter from the school (Modesto Junior College or California State University, Stanislaus) stating that the Student will be attending the school in the Fall 2021. The verification letter must also include the Student's student identification number and the address of the school and the department/person to whom the funds (\$1000) are to be delivered for deposit for the benefit of the Student. The verification letter must be received before the funds can be delivered to the school. If the verification letter is not received (post marked to the P.O. Box above) by June 15, 2021, the Yokuts Group Committee will select another applicant for the scholarship.

The Student is encouraged to attend the Yokuts Group 2021 Summer Picnic at which time the scholarship will be publicly awarded. This, of course, is subject to any Covid-19 restrictions in effect at the time.



# Gillian Wegener – Award-Winning Poet, Community Leader

By TOM PORTWOOD

In these troubled, chaotic, and profoundly tragic times, the power of poetry to mend wounds or express our deepest feelings is there to be tapped by all, though poetry is often left on dusty bookshelves in the daily swirl of things.

For former Modesto Poet Laureate and teacher Gillian Wegener, poetry is all around us every day, in little things or cataclysmic events, in good times and bad: “When things go really right in our lives – when a couple gets married, when people have babies, when there’s a celebration to be had – people want poetry for those moments,” she recently explained. “They look for poetry to express the emotions of that moment. And the same is true when things have gone really, really wrong, such as 9/11 or after what happened at the Capitol on January 6th. And there have been many, many poems written about this pandemic era. Because people are so emotional about these issues, they look to poetry as a kind of filter, to explain and express those emotions.”

Born in Queens, New York, Ms. Wegener has lived in the Valley for the past thirty years. Currently serving as an Academic Coach to incoming teachers of Oakdale JUSD, she taught junior high students for more than twenty years, and still “misses the kids every day I loved teaching junior high kids – they are fantastic! I miss their goofiness and their spontaneity and their eagerness to learn.”

“But I like what I’m doing now, too. Being an academic coach means that I work with new teachers to kind of show them the ropes in our district. Being a new teacher is a tough, tough job. So, any support they may need, I’m there to give it. I also work on curriculum and help out on piloting and adoptions processes.”

While she first had hopes of becoming a Forest Ranger, Ms. Wegener “put that out of my head” when someone told her a lot of math came with that job. “I am *not* a math person!” she said, chuckling. Inspired by her high school English teacher, Mr. Litchfield, she “decided to pursue a profession connected

to reading and writing, both of which I loved. Mr. Litchfield was a real inspiration for me and remains a huge influence on me. I think of him often when I’m teaching.”

“My dad liked to wander around and look at things and get into the history of places, and I think that close observation of place was a big influence on me as well. And my mom just keeping it all together was a huge influence.”

As for Ms. Wegener’s abiding passion for poetry – well, that took root at a very early age, with the gift of a book. “When I was probably eight or nine, my aunt Roberta gave me a book of poetry. It was a book for children, and it had poems by about everybody you could imagine in it. I read it all the way through, and I loved it. It had really cool illustrations, which I copied, and I memorized some of the poems.

I think I loved the rhythm of things. Some of my earliest, earliest memories are of nursery rhymes. So the rhythm and the meter were sort of embedded in my head. By the time I was in junior high I was writing poetry all the time. I carried around notebooks of my poetry through high school. I didn’t write a lot in college, but I came back to poetry when I was a new teacher here.”

Eudora Welty once observed that “feelings are bound up in place and in art” and that is certainly true of Gillian Wegener’s beautiful poetry, evident in both of the books she has authored (*The Opposite of Clairvoyance*, Sixteen Rivers Press, 2008; *This Sweet Haphazard*, Sixteen Rivers Press, 2017).

“I write a lot about the Valley,” she noted. “About the landscapes, and the little details of things I see around town. A sign can maybe set off a poem. I don’t think my poetry is about anything too significant. I don’t set out to write about big themes. But in writing about the everyday moments in life, those themes come forward. That’s true probably for any poetry. Writing about the things we see around us – and somehow that becomes more universal. That’s something I really like about poetry.”

Although Ms. Wegener is not afraid to focus on moments of deeply personal pain, as she so poignantly does in a poem about her late father’s dementia titled “My Father Begins to Disappear,” a thread of warm, affectionate optimism and humor runs through much of her work.

She brings that heartfelt optimism and adds even a sense of joy to everything she does in the community, where she is recognized as one of its hardest-working volunteers and leaders.

For the past eight years, Ms. Wegener has led the Modesto-

Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) in its mission of bringing poetry into our community. “The poetry community has always been here,” she reflected. “But in 2009, Hanibal Yadegar, the owner of the Barkin’ Dog, talked me into running a poetry night. So, I invited all the local poets, and everybody came. And suddenly, there was this place where people hung out together and talked about poetry and listened to poets from across the region, and read their own poems, and a sense of community began to build. By 2013 there was definitely a sense of community and we were able to establish MoSt. Through that, we’ve been able to provide a bunch of poetry services for the community, including in schools and senior centers. We’ve accomplished a lot.”

From 2015 to early 2020, Ms. Wegener also volunteered at Juvenile Hall. “I worked with the girls on their creative writing projects – poetry, short stories, things that gave them a creative outlet. We were working with kids who were as young as eleven and as old as eighteen, and they definitely have a lot to say. I can’t say it was always fun work, because sometimes it was really painful to hear those stories. I definitely learned a lot from them, that there’s a lot of grace within them, a lot of love – even after everything they’ve experienced. So, it was a great pleasure to work with them.”

Ms. Wegener also serves on the Board of the Stanislaus County Commission for Women. “The Commission honors the work that women do in the community who are working so hard to make things better for everyone,” she noted. “It has been a pleasure to hear about the amazing work that

both women and girls are doing out there. We just had two women run for Mayor, and I don’t know how often that’s happened in the past. Overall, I would say there are definitely more opportunities for women in the community than in the past.”

“I feel like our community is getting stronger and better all the time and I’m happy to be a part of that,” she said, thinking of the

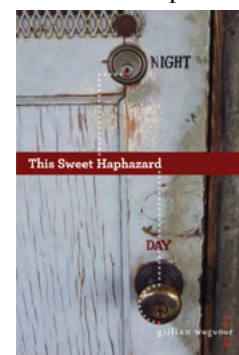
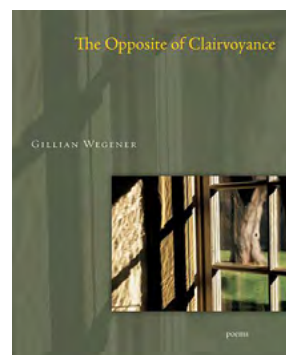
changes she’s seen in the Valley over the years.

“I’m not a very religious person,” she continued, “but I do believe that we are here on Earth to serve each other, to take care of one another. If I’m here to make things better for other people, I can do that in a bunch of ways. It’s hard work sometimes, but it’s worthy work, that makes things better for people.”

Ms. Wegener knows and loves this Valley that she and her family have embraced, that she eloquently evokes in her poetry:

“...no, it isn’t pretty, but we still live here and tonight the moon will rise, almost full, over this sweet haphazard of home.”

Gillian Wegener was twice the recipient of the Dorothy Rosenberg Poetry Award (2006, 2007), and was honored as one of Stanislaus County’s Outstanding Women in 2015. She served as the City of Modesto’s Poet Laureate from 2012 to 2016



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# Finding the Way to Build a Better World for Us All

By LENG POWER

In the days that followed the attack on our nation's capital, I struggled to find the sequence of words that would completely convey my thoughts. Careful not to compromise my commitment to compassion and equanimity, my initial instinct was to reach out to trusted friends, esteemed thought partners, leadership circles and reflect on my own story. I wanted to get beyond my reaction and understand the broader implications such unprecedented acts meant for all of us.

As I have shared before, this country accepted my family as refugees when we were escaping a genocidal political regime. Arriving at three years old, this is the only country I can call home. My gratitude for the chance at this life is rooted in placemaking here in our community. With that appreciation, is accepting the honorable responsibility of citizenship and the moral obligation of seeking clarity and upholding truth. This process requires us to weigh how we relate to ideas like, common good, democracy; how we can distinguish between nationalism and patriotism, how we identify racism and fascism. Our comprehension of these frameworks must be steadfast so that we can resist falling into our feelings when the conditions of the world tempt us to deny what we know to be true.

Leaders are entrusted to act in accordance with their respective oaths and the compass by which they occupy their position. We have seen, in the days that have followed the attacks, two types of leaders emerge. Those who can swiftly name and repudiate domestic terrorism and justly call for accountability and those who failed at this most basic threshold of human decency of prioritizing protection of life. People

who have long held their views silently, are compelled by this most egregious act to take professional, political and personal risk to lend their voices in bipartisan outrage, disappointment and to call for leadership that can meet this moment.

Many of us refute the dangerous false equivalency in drawing comparisons when none exist. It emboldens those who deny or subjugate the burden of examining the account of events and the pattern of systems. Violence-on-both-sides rhetoric is weaponized to appease those who would incite it rather than those who are victims to it. It is an imprecise, simplistic and offensive offering. I would welcome any personal and direct discussions offline on this matter because understanding this is paramount to being able to truly move forward.

Many of us wonder what is next for this American enterprise now that we have endured such insurrection. Some wonder if the moral fiber which connects us all has been too weakened to hold us together much longer. The strength of our communities has never come from the power that rests outside of us. The source has always been what we dedicate as virtuous to the collective good and worth getting into good trouble for. It is both deeply rooted and precariously held. We are always bound to be co-creators in this endeavor. We must again find our way to the vigorous exchange of diverse ideas on how to build a better world for all of us. We must require nothing less of those who lead us even if that means embarking on that path yourself.

"And you can also commit injustice by doing nothing"  
— Marcus Aurelius

## Sierra Club Sues to Halt Del Puerto Canyon Dam Project

By KENT MITCHELL, Political Chair

Yokuts Executive Committee voted unanimously to support litigation filed by Sierra Club, along with Center for Biological Diversity, California Native Plant Society, and Friends of the River, to halt the proposed Del Puerto Canyon dam. Del Puerto Canyon, near Patterson, supplies critical habitat for protected plants and animals, as well as bicycle routes, hiking trails, and birdwatching areas for residents, according to the lawsuit filed November 20 in Stanislaus County Superior Court.

The dam, which would store approximately 82,000 acre-feet of water for nearby agricultural operations, would destroy indigenous cultural sites and emit dangerous greenhouse gases.

The project would also destroy habitat for California red-legged frogs, California tiger salamanders and golden eagles, all of which are protected species under state law.

Sean Wirth, Mother Lode Chapter Conservation Chair, remarks that the project poses a risk to nearby communities if its structural integrity ever fails. Ron Stork, of Friends of the River, states that taking more water from the delta is not the solution to California's water-supply challenges. "This

reservoir will only fuel increased demand among agricultural interests of the San Joaquin Valley, worsening dependence on an already stressed delta."

From the Sierra Club Mother Lode: Yokuts Group



## TIME TO HEAL: Building mutual respect with our divided citizens

By RICHARD ANDERSON & JAMES COSTELLO, Modesto Peace/Life Center

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has been considering starting or becoming involved with some kind of moderated discussion groups or organizations dedicated to healing our polarized society. An introduction was Civic Saturdays recently held by the Stanislaus Community Foundation.

One model is Braver Angels that "seeks to depolarize American politics through grassroots organizing. Our volunteer leaders (supported by a small staff) leverage Braver Angels programs and a unique organizing structure to impact community life

and American institutions."

Another is Living Room Conversations, a conversational model developed by dialogue experts in order to facilitate connection between people despite their differences, and to identify areas of common ground and shared understanding. "Within this model, we have developed over 100 conversation guides on all sorts of topics that can otherwise be tense to talk about with friends, strangers, and even loved ones of differing backgrounds and political persuasions."

A third effort is Everyday Democracy whose "process includes core elements of community organizing, facilitated meetings with small groups that later come together, and a connection between dialogue and action."

A fourth is Make America Relate Again: <https://www.makeamericarelatepodcast.com/episode-1> In one episode Gregg interviews Kim, a liberal, who banters with Nick, a Libertarian: <https://www.makeamericarelatepodcast.com/s2ep3-transcript>. Richard Anderson has been working on the idea of a series of interviews that could be broadcast by MYTV26 and KCBP Community Radio and archived on YouTube.

Let us begin the healing. *Stanislaus Connections* will keep readers updated as we proceed.

**ACTION:** Send your ideas to Richard Anderson, [andersonr@yosemite.edu](mailto:andersonr@yosemite.edu) or to James Costello, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)





# Hiking the Forest Primeval along the Stanislaus River

By ELAINE GORMAN

One of the San Joaquin Valley's remaining stretches of old-growth riparian forest is found in Caswell Memorial State Park. This 258-acre riverside park is located west of Ripon in San Joaquin county, and a mere 25-minute drive from my home. On this late fall morning, I met a friend at the kiosk, where we inserted our fee envelopes into the iron ranger.

## Green Tips for a Green Planet:

# "The pandemic is a fire drill for the climate crisis."

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

"Dayenu," the title of a song sung by Jewish people at Passover, focuses on "gratitude and abundance," upon the Ying Yang of "urgency and hope," direness and possibility played out in the Exodus story of the Bible, a story that parallels our times.

The January/February 2021 issue of *Hadassah Magazine* features an interview by Rahel Musleah with Rabbi Jennie Rosenn, who has spearheaded a network of Dayenu Circles, diverse grassroots groups committed to mobilizing communities on a "scale and speed that science and justice demand" in order to put in place "the technology, the policies, the power to create a world in which everyone can have enough."

The article points out that a 2018 United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "concluded that the global population must do what is necessary to reach net zero emissions" by 2050 if we are to have a home planet that can sustain human and other life as we know it.

Rabbi Rosenn warns that "Last April, when half the world shut down [because of the COVID-19 pandemic] emissions only dropped by 17% leaving "the remaining 83% embedded in our infrastructure." Dayenu has taken on responsibility for "developing national campaigns through which people can take "strategically targeted action" for *Tikkun Olam*, Repair of the World.

"The pandemic," says Rabbi Rosenn, "has given us an unexpected opportunity to rebuild and re-envision our world so it's not the same polluting, inequitable, and fragile economy as before. It's a fire drill for the climate crisis, and it's small in comparison to climate collapse."

**ACTION:** Dayenu partners with groups within and beyond the Jewish community. Seek and find your role in deflecting past abuses and crippling attitudes toward our global home. Each and every citizen of Planet Earth can heed the wake up calls of the pandemic, social and economic injustice, and first and foremost, climate injustice. We can work together to keep our world healthy, beautiful and especially, sustainable. Email: [info@dayenu.org](mailto:info@dayenu.org)

(note: check out State Park website for info. on limited Golden Bear pass).

As we entered the park, orchards and subdivisions gave way to towering valley oaks, cottonwoods, and sycamores. Wild California grape vines hung down, sometimes covering the trees. We half expected to see Tarzan whizzing by.

The gate on the road to the parking areas was locked and visions of the spring 2020 shut down of State Parks caused a minor panic. But no biggie, the maintenance crew just hadn't opened the gates yet, and the campground host graciously unlocked it.

After parking at the large, shaded picnic area, we walked over to check out "the Stan" at Willow Beach. Nuts from native California Black Walnut and acorns covered the trails. In late November, the water was shallow and slow. Animal tracks were in the sand and mud. We looked for migrating Chinook salmon but didn't spot any. A riverside Black Phoebe was perched on the nearby vegetation and gave us good views. Sunning turkey vultures spread their wings on their high perches in the giant trees.

A short walk took us to another small picnic area and a plaque dedicated to Estanislao, Yokuts chief. In the early 1800s, Estanislao led an uprising against the Mexican army. Caswell SP is part of Yokuts ancestral land. The Stanislaus



River and Stanislaus county are named for this Yokuts hero.

We headed out on the River Bend Trail, and the forest closed in with elderberries, grape, and wild rose, abundant food for the forest birds and other critters. Binoculars in hand, we located spotted towhees and golden-crowned sparrows, scratching in the dirt. Cows mooing and human voices across the river reminded us of nearby civilization. When the trail reached the river, we were able to locate Great Blue Herons fishing in the Stan. We looked for pond turtles but early morning was probably too cold for them to be out sunbathing. We kept to the trails that hugged the river. Watch out for side trails, as many will lead to the edge of the riverbank, with steep and unstable banks.

In a tall oak covered with wild grape, a large flock of cedar waxwings feasted on fruits. It was fun to watch them fly between the trees. Periodically, we would hear honks of geese and squeaks of Sandhill Cranes flying overhead, on their way to nearby San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

We reached the main Majestic Oaks Trail, then turned left on to Hidden Lake Trail. This part of the park is so dense with vegetation (including stinging nettle!) that we could not locate the well-named lake. We came upon the intersection with the Fenceline Trail, which completed our 3-mile loop back to the picnic areas.

After retrieving our lunch from our vehicles, we walked a short distance to some picnic benches that overlooked the Stan. There are several magnificent sycamore trees, with massive trunks and branches, which provided neat perches for a small flock of western bluebirds. While enjoying the calm ambience of the forest and river, we remarked that we saw only one other pair of hikers during our hike — we had this beautiful place almost exclusively to ourselves.

This park is named for the local Caswell family, that donated 134 acres of their ranch to the State of Calif. Caswell SP is one of the last areas that provides suitable habitat for the endangered riparian brush rabbit and riparian woodrat. We thank the Caswells for their foresight in preserving this remnant of the San Joaquin Valley's ancient riparian woodland.

More about the park here: [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=557](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=557)



# California's affordable housing leaders offer preview of forthcoming Roadmap HOME 2030

*Coalition unveils framework of bold policy priorities for 2021-22 legislative session*

As the 2021-22 legislative session gets underway, Housing California and California Housing Partnership offered a sneak preview of the forthcoming Roadmap HOME 2030, a 10-year comprehensive, racial equity-centered, and evidence-based framework of bold policy solutions to end homelessness and create stable, affordable homes for all Californians. Developed in partnership with leading policy experts, researchers and advocates from across the state, the organizations unveiled 12 early policy solutions California state legislators are urged to prioritize this year

“As Amanda Gorman, the National Youth Poet Laureate, so eloquently stated at the Presidential Inauguration, ‘Somehow we’ve weathered and witnessed a nation that isn’t broken but simply unfinished.’ I see California in this same light. Our moment is now to lean in and finish this business by *first transforming California’s housing justice system*,” said Lisa Hershey, executive director of Housing California. “The pandemic, natural disasters, and racial injustice have created the perfect storm from which real change can be born. Californians – both government officials and everyday residents – have shown a hunger for a California with safe, affordable, stable homes in thriving communities for ALL. The policy priorities we unveiled today, and the solutions in the forthcoming Roadmap HOME 2030 plan, are the long-term strategy we need to unlock homes, health and prosperity for all.”

The state has seen recent achievements, such as Project Homekey, that have provided critical, yet temporary solutions or one-time allocations. Despite these wins, there is growing consensus amongst advocates and government officials, like the State Auditor, that the scale and scope of housing issues demand a larger coordinated and comprehensive approach. Among the critiques included in the Auditor’s report, it found that “California is failing to build enough affordable homes for lower income residents” due, in part, to uncoordinated efforts on local and state levels and an “ineffective approach to planning,” concluding that “the State needs to expand the purpose of its housing plan and require HCD to provide a roadmap for how the State is going to build enough affordable housing to address the severe shortage.”

“Past attempts at solving our homeless and housing crises have been well-intentioned but lacked two key ingredients: a clear destination and a map showing us how we get there through a sustained, long-term effort,” expressed Matt Schwartz, president and CEO of the California Housing Partnership. “The Roadmap HOME provides both by weaving together the best ideas in the Capitol with bold, new evidenced-based approaches to speed up and lower the cost of providing affordable homes for everyone at the scale we need to meet these challenges in earnest.”

“Small solutions don’t solve big problems. As Senate Housing Committee Chair, I’ve prioritized big and bold

**“The pandemic, natural disasters, and racial injustice have created the perfect storm from which real change can be born.”**

ideas to solve our housing problems that match the scale of the crisis,” added Sen. Scott Wiener. “While we have taken important strides these past few years, it’s clear to me that it’s time we had a long-term comprehensive plan like the Roadmap HOME.”

“While California has taken some steps toward addressing our homelessness crisis, in order to solve the crisis and create affordable housing for all, we must have a long-term game plan,” Assemblymember David Chiu agreed. “I’m excited to work with the Roadmap HOME 2030 team to identify comprehensive long-term solutions.”

Despite unprecedented publicity, funding and legislative efforts to solve housing and homelessness, California’s challenges have persisted and even worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Roadmap HOME delivers a fresh approach to the way we look at housing policies and begins the transformation of our state’s housing justice system to help meet ongoing and renewed calls to root out systemic inequities and racism across our society. The non-partisan Legislative Analyst’s Office agreed, noting recently,

**“Past attempts at solving our homeless and housing crises have been well-intentioned but lacked two key ingredients: a clear destination and a map showing us how we get there through a sustained, long-term effort.”**

“While the Governor’s budget reflects his commitment to curbing homelessness and addressing housing affordability, by once again proposing significant state resources toward these issues, the Governor’s response continues to focus on one-time solutions. As we have said previously, a clear, long-term strategy would make it more likely that the state’s investments would have a meaningful ongoing impact on its housing and homelessness challenges.”

The solutions in the Roadmap HOME offer a multi-pronged framework for legislative solutions that:

**Invest in our values** by prioritizing housing resources for those struggling the most, especially Black, Latinx, Indigenous and people of color

**Promote fairness** by restructuring tax and finance systems to undo racial inequities

**Protect people** by updating and enforcing the rules that safeguard Californians struggling to afford a home and facing discrimination

**Reimagine growth** by transforming how we use land to create affordable homes and access to opportunity

**Create efficiency and accountability** by designing seamless, coordinated housing and homelessness systems to close racial equity gaps and create homes for all.

“The James Irvine Foundation’s goal is a California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically. In 2019-2020, we explored how philanthropy could promote secure, safe, affordable housing for low-income workers, particularly our Black and Brown neighbors. The more we learned, the more it became clear that a piecemeal approach wasn’t working,” said Leslie Payne, Senior Program Officer. “Californians deserve comprehensive, equity-centered and evidence-based solutions, implemented with investment that matches the scale of the need. The 10-year vision in California’s Roadmap HOME 2030 is an important part of what our residents need to rebuild the California Dream.”

“The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative applauds the release of the Roadmap HOME’s initial package of 2021 policy priorities. As a major supporter of California organizations combating homelessness and the housing crisis, we believe the Roadmap is exactly the kind of long-term, comprehensive approach that is needed to make substantial progress in reducing the number of Californians who are homeless and struggling to pay their rent,” added Ruby Bolaria Shifrin, Director of Housing Affordability at Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. “We urge the Governor and Legislature to act on these recommendations immediately.”

“California’s Roadmap HOME 2030 offers a collaborative path forward in statewide housing and homelessness solutions,” said Andrea Iloulouian, senior program officer at The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. “Our hope is that any experience of homelessness in Los Angeles County is rare, brief, and non-recurring, and permanent housing is essential to achieving this goal. Voters in Los Angeles have made significant, long-term commitments to addressing homelessness, but we cannot do this alone. Roadmap HOME 2030 offers state policymakers an opportunity to embrace meaningful, long-term recommendations – grounded in the experiences of people with lived expertise – at the intersection of housing and homelessness policy.”

To learn more about California’s Roadmap HOME 2030, visit [roadmaphome.org](http://roadmaphome.org)

The development of Roadmap HOME is generously supported by: James Irvine Foundation,

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

**ACTION:** Contact your state legislators.

# Homeless: The Harsh Realities of Help

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

“We have a disconnect with our citizens about what services are available for homeless people and how easy it is to access them,” said Modesto businessman Steven Finch recently.

“People are comforted when they see large buildings and lots of staff workers dealing with homelessness, poverty, and mental illness. They read about \$22,000,000 coming to Stanislaus County for homelessness and they think, ‘That should do it; all fixed.’”

In fact, Finch has found that trying to navigate the system of care for people in distress, including the homeless and mentally ill, “takes my every ounce of intellect and perseverance — imagine doing this task without a phone, car, ID, or place to stay, while possibly dealing with mental illness, addiction, or other problems.”

Finch learned about the near-impossibility of getting help for homeless people after he and some fellow volunteers formed *Stanislaus Homeless Advocacy and Resource Enterprise (SHARE)*.

Modeled after *Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)*, a volunteer program that pairs members with children in the foster care program, SHARE’s mission includes a focus on assistance for the most vulnerable among homeless people, especially the mentally ill. Finch thought the CASA model would serve the homeless just as well as it does foster children; he learned almost immediately that the homeless system of care is broken and dysfunctional.

“Agencies and non-profits are so strained and understaffed they are at a breaking point,” said Finch. “They refer you back and forth and the referral is sometimes to a phone with no answer and a mailbox that is full. There are many good people in this work, but it seems their hands are tied.”

Finch was dismayed to learn how little money is spent at the city or county level for mental health.

“It’s all pass through from the state,” he said. “That’s not the norm in other communities I reached out to when doing research for starting SHARE.”

Finch learned that a great deal of local budget money for homelessness, “gets burned up by short-term congregate living solutions. These are not a solution for many people, so they end up back on the streets. I spoke with the Director at *Family Promise* and she said they could ramp up their program to 4-5 times the size and pace, but at the end of the day, there is NO long-term housing for graduates of the program.”

Finch said that people’s lack of confidence in the ability of local government to solve problems, “makes sense for



Modestans when you consider the debacles we experienced firsthand with the 2010 housing crisis.” Subsequent failures to reduce homeless numbers have left Finch disillusioned. “I have frankly lost confidence in our cities’ and county’s ability to resolve this issue,” he said.

Finch said that the end point of efforts to help the homeless and mentally ill, “always gets to the real macro issue of affordable housing,” where, “there’s a choke point.”

“We have people working on various solutions, like lots with pallet homes, tents, and other options, but these efforts seem fragmented. Stanislaus Foods has offered the lot space behind Berberian Shelter many times for many purposes; there are other lot spaces that churches and private citizens have talked of making available. So far, nothing concrete has been done or proposed.”

Finch still thinks the CASA model, “has great potential with our homeless individuals and families,” but he’s dismayed by near impossibility of housing people.

Despite what looks like an insurmountable problem, Steve Finch remains optimistic about the good will of people in general. “People want to see what is being done and they are then willing to do and give more. Right now, it just looks like the money goes into a black hole.”

Like most anyone who has actually had on-the-ground experience trying to help the homeless, Finch is frustrated at the widespread perception that there’s plenty of help. The fact is, there isn’t much help, and what help is available is extremely difficult to access.

Finch thinks it would benefit everyone to consolidate

resources and devote them to getting people sheltered in places other than congregate living. “We should have every-one meeting once a month and pooling information to move forward on a plan,” he said.

Meanwhile, as our streets, parks, and other public spaces fill with more and more people with nowhere to go, Finch sees, “very little sense of emergency. When it’s freezing cold, it’s an emergency to the people experiencing it,” he said. Responses like, “I can call you back next week at 9AM,” end up accomplishing nothing in the way of addressing the key problem of getting people off the streets.

“It’s really important people understand how little help is available,” said Finch. “We started SHARE with the dual purpose of helping unhoused people navigate a complex system of care while also educating advocates.”

Thus far, Finch has found that navigating that system of care is nearly impossible, especially since the end point is “no long-term housing.” And with the average cost of “affordable” housing approaching \$400,000 per unit in the San Joaquin Valley, traditional options for housing homeless people are years away. In a time when we need to start thinking of alternatives to traditional housing, Steve Finch is more than ready.

## Be informed!

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



# The First Indigenous Caldecott Medal Winner

By ALIYAH CHAVEZ, *Indian Country Today*

The American Library Association announced winners of the nation's outstanding children's books this week. At the top of the list is *"We Are Water Protectors,"* a picture book created by two Indigenous women.

It was illustrated by Tlingit artist Michaela Goade and written by Carole Lindstrom, Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe.

The selection is history-making, marking the first time an Indigenous person has ever won the Caldecott Medal.

The medal is the award for the most distinguished American children's picture book.

The 40-page picture book follows a young female protagonist standing up against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline and was inspired by Indigenous-led movements across North America.

"I'm still pretty shocked about it," Goade told *Indian Country Today*. "I would really love to say thank you everyone who's lifted this book up. And for really the people at the heart of this story, which are water protectors and land defenders everywhere, who have boots on the ground doing this work for all of us."

Around *Indian Country*, many celebrated the news.

"Because *'We Are Water Protectors'* won the Caldecott Medal, children around the world will read about Water Protectors, for generations to come," Debbie Reese, Nambé Pueblo, said in a blog post. She is the founder of *American Indians in Children's Literature*. "Kúdaa, Carole and Michaela, for giving this book to all of us."

The book's illustrations were done with watercolors. Shades of blue, purple, red and pink infuse the pages.

"Michaela Goade's semi-translucent color palette beautifully bathes every page with powerful illustrations," said Caldecott Medal Committee Chair Annisha Jeffries.

The inspiration for the story came from Lindstrom, who watched the happenings of Standing Rock from afar in 2016.

"I felt very helpless, wondering how I could be of service so far away since I can't be there," Lindstrom reflected. "So I thought, 'Well, I'll write a book.'"

She initially wrote a novel, and it eventually turned into a picture book. After writing, she told her editing team that she wanted an Indigenous person to illustrate the book.

The publishing team chose Goade, who began working on creating the colorful illustrations.

An obstacle for Goade was figuring out how to illustrate the "heavy" topic in a way that would resonate with children.

**"We need representation for our own communities, but we also need non-Native people to see these books, value these books and lift these books up," Goade said. "Not just in November for Native American Heritage Month, but all year."**

She says she did research then reflected characters who are wearing both traditional and contemporary clothing, highlighting various genders and skin complexions.

All of these details were very intentional, Goade said, because representation of Indigenous communities is something that comes few and far between.

"We need representation for our own communities, but we also need non-Native people to see these books, value these books and lift these books up," Goade said. "Not just in November for Native American Heritage Month, but all year."

The book has a five-star rating on *Amazon* and is a No. 1 best seller in Nature Conservation.

Now that *"We Are Water Protectors"* has been given the

seal of the Caldecott award, the duo expects it will gain even more recognition and traction.

With more visibility, the women hope it brings more awareness to environmental injustice.

"The fact that President Biden has canceled the Keystone pipeline is huge," Lindstrom said. "And so my hope is that we can cancel the Dakota Access Pipeline, [Enbridge's] Line 3, and all of the pipelines on Turtle Island."

**(Related: [Tribes to Joe Biden: Stop Dakota Access Pipeline](#))**

The book was published in March by Roaring Brook Press.

In 1942, Velino Herrero, Zia Pueblo, received a different Caldecott award. He was the illustrator of *"In My Mother's House,"* which was named an honor book.

Also awarded Monday was Eric Gansworth, Onondaga, author of *"Apple (Skin to the Core)."* His book was recognized as an honor book for the Michael L. Printz Award, given for excellence in literature written for young adults.

Happening Monday evening is the American Indian Literature Award ceremony. It will be [streamed on YouTube](#) beginning at 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

*Aliyah Chavez, Kewa Pueblo, is a reporter-producer at Indian Country Today. Follow her on Twitter: @aliyahjchavez or email her at achavez@indiancountrytoday.com.*

*Indian Country Today is a nonprofit news organization.* Will you support our work? All of our content is free. There are no subscriptions or costs. And we have hired more Native journalists in the past year than any news organization and with your help we will continue to grow and create career paths for our people. [Support Indian Country Today](#) for as little as \$10.

## MoSt Workshop Event in February: Finding Inspiration from Surprising Sources

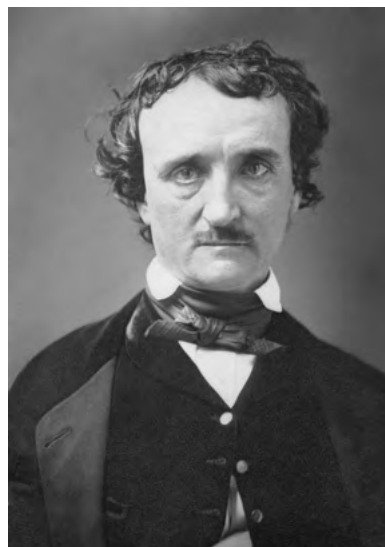
The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) will host a special Workshop Event on February 6, 2021, facilitated by Maw Shein Win, a stellar poet, editor, and educator. Her topic for the morning session, *Finding Inspiration from Surprising Sources*, promises to be very thought-provoking and productive for all poets.

The Zoom event will run from 10 am to 2 pm, with breaks, and will also feature two shorter afternoon workshops – *The News from Poetry*, led by the excellent poet and actor Gary Thomas and *Poetry from Phrases*, facilitated by the equally excellent poet and KCBP Radio Programmer Linda Scheller.

A registration form is available on the MoSt website ([www.mostpoetry.org](http://www.mostpoetry.org)). Registration fee is \$15.00 for each participant.

### A Dream Within a Dream

Take this kiss upon the brow!	I stand amid the roar
And, in parting from you now,	Of a surf-tormented shore,
Thus much let me avow —	And I hold within my hand
You are not wrong, who deem	Grains of the golden sand —
That my days have been a dream;	How few! yet how they creep
Yet if hope has flown away	Through my fingers to the deep,
In a night, or in a day,	While I weep — while I weep!
In a vision, or in none,	O God! Can I not grasp
Is it therefore the less <i>gone</i> ?	Them with a tighter clasp?
All that we see or seem	O God! Can I not save
Is but a dream within a dream.	One from the pitiless wave?
	Is <i>all</i> that we see or seem
	But a dream within a dream?



Edgar Allan Poe





## Lockdown #3 2021

A shallow sleep of separation  
drifts  
empty promises  
unmoored and textured  
against a heave of  
rolling glass

In canyons below, towering  
kelp beds sway  
isolate  
wait for a sign

Ringed by purple mollusks,  
bleached starfish  
we wait  
chilled,  
green tangles of seaweed  
mask bare feet  
clot the sand beneath us

In the receding distance,  
siren voices call  
mock the tides  
cajole wild birds  
to gather

## POET: Ann W. Bailey

Ann Bailey, presently sheltered-in-place, is a writer and artist centered in the Central Valley. She has participated in regional arts and literary events over the years from Poets in the Schools and small press: "Big Moon" in the early years; Great Valley Writing Project and Valley Sierra Arts Project leadership into the late 90's; and most recently, a virtual member of the Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt), the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW), and one writing group. She served one term on the City of Modesto Culture Commission.

She presently shows art work at the Carnegie Center for the Arts, the Mistlin Gallery and other local, juried shows virtually or on-site when they are open.

## Peace Tour

Yo-Yo Ma/A Low Wall in Mumbai

The heat and red honk of traffic  
curries the square at golden hour  
a low wall beckons:  
sends forth a quiet exaltation  
worn smooth, threadbare  
bowed back and forth against hope  
serenely weathered.

There's no accounting for it- this moment  
wild geese fluting overhead  
air lifting a pale edge of evening  
just as the light goes

Trust swallows its own tongue  
eyes close  
all is well for that one moment  
nothing extra  
nothing wasted.

## Covid 19

In the margins of breath  
silence takes shape  
a voracity of white space  
that shimmers  
arcane script  
legible only in the body's most intimate  
helix  
sticky text  
that twists and snarls  
bursts into morbid existence  
a quantum, indelible  
truth.

## Defensible Space

September fires rage  
accelerate blindly  
create their own weather;  
heat ignites into fullness  
blooms, then withers;  
red embers decay  
in a nest of grey powder

Gravity, the old god,  
distracted but insistent  
yawns below  
focused on spent light: one  
waning moon/ a single, distant  
star  
Pale spark evoked/  
ashy ember consumed  
we are pulled down  
cell by watery cell...  
no recourse  
except to resist the descent  
refuse  
to burn  
or sleep

## Beat

American Typewriter -  
vintage font, looked upon fondly  
by men who miss having secretaries  
by women who no longer type

Hipsters embrace the actual machine  
Poets who hammer black keys  
leverage muscle into keystroke mambo  
hip action  
word magic  
silver  
letters in a line  
a whisper touch of paper

In neon light  
on street corners  
in the dark  
wordsters hawk rogue poems  
on urban Saturday nights  
tailored to a clandestine message  
no questions asked  
your own special bongo  
vice, wrinkle,  
gallows phrase  
strung out in time to  
the beat







Grace Lieberman Tribute/David  
Bradford Memorial

## Valentine's Day Concert & Tea

Christine Capsuto Shulman &  
Elizabeth Neff

Feb. 14, 2021 - 3 pm

*Sunday Afternoons at CBS* is excited to finally begin **Season 29** with our very popular Valentine Concert & Tea featuring multi-talented **Christine Capsuto Shulman** and **Elizabeth Neff**, performing *Love Songs Through the Genres*.

As with most performances during these times, this wonderful concert will be virtual via Zoom. The full Afternoon Tea will include tea sandwiches, scones and jam, Valentine pastries and chocolates—as well as teas—packaged for you to enjoy in the comfort of your home. Drive-thru pick-up of Tea goodies will be available 11am – 1pm at CBS, 1705 Sherwood Avenue, before the concert begins at 3pm.

Because of COVID challenges, your participation in this special season-opening fundraiser will help us keep the concert series alive. We hope you will purchase early and often. Tickets for this event only are \$50 each and can be purchased online or by mail only.

Have a song request or questions? Leave a message at 209 571-6060.

Reservations must be prepaid by Friday, Feb. 12 prior to office closing through Brown Paper tickets at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/5025163> PayPal, or by check mailed to P.O. Box 85, Modesto CA 95353. Make checks to **Congregation Beth Shalom** with “Valentine Concert Tickets” in the memo section.

Please bring your BPT or PayPal proof of purchase or receipt to insure your proper number of tea servings—one serving per confirmed reservation. Mailed check reservations will be placed on a master list by Feb. 12 prior to office closing.



## Listen to Local Programming on KCBP 95.5 FM, The Voice of the Valley

Listen on 95.5 FM or streaming on [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

**NEW PROGRAM: KeeHive – LaKiesha McDonald** talks women who have overcome great odds. Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:00am.

**SPECIAL KEEHIVE Black History Interviews:** Top 4 African American Youth & Young Adult Influencers, Thursdays, February 4, 11, 18, 25, 5:00pm

**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 - Mondays, 8:00pm; 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 Leah Hassett - 8:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

**The Peril and the Promise** with Pegasus - Wednesdays, 9:30 pm; Saturdays, 2:30 pm; Listen here also: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp-peril>

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

**Where We Were** - Fascinating local history with Felton Daniels. Monday & Thursdays 9am. Friday 8:30pm; Sunday at 11:00am & 4:30 pm.

**The Ralph Nader Hour** - 4:00pm Saturdays.

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

### Local Music:

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

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

**This is SKA** with Middagh Goodwin - Tuesdays, 9 pm; Fridays, 11pm; Sundays, 6 am.

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

### Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

Various musical programs during the noon hour: Oldies, Jazz, Old Piano.

*Thom Hartmann* - 2:00pm

*Sojourner Truth* - 4:00pm

*Democracy Now!* - 7:00pm.

*Flashpoint Magazine* - 10:00pm.

### Children's Programming

*Confetti Park* - Saturday's 8:00am; & Sunday's 12:30pm.

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

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

What programming do you like or would like to hear? Contact us at [programming@kcbpradio.org](mailto:programming@kcbpradio.org) or call (209) 353-3066. Help put “Community” into community radio!

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# Don't Let Biden 'Make Us the Dupes of Our Hopes'

By **NORMAN SOLOMON**

At inauguration time, journalist I. F. Stone wrote, incoming presidents “make us the dupes of our hopes.” That insight is worth pondering as Joe Biden ascends to the presidency. After four years of the real-life Trump nightmare, hope is overdue — but it’s hazardous.

Stone astutely warned against taking heart from the lofty words that President Richard Nixon had just deployed in his inaugural address on January 20, 1969. With the Vietnam War raging, Stone pointed out: “It’s easier to make war when you talk peace.”

That’s true of military war. And class war.

In 2021, class war is the elephant — and the donkey — in the national living room. Rhetoric aside, present-day Republican politicians are shameless warriors for wealthy privilege and undemocratic power that afflicts the non-rich. Democratic Party leaders aren’t nearly as bad, but that’s an extremely low bar; relatively few are truly champions of the working class, while most routinely run interference for corporate America, Wall Street and the military-industrial complex.

Rarely illuminated with clarity by corporate media, class war rages 24/7/365 in the real world. Every day and night, countless people are suffering and dying. Needlessly. From lack of social equity. From the absence of economic justice. From the greed and elite prerogatives cemented into the structures of politics and a wide range of institutions. From oligarchy that has gotten so extreme that three people in the United States (Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett)

**How far Biden can be pushed in better directions will depend on how well progressives and others who want humanistic change can organize.**

now possess more wealth than the entire bottom half of the population.

Yes, there are some encouraging signs about where the Biden presidency is headed. The intertwined economic crisis and horrific pandemic — combined with growing grassroots progressive pressure on the Democratic Party — have already caused Biden to move leftward on a range of crucial matters. The climate emergency and festering racial injustice also require responses. We can expect important steps via presidential executive orders before the end of this month.

At the same time, if past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, we should not expect Biden to be a deserter from the class war that he has helped to wage, from the top down, throughout his political career — including via NAFTA, welfare “reform,” the bankruptcy bill and financial-sector deregulation.

How far Biden can be pushed in better directions will depend on how well progressives and others who want humanistic change can organize. In effect, most of mass media will encourage us merely to hope — plaintively and passively — holding onto the sort of optimism that has long been silly putty in the hands of presidents and their strategists.

Hope is a human need, and recent Democratic presidents have been whizzes at catering to it. Bill Clinton marketed himself as “the man from Hope” (the name of his first hometown). Barack Obama authored the bestseller “The Audacity of Hope” that appeared two years before he won the White

House. But projecting our hopes onto carefully scripted Rorschach oratory, on Inauguration Day or any day, is usually a surrender to images over realities.

The standard Democratic Party storyline is now telling us that greatness will be in reach for the Biden administration if only Republican obstacles can be overcome. Yet what has led to so much upheaval in recent years is mostly grounded in class war. And the positive aspects of Biden’s initiatives should not delude progressives into assuming that Biden is some kind of a class-war ally. For the most part, he has been the opposite.

“Progressives are not going to get anything from the new administration unless they are willing to publicly pressure the new administration,” David Sirota and Andrew Perez wrote days ago. “That means progressive lawmakers are going to have to be willing to fight and it means progressive advocacy groups in Washington are going to have to be willing to prioritize results rather than White House access.”

The kind of access that progressives need most of all is access to our own capacities to realistically organize and gain power. It’s a constant need — hidden in plain sight, all too often camouflaged by easier hopes.

More than being a time of hope — or fatalism — the inauguration of President Joe Biden should be a time of skeptical realism and determination.

The best way to not become disillusioned is to not have illusions in the first place. And the best way to win economic and social justice is to keep organizing and keep pushing. What can happen during the Biden presidency is up for grabs.

From the *LA Progressive* <https://www.laprogressive.com>

**MistlinGallery**  
Central California Art Association

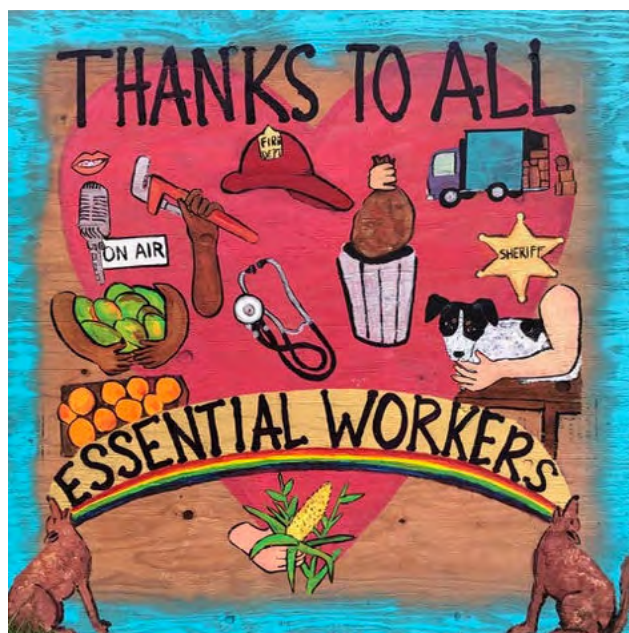
**March 4-27: Young@Art Student Exhibition**  
Entry information at [ccaagallery.org](http://ccaagallery.org)

Check the website for current open days and times  
1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369

**EXPOSE YOURSELF TO ART**

WITH  
**LINDA SCHELLER**  
**DAVID SCHROEDER**  
SUNDAYS 2:00 PM  
ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

Mistlin Gallery  
Stanislaus Arts  
Central California Art Association



Art by Vickisa, Point Reyes Station, CA.

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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.*

## FEBRUARY 2021

**CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.**

**Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m.,** MJC via Zoom. To access the program, click <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmaymqgHqzxhsAa0RJmYwVg/>. When the live program appears, click on it. **Feb 10:** COVID-19: Where Are We Now: Update and Discussion with MJC Professors: Erynn Lucas, Microbiology; Deborah Martin, Anatomy-Physiology; Elizabeth McInnes, Biology. An update on the testing, treatments, variants, and vaccines of Sars-CoV-2. Panelists will present the newest data and facts from current research. **Feb 24:** Science, Policy, Innovation, Action. Giana Amador, Co-founder and Managing Director, Carbon180. The discussion will cover innovation and implementation by farmers, foresters, and business to reduce as well as sequester carbon from our atmosphere. Ms. Amador will share her experience as an advocate for carbon sequestration.

**MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science):** free science programs. Live presentations via Zoom. Link provided before each talk on the MAPS website a few days of the presentation. 7:30 pm, Link to Zoom: <https://modestoscience.wordpress.com/schedule/>. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF-q-egRrQk>. Friday, Feb.19: Justin Fisch. A Land Dedicated to Science - The Antarctic Treaty and its Environmental Protocol. Mr. Fisch holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability Studies from the University of Florida, and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Degree from McGill University.

**VIRTUAL FILMS** are available at the State Theatre! Visit <https://thestate.org/virtual-screenings/>

**The Prospect Theatre** Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2020-2021-season/>

**3 WED: VIGIL: NO VIGIL** in FEBRUARY.

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

**14 SUN: Sunday Afternoons at CBS** is excited to finally begin Season 29 with our very popular Valentine Concert & Tea featuring multi-talented Christine Capsuto Shulman and Elizabeth Neff, performing Love Songs Through the Genres. Reservations must be prepaid by Friday, Feb. 12 prior to office closing through Brown Paper tickets at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/5025163> PayPal, or by check mailed to P.O. Box 85, Modesto CA 95353. Make checks to Congregation Beth Shalom with "Valentine Concert Tickets" in the memo section. See article, this issue for details.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**MLK Commemoration** in February. TBA.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

**Village Dancers** are not dancing in person but have a Zoom class, every Sunday 3:00-5:00 PM (PST). Lessons and reviews every week are given in international folk dances and are led by different teachers from around the Valley. People from England to Taiwan, New Hampshire to Oregon, Arizona to Denair join us each week to exercise in their own homes to interesting music. Email Judy at [JudyKropp40@gmail.com](mailto:JudyKropp40@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom number and password.

**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. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: [info@imcv.org](mailto:info@imcv.org)

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

### MONDAYS

**The Compassionate Friends**, Modesto/Riverbank Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the 2nd Mondy at 7p.m. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in their 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); <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.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).

**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](mailto:WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com) or call 209.577.1604.

**Silver & Gold Support group** for our senior LGBT communities' unique concerns and experiences. 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 various locations in Modesto. Info: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: [stevencullen@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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](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; 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.

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: SUSPENDED**, 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.

**Tuesday Evening Funstrummers** Ukulele Jam. Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., 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

**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: [merced-board@gaycentralvalley.org](mailto:merced-board@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 [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto: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 pm. Meeting: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Follow group on Facebook. Info: Tim Robertson, [tim@nvlf.org](mailto:tim@nvlf.org)

**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.

**LGBTQ+ Collaborative Meetings** are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless noted. Evening meeting, 1pm to 2 pm, Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: John Aguirre at cell/text - (559) 280-3864/ e-mail: [jpmamodesto@gmail.com](mailto:jpmamodesto@gmail.com)

**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)

**Third Thursday Art Walk**, Postponed until further notice. <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

**The Book Group**, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Info: [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.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 Thursdays, Cafe Amore, 3025 McHenry Ave, Suite S., Modesto, 8 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

### FRIDAYS

**Game Night and Potluck**, third Friday of each month. For 21+ only. Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto. 7 pm to 10 pm. Info: John Aguirre, (559) 280-3864; [jpmamodesto@gmail.com](mailto:jpmamodesto@gmail.com)

**Friday Morning Funstrummers** Band Rehearsal. Donation 9:15am to Noon. College Avenue United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 209-505-3216, [www.Funstrummers.com](http://www.Funstrummers.com).

**Latino Emergency Council (LEC)** 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Dale Butler, 522-8537. **Sierra Club:** Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 300-4253. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

**Mujeres Latinas**, last Friday, lunch meetings, Info: Cristina Villego, 549-1831.

**Hispanic Leadership Council**, 3rd Fridays at noon, 1314 H St., Modesto 95354. Questions? Yamilet Valladolid, [yamiletv@hotmail.com](mailto:yamiletv@hotmail.com)

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:kathyhaynesSESG@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.