



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

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John McCutcheon Returns in Concert to Modesto

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

Six-time Grammy nominated folk musician John McCutcheon performs in his 19th benefit for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, January 11 at 7pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. John is a master of the guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano, autoharp and fiddle. His annual concert has been called the best thing about January in Modesto. John's latest albums, *Bucket List* and *Cabin Fever*, will be available at the concert.

COVID precautions will include proof of vaccination upon entry, masks indoors at all times and reduced seating. John says "Please, do your part to make sure musicians can work, venues can stay open, and we can all gather together again. And again. See you soon!" John's video appeal to do our part is here: <https://vimeo.com/600308624>

John's classic anti-war song, *Christmas in the Trenches*, can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJi41RWaTCs>. It is the story of the unauthorized Christmas truce during World War I when German and British soldiers laid down their arms.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$28 at the door and youth 24 and under are \$10. Online tickets sales are at <https://mccutcheonmodesto2022.brownpapertickets.com/>

Tickets can be purchased in person by check or cash at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., 209-523-1438 and at Intrinsic Elements, 1214 J Street, 209-409-8510. Both ticket venues are closed Dec. 26-Jan. 1.

Information: contact Ken Schroeder 209-480-4576. John's website is www.folkmusic.com

You can sponsor the John McCutcheon concert

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the concert. You will receive tickets to the concert, your name in the program, and reserved seating. Five levels of sponsorship are available:

Autoharp — \$40 **One** ticket

Guitar — \$75 **Two** tickets

Banjo — \$150 **Four** tickets

Piano — \$300 **Eight** tickets

Hammer Dulcimer — \$500 **Sixteen** tickets,

You may send your sponsorship donation check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134, Modesto CA 95354. Please let us know the level of sponsorship and whether you have a dedication. Write "sponsor" in the memo on your check.

Specify how you would like the dedication to appear in the program (such as "In Honor of



..." or "To the Memory of ...") The Modesto Peace/Life Center is a tax-exempt organization under the IRS code section 501(c)(3).

Critical acclaim for John McCutcheon:

"John McCutcheon is not only one of the best musicians in the USA, but also a great singer, songwriter, and song leader. And not just incidentally, he is committed to helping hard-working people everywhere to organize and push this world in a better direction."

— Pete Seeger

"He has an uncanny ability to breathe new life into the familiar. His storytelling has the richness of fine literature."

— Washington Post

continued page 2

8 Tips to Get You Through Difficult Conversations This Holiday Season

By **SARAH VAN GELDER**

It's a year since the election. You're preparing to get together with friends or family for a Thanksgiving feast or looking ahead to end-of-year holidays, but there's one thing you're dreading: the conversation with the family member or friend who voted for Donald Trump.

What do you say? How do you deal with a divide that has fractured a nation and even reached into our families?

I recently sat down with Linda Stout, founder of Spirit in Action, who grew up in a poor, white community in rural North Carolina, and who has, for years, organized poor people across race, class, and politi-

cal lines. Her insights helped me to see the opportunities in these kinds of difficult conversations. So, inspired by her stories, here's an eight-step plan for getting through the holidays:

1. Prepare In Advance: Bring short statements of gratitude, poems, a song, or a story to the gathering. Or perhaps bring history: Stout used to read aloud from Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* so her children would hear the unsanitized version of early encounters between settlers and Native people.

2. Listen: When difficult political discussions come up, listen first, Stout said, even to those you disagree with. Listen especially

for the other person's struggles and hopes. When people feel heard, they are more open to other viewpoints.

3. Acknowledge The Other Person's Experience And Opinions: Ask respectful questions based on authentic curiosity about their lives.

4. Share Stories: Tell your story, too. Center your story in your heart: Explain why you care, what worries you, what you hope for. Allow yourself to be vulnerable.

Stout told me that her family has a tradition of storytelling, but if it doesn't come naturally to you, prepare stories to share in

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL	2
LIFE GOES ON	3
TEACH THE TRUTH	4
CLIMATE IS CHANGING	5

HOMELESS & SHELTERS	6
ALCHEMY OF WORK	7
BEAT THE SUPPLY CHAIN!	8
KCBP RADIO.	10
OUR OWN BEST ENEMY	11

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If you do not have Adobe Reader, download it free from <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>

Modesto needs a Police Review Commission with an Independent Police Auditor

A Civilian Review Committee composed of representatives from various community organizations, including the Modesto Peace/Life Center, has prepared specific proposal documents, modeled upon the City of Davis' successful police review process, which have been sent to each member of the Modesto City Council. Please contact your councilmember and urge support for a Civilian Police Review Board with an Independent Police Auditor To receive a copy of these documents, email Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org

A Community Forum on **Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement for Modesto**, with recognized experts on this issue, was held on February 27, 2021. Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39G3jn10uHU>

Supported by the following groups: Modesto/Stanislaus NAACP, ACLU Stanislaus, Latino Community Roundtable, North Valley Labor Federation, Modesto Peace/Life Center, Faith in the Valley, Democratic Women's Club of Stanislaus, Valley Improvement Projects, Indivisible Stanislaus, Turlock Black Lives Matter Movement, Stanislaus & Tuolumne Central Labor Council, United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME 3930, Advocates for Justice, DSA Stanislaus, Modesto Church of the Brethren.

ACTION: Get your local organization to sign on to this effort. How? Email Jim Costello at jcostello@igc.org for information.

Follow closely "Forward Together"—An initiative focused on police-community relations started by the City of Modesto at <https://www.modestogov.com/forwardtogether>. And watch for news about Sheriff Dirkse's "Project Resolve."

8 Tips to Get You Through Difficult Conversations

from page 1

advance. The best stories are ones you or someone close to you experienced. But you can also turn to stories you've heard or read. The main thing is that they are true and heartfelt.

5. Share Facts, But Sparingly: Talk about what you know to be true, but don't use information as a weapon; use it to increase understanding. Especially in a time when so many are suspicious of experts, trusted friends and family can be better at breaking through the fake news and offering a reality check.

6. Avoid Jargon: Many progressives speak in ways that "leave people behind," Stout said. Avoid in-group language. This may be difficult if you mainly talk to activist friends or to other people in your profession; in both cases, language signifies your identity and your community—and excludes people. Specific, simple, straightforward words are most powerful.

Stout told me about her conservative, Southern relatives who were complaining to her about a nearby Occupy encamp-

27 Ways to Beat the Supply Chain Slump and Give the Greatest Holiday Gifts Ever

You'll never again gift another store-bought candle

By KATIE O'REILLY | Nov 26 2021, Sierra Magazine

This Black Friday, we may be forced to rethink America's great shopping addiction.

Most of us are well aware that the global supply chain crisis has led to raw-material shortages and shipping delays. Experts predict these snarls won't let up until next year or beyond. This could be a taste of what's to come: Climate disasters are sure to impact how we produce, source, and ship the materials used to make food items, cell phones, cars, toys, and all manner of popular holiday gifts. The time is nigh for a shift in our collective consumerist habits.

Unfortunately, the pandemic fundamentally altered the way many of us shop—digital sales ballooned in 2020, creating a glut of padded mailers, shrink wrap, and, well, stuff—an alarming amount of which is ultimately destined for the landfill. Currently, less than 14 percent of the nearly 86 million tons of plastic packaging produced globally each year is recycled.

The good news is, holiday magic isn't contingent on a well-greased Amazon Prime account, nor transit via multiple far-flung shipping containers. Most of us don't need or want more stuff anyway. While problematic in countless ways, a supply chain kerfuffle on a global scale may be just the catalyst we need to think outside the box—and outside the 'Zon.'

Make 2021 the year of the DIY, experiential, and/or treasure-hunted used gift. These heartfelt items carry bona fides for both recipient and gifter. For one, you'll save plenty of cash. For another, making something with your own hands, or finding the most meaningful thrifted treasure, is bound to release happiness hormones—hardly a benefit to reap when mindlessly ordering up another Instant Pot or video game console.

Give the gift of a warm meal. Home-cooked food says "I care about you" so much more than any store-bought item like generic candles, socks, or picture frames, says Meaghan



continued page 8

MAPS offers free community science programs

7:30 pm. Participate by logging on to an Internet Link: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/maps.php> to sign up for notification of the link.

For archived MAPS talks: <https://share.yosemite.edu/view.aspx?i=1E7L10/22> might be live in Sierra Hall 132

Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. Zoom/YouTube. **Dr. Margaret Turnbull** (Ph.D. Univ. of Arizona, SETI Inst., NASA Ames), discusses planetary systems capable of supporting life as we know it. She developed a *Catalog of Nearby Habitable Systems* for use in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). Dr. Turnbull will briefly address the recent abundance of UFO news appearing on the popular media.

[UA Astrobiologist Helps NASA Search for Life on Other Planets | University of Arizona News](#)

[Margaret Turnbull | SETI Institute](#) [Margaret Turnbull - Wikipedia](#)

[Do Any Exoplanets Have Intelligent Occupants? \(SETIcon 2\) - YouTube](#)



MAPS is grateful to the MJC Foundation, SCOE, MJC, the MTA (Modesto Teachers Assn.) and the GVM for generous support.

ment. Stout explained that the occupiers objected to growing inequality—that corporations were getting huge tax breaks and government giveaways while hard-working families couldn't catch a break. Then there was silence, she told me. "Why don't they explain it so people can understand it," they asked her. While language about the "99 percent" had no meaning to them, Stout's explanation worked for them.

7. Be Patient: If things go off the rails, back up and try a different approach, Stout said. The point isn't to win points. It's to ignite understanding.

8. Make A Request: Consider making one modest request. (And be ready to accept a challenge to do something different yourself.) Stout told me about a cab driver in Savannah, Georgia, who was railing against Obamacare. She told him about her nephew's emergency appendectomy and the huge medical bills that resulted. Then she made one request. Stout asked the cab driver to watch news stations other than Fox each night for just one week. When she took another ride with him a week later, he told her how much he liked Chris

Matthews from MSNBC because he "was a good ol' boy" and that he had decided to limit his Fox News viewing to just one night per week.

The divides in our country have become profound. Fear of an uncertain future, economic dislocation, fake news, social isolation, and the belligerence of our tweeter-in-chief have contributed to this. And racism, sexism, and other "isms" are always just below the surface, ready to pop up when people are stressed. These divides keep us distracted and distrustful of each other, while dirty energy corporations continue polluting our air and water, and the military-industrial complex continues to threaten our future.

During the holidays, we might be able to turn down the volume of hostility and create some threads of understanding. And that would be something to be thankful for.

SARAH VAN GELDER is a co-founder and columnist at YES!, founder of PeoplesHub, and author of *The Revolution Where You Live: Stories from a 12,000-Mile Journey Through a New America*. Reprinted from [Yes Magazine](#).

A Few Personal Thoughts on the Pandemic

By TOM PORTWOOD

As I write, a soft November fog kisses the crinkling leaves of the Willow by my apartment. Low-hanging clouds had lingered through much of this Thursday, giving the landscape the timeless patina of a Technicolor film from long ago. The busy intersection of Floyd and Coffee, near where I live, always looks pretty and autumnal at this time of year, the foliage on the Chinese Pistache trees by the dental office vibrant and dramatic, the pile of leaves cascading from the Ginkgo bright yellow.

This is now the second holiday season we're entering with the COVID pandemic casting a shadow over everything. Sometimes we think the virus is receding but then a new wave arrives, the rates of transmission and deaths slowly edge upward once more, often rising precipitously for a time, and our hopes of returning to a pre-pandemic "normal" are dashed yet again. Of course, we need to keep living our lives to the fullest extent possible, but that isn't always easy.

As of November 18th, we've lost 1,404 people to COVID – so, at this point, one out of every 396 of us has been taken by this killer (based on an estimated Stanislaus County population of 555,728 residents in 2021). The losses are real, impacting families and their loved ones from one end of the County to the other.

Of course, COVID has had an impact on almost every aspect of life and started dividing us almost from the moment the first cases were reported in the Valley. All the issues surrounding COVID have only intensified the divisions that had been splitting us apart along partisan lines for a decade or more. And that's something of a calamity, not only because all the conspiracies and misinformation undermine the key public health messages that can save lives, but because embracing a cavalier attitude toward the virus disrespects the scale of the tragedy that's befallen us and *all but mocks the heroic* contributions of every one of the essential workers and volunteers who are working so hard to keep the world

running on track as best they can.

There's a small pond nestled in the apartment complex where I live. It's something of a gathering place for neighbors walking around the grounds and attracts its fair share of wild birds – Canada Geese come calling in the early months of the year, as do Snowy Egrets. One September, a Great Blue Heron swooped in for a couple of days and lunched at the pond like it was a snack bar. And long before I moved in almost eight years ago, the pond has been home to varying numbers of ducks, mostly Mallards.

Earlier this week I had walked out into a cool afternoon, a light breeze playing among the trees surrounding the pond. The sun had finally burned off most of the Tule fog, at least for a few hours, and it was quite splendid outside. Loaded down with a hamper full of clothes and detergent and heading for the community laundry room, I looked across the water searching for the ducks. The presence of the ducks has become a kind of talisman for me, a sign that nature can buoy our flagging spirits by simply *being there*. Not finding the ducks on the water, I began scanning the thick ivy for any signs of the Mallards. I was not to be disappointed. There, by the water's edge, and bobbing blissfully about lush ivy leaves I counted them – two or three Mallards here, several others on the other side of the pond, two others anchored in the little cove-like space below the eucalyptus – suddenly the landscape was aflutter with waterfowl, splashes of teal green, scarlet, indigo blue feathers shimmering in sunlight.

Following twenty hard months of this pandemic's brutal moments, its sometimes highs and many lows, these ducks can still bring a smile to my face, even if they are the noisiest neighbors I've ever had. They constantly remind me that we are just part of a greater whole – that we share this beautiful planet with our fellow creatures, that we are in fact connected to every living animal and plant.

We are connected to each other as well. Last year, in those early months of lockdown and uncertainty, I was reminded just how tightknit and interconnected a community can be, how gracious and generous people are, especially when the chips are down. As March gave way to April several of my neighbors – knowing I didn't drive and might have a hard time getting to the store or medical appointments – offered to help me in any way they could. Anytime I needed it, they said, without hesitating for a minute. Without blinking an eye. I was, and am, truly touched by their kindness.



During these last couple of years, I've learned much more about some of my neighbors and the difficulties they've faced during the pandemic. At least two of them work in health care settings and were among the first people I knew to get vaccinated. Three others work long, hard hours at essential jobs, are always dead-tired when they come home, and are the friendliest, most considerate neighbors you could ask for. Another neighbor comes by with her little dog on those days when I have a chair out on the front stoop of my apartment. We typically chat for a few minutes; find out what each of us is having for dinner. As we talk, her snowball-fluff of a dog peers up at me to get his chin scratched. Two babies have been born and both must be more than a year old by now. And I've had the privilege of watching a few toddlers taking their first herky-jerky walks around the pond, their respective moms one step behind them – hands out, ever ready to catch a fall.

Life goes on, as it turns out, even in the midst of so much loss, as it must and should. If the pandemic has taught us anything it's that life is even more fragile than we thought it was two short years ago. None of us needed a reminder that every moment counts. But it does. Actually, reminders are all around us, all the time.

KCBP Community Radio Seeks Volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's Community Radio Station the "Voice of the Valley" KCBP 95.5 FM needs volunteers to help develop the following programs:

Children • Art • Poetry • News/Journalism
• Education • Health • Science • Social
Justice • Multicultural • Music/All Genres

Other Opportunities: Underwriting •
Fundraising/Event Committee • Community
Outreach.

Contact Jocelyn Cooper,
KCBP Development
Director, (209) 422-0119
kcbpvolapp@gmail.com



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Students Say Teach the Truth

An LFJ award winner centers her students' perspectives in the current conversation about racism, social justice education and the need for an inclusive national narrative.

By ELIZABETH KLEINROCK

Although we've recently witnessed a mainstream mass awakening to the prevalence of racism in our society with the increased visibility of movements such as Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate, lawmakers, educators and caregivers in 20 states are currently fighting legislative and other battles over what confused legislators are calling the presence of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in K-12 schools. At this moment, these legislators and their supporters are misusing CRT as an umbrella term for topics such as race, racism, gender, diversity, equity, liberation and identity, among others. However, it's not lost on me that the opinions missing from this conversation are those of the people most directly affected: our students.

As these laws will touch millions of our nation's youth, I wondered what my students thought about this ongoing battle over teaching about race, racism and U.S. history. The following responses were collected from a group of my current and former students, ranging from fifth to ninth grades. (All students who are quoted volunteered to participate and gave permission for their words to be used anonymously.)

Question: Right now, many teachers, parents and politicians are trying to pass laws to make it illegal for schools to teach about race, racism, gender and privilege, among other social justice-related topics. Some even call teaching about these issues brainwashing and believe it will cause people to be more divided. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- I think it's a good thing to have people teach children about race and racism because teaching is not just about teaching math, reading and writing, although those subjects are all important. It's about teaching culture and history and being able to learn all the terrible things that have happened in history. And teaching children that racism is not a good thing will make an impact on the world later and just because people were born with a different color skin than other people, that doesn't mean that they deserve any less than other people do. And I would like you to think to yourself of 3 really good reasons why people of color deserve less than you do. I sure can't. (fifth grader)
- It is important for kids to know about these topics. For example, I think the most horrible period of the U.S. was slavery, because white people treated African Americans as animals, and that is not ok. We should all share the same rights, and be treated like humans. I think kids should learn about social justice topics like gender, race, feminism etc. because it will allow them to realize the mistakes done in the past, so we don't repeat it again. (eighth grader)
- I think it is so important to learn about social justice in

school. If children aren't learning this then we will be going back in time. Separation and division will be more extreme as if we are to teach our generation what we have done wrong so they know what to do better. If we are ever actually looking for a future of equality then we must properly teach our future and present. (ninth grader)

- Learning about race and racism is a very sensitive topic, but far from brainwashing. If people don't start to learn, there really won't be any progress, everyone will just keep hating everyone who's different. It's only a sensitive topic because people are uncomfortable talking about it, and

It's not lost on me that the opinions missing from this conversation are those of the people most directly affected: our students.

that's not right. In the future if people start to learn about equality, hopefully this topic will just be normal. (seventh grader)

- I think that it is even more brainwashing to deny that there are hate crimes happening everywhere. This world has awful things but we can absolutely change the way that we treat each other. (ninth grader)
- Although these topics may be new, they are a crucial part of a student's education. I completely disagree with those trying to pass laws to make it illegal to learn about social justice issues. To this day, a class that has always stuck with me was 4th grade. This is because it provided a safe space for students to learn about politics and social justice issues without being judged or feeling unaccepted. It is so important for young children to learn about others' gender identity, race, and culture, without being taught to have a close-minded view on people who are different from them. Learning about and accepting differences from young ages is so important because it sets up their views on life from a young age. In today's society we need to have people growing up knowing that they are safe and accepted rather than scared. They need to grow up without the fear of being hurt due to race, sexuality, gender, etc. The main way to do this is by incorporating unbiased information into classes and letting students learn who they are and why it is important to stand for what you believe in and to accept others. So no, I absolutely disagree with making it illegal to teach students about social justice issues. (ninth grader)
- I think that teachers should be able to teach about race, racism, gender, privilege. If we learn about it we will be aware and able to understand what is going on in the world much better. If teachers teach students facts and a variety of perspectives about race, racism, gender, privilege then the students can come to a conclusion on their own. (sixth grader)
- In the state of our world at the moment, I think it's crucial for everyone to be aware of all the issues that are

happening. I especially think that it's important for kids to know what is happening, because they are the future and it is key for them to be educated. I understand that parents want to shield their kids from real world topics like racism, privilege, and lots of other issues that we face. Kids should learn about that stuff at a young age because it's crucial that they know what is wrong, so they can be inspired to be an activist for change. If you shield them away from the problems then it is more likely that they will show up. I disagree with the law because when I was younger I was taught about social justice issues. One of them included equal pay for women, and it really inspired me to do more research about equality. That was something that I was super passionate about, and still am, and if no one taught me about that, I would've missed out on learning something that could affect me years down the road, and I fear if we don't teach these social issues now to kids, that is exactly what's going to happen to them. (ninth grader)

- I think that it is very important for students to learn about race, racism, gender, privilege and other social justice related topics because if students have concerns or have experienced racism, discrimination or felt like they weren't treated well then teaching them about these issues could help them understand. It could also help people learn how to advocate for themselves and others. (sixth grader)

Rather than center our own, adult perspectives, we cannot forget that our education system exists to serve our students. It's our responsibility to equip them with the tools to learn from mistakes of the past and build a better future. Lessons that tackle issues my students mentioned—such as gender-based pay disparities, the ugly parts of U.S. history such as enslavement, and how racism permeates and manifests in our society—invite young learners to view our nation holistically and draw their own conclusions.

Those of us who teach about identity and history within the context of the United States do so because we care about the

We can't change the past. But when we as educators recognize that we have the power to create a more fair and inclusive future, we have a responsibility to do so.

future of this country and are investing in its healing from past and present trauma. We can't change the past. But when we as educators recognize that we have the power to create a more fair and inclusive future, we have a responsibility to do so.

About the Author

Elizabeth Kleinrock is an anti-bias and anti-racist educator who just published her first book. She is also a 2018 recipient of the Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching.

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"Climate Has Changed for 3½ Billion Years; Why Should it Stop Now?"

By RICHARD ANDERSON, Ph.D.

From The Valley Citizen

Sometimes the Valley's science-deniers get to be too much for Dr. Richard Anderson, a retired Professor of Biology formerly at Modesto Junior College. With a PhD in plant cell structure and a master's degree in marine biology, along with decades of further study, Anderson offers clear explanations of climate change basics. Like all great teachers, he has a special gift for making complex issues clear. Here's his response to those who deny or don't understand the science behind climate change.

A dominant problem blocking many people from recognizing that human CO₂ emissions are overheating the Earth is that they know Earth's climate has drastically changed in the past. Then they reason, present-day warming is just another natural swing of the thermometer.

A couple days ago, a friend asked me, "How do I know this global warming thing isn't just another cycle that has happened for thousands of years?"

In 2009, a CSU Stanislaus professor presented a Science Colloquium talk at MJC, "Climate Has Changed for 3 ½ Billion Years; Why Should it Stop Now?" Check out: <https://vimeo.com/647014371>

Just this November, an MJC philosophy professor railed at me in an email:

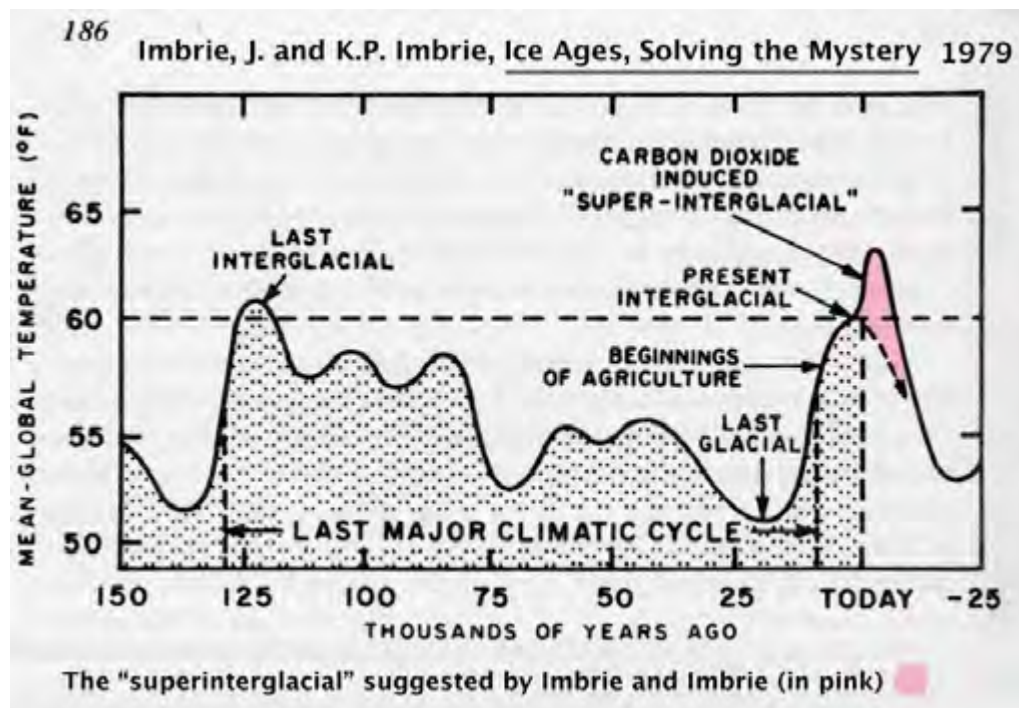
"I am AMAZED that you can swallow this "Climate Change" garbage you are selling, after reviewing just a bit of the Geological history of earth. Of COURSE, the climate changes back and forth.

"There have been VAST swings in temperature and CO₂ levels over the past 4 and a half billion years on earth. The "burning" question here is whether the CO₂ levels are the main driver of Climate change, and whether present CO₂ levels threaten to burn us all up. The answer to these questions appears to be as resounding NO."

In 2013, Dr. John Holdren, Barack Obama's science advisor, was grilled by Rep. Wayne Stockman of Texas during a Republican-led inquiry to find the truth about current global warming. Check this out: <https://youtu.be/nVqKZqgx3W4>

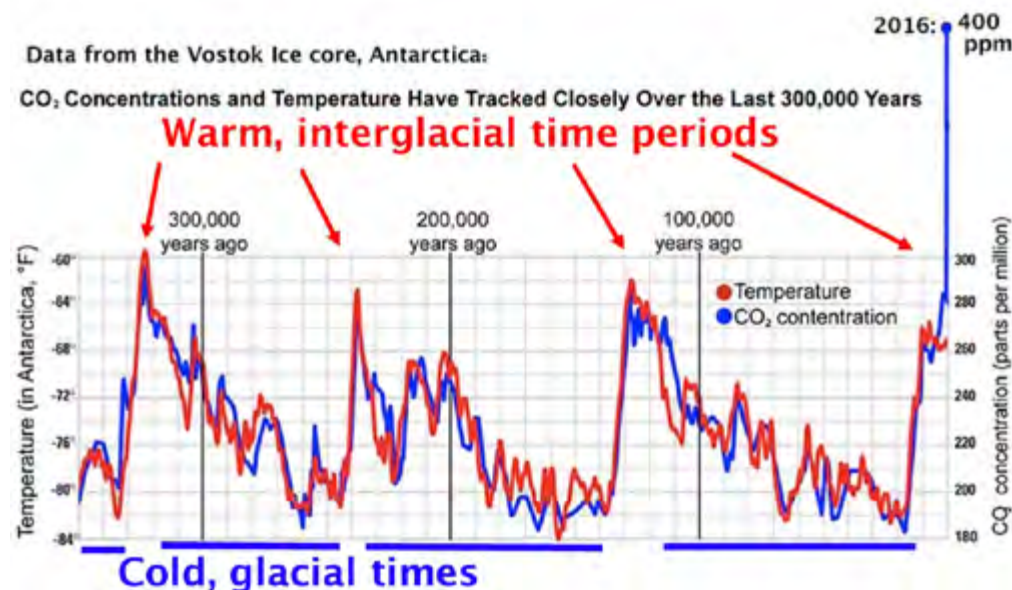
Holdren points out that current science shows that the ~100,000-year Milankovitch cycles start and end the recent ice ages. The temperature of Earth starts rising at the end of an ice age, causing the release of CO₂. This comes from the warming oceans and the release of coastal methane hydrates, release of methane from soils like tundra and peat bogs, and more. The CO₂ rise is a positive feedback mechanism result, not primary cause of the warming. All of these are operating right now.

Orbital cycles as the cause of ice ages is not a new idea. Check out this graph showing the extra warming of our Earth that was expected by earth/climate scientists as early as 1979, by Imbrie and Imbrie, *Ice Ages, Solving the Mystery*:



Spend a few moments pondering this graph. It shows that we presently are in an expected cooling period, leading into the next ice age. But Earth has NOT started to cool down. Why? It's not a secret: Anthropogenic global warming. The Imbries say we are now in a "Super-Interglacial."

Climate scientists don't just make this stuff up. Here is a graph of data from the Russian ice core drilled above Vostok Lake. Note in the upper right, the CO₂ is now 414.57 parts per million on 11/15/21 and rising.)



Readers may be familiar with this graph. Temperature is the red line; the CO₂ concentration is the blue line. There are people who discount CO₂'s importance because at the start of a glacial period, the temperature may rise a bit BEFORE the CO₂ rises. Some erroneously conclude, "Therefore CO₂ isn't the cause of ice age temperature swings. It isn't a problem now."

Indeed, during recent ice ages, CO₂ was not the primary cause of the warming. It was an amplifier of the orbital cycle effects. Since the Industrial Revolution, human CO₂ emissions have become the primary cause of our current warming. Failing to understand this, we will fail to address one of the greatest natural calamities humankind has ever faced.

As humans add over 30 billion tons of CO₂ annually to our air, this warms the Earth; makes our oceans more acidic; causes the ocean's volume to expand and sea levels to rise; and exacerbates so many climate disruptions that we are enduring- a growing assault on the future security of people everywhere.

Homeless: The (almost) Unbearable Burden of Shelters

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

“Almost all emergency shelters of today are over their heads,” said Major Harold Laubach at Modesto’s Salvation Army Berberian Shelter on November 19. “But for people with mental health issues, we are probably the best alternative. Forty percent of our residents deal with mental health challenges and another 40 percent deal with substance abuse challenges.”

Laubach was responding to a growing litany of complaints from residents of Stanislaus County’s low barrier shelter that rules are arbitrary, staff members too often look down on residents, and promises of housing have been made in bad faith. The low barrier shelter shares a building with a more traditional Salvation Army Shelter on 9th Street, near downtown Modesto.

A great many of the shelter’s problems arise from its growing role as the only alternative for mentally ill, physically disabled, and recently discharged hospital patients. Moreover, many who seek shelter have perilous health conditions when they enter.

“The fire truck and an ambulance come here almost every day,” said Laubach. Laubach also said some of today’s laws contribute to the growing burden shelters carry as the last resort for people with nowhere to go.



“By law, hospitals are required to seek beds for those experiencing homelessness before they’re discharged. Many are brought here when they still need some level of medical attention. We’ve just been approved to hire Licensed Vocational Nurses and we have already added Certified Nursing Assistants, but there are shortages of qualified people. We currently have 37 residents in wheelchairs.”

Problems also arise when residents enter the shelter drugged or drunk. Because it’s a low barrier facility, the policies are based on a client’s behavior, not their level of impairment.

“We don’t have drug or alcohol tests,” said Laubach, “but we do have metal detectors so that people can’t enter with weapons or drug paraphernalia. We otherwise have no rules about drug use, except we don’t allow it on the premises.



Even so, people are sometimes able to smuggle drugs in.”

Laubach said there are very creative ways to smuggle drugs into the shelter.

“We found drugs in those household safes disguised as canned goods. We’ve had people smuggle drugs in using soda cans to conceal the drugs. And when you are working with people with addictions, we sometimes find them unconscious in the bathrooms.”

Complaints about the bathrooms are among the most common from shelter residents, despite the new ADA compliant bathrooms. When asked why he repeatedly left the shelter, the late Alan Davis said it was because he couldn’t use the bathrooms. Davis was in a wheelchair, and the bathrooms are handicapped-accessible, so few people took Davis seriously. However, there could be other issues with bathroom services, including lack of capacity for the number of residents.

“They shouldn’t have women cleaning the men’s room,” said Tyrone Thomas, a long-term resident. “I had to go and wasn’t allowed in because a woman was cleaning. It was late at night and I couldn’t wait.”

To Increase NON-Congregate Shelter or Not

By FRANK PLOOF

First, let me share a recent article [on this page and] in The Valley Citizen: Homeless: The (almost) Unbearable Burden of Shelters

After reading, ask yourself, “How can we better serve the most vulnerable people in our community? What can we do?” Clearly what we have been doing works for some but fails too many, especially the mentally ill, physically and mentally disabled, the elderly and the infirm.

Do we just want them out of sight, or do we really want to provide them the help they need to improve their lives to whatever degree is possible?

What kind of community do we want to be known as?

My option is to embrace them as fellow humans who in many cases are broken and need to be healed to whatever level possible. The first step is to get them appropriate shelter as soon as possible.

We have thousands of folks in the county who now live literally unsheltered, as well as in emergency shelters, in vehicles and travel trailers, and who couch surf. Many bed down on our streets and in our parks. They have nowhere to go and often lack access even to a rest room.

Another long-term resident, Daniel Shockley, was evicted from the shelter after another dispute involving the restrooms.

“The bathrooms were full on our (low barrier) side, so I went to the other side,” said Shockley.

“Someone knocked on the door and I said, ‘I’m almost done.’ They thought I said, ‘I’m loading a gun,’ and they kicked me out.”

Shockley’s term of eviction was shortened after consideration of his long term and good record.

“I’ve been here two years and I’ve only been written up three times,” said Shockley, still upset about the eviction.

Laubach said that in many cases, residents receive up to five warnings before further action. Given the high proportion of mentally ill residents, it’s not unusual for staff members to have to deal with petty disputes that can escalate into potentially dangerous conflicts. While there is 24/7 security on site, at times they have to take on the roles of psychologists and psychiatrists, roles for which they aren’t trained.

It’s also not unusual for staff to have to deal with disputes between spouses.

Marcus Lopez said he was evicted for arguing with his wife.

“They have cameras. They could check and see I never touched her,” said Lopez, bitter about having been ordered to leave the shelter.

Even with a robust security system with cameras, the shelter’s managers often have to rely on verbal reports from the parties involved in an argument. Such cases can easily turn into competitions where seeking the truth is less valued than seeking to avoid responsibility or blame. These kinds of controversies, if they can be resolved at all, require the kind of professional counseling or arbitration required of social

continued page 10

Homeless: The Wonderful Alchemy of Work

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

In the end, it wasn't the beatings, the sexual abuse, the hunger or the ugly words that broke Carrie Turnquist; it was the indifference of others.

After she was badly beaten when a passenger in a passing car jumped out, pulled her hair back and began punching her in the face and head, she lay on the sidewalk while people watched and did nothing.

"I felt like a dog that had been injured and tossed to the side of the road," she said. "Nobody cared. Nobody offered to help. I felt like my life didn't matter to anyone. I was badly bruised and bleeding and had to walk by myself to Doctor's Hospital. I knew I had to get out."

Carrie was beaten on South 9th Street in Modesto on February 15, 2017, in an area so notorious for drugs, crime and prostitution it was featured in a 2016 documentary film entitled, *"The Nine."* At the time, she had been a Modesto resident for over twenty years, most of them homeless.

Carrie had been beaten before, off and on all her life, but never this severely. The daughter of an alcoholic mother who belittled and blamed her, and an often-absent father, she felt rejected almost from birth.

Born 44 years ago in Salinas, California, Carrie's world came apart when her father died, followed four weeks later by her sister. Afflicted with a severe overbite and a tendency to put on weight, she was a natural target for the cruel ridicule of kids and classmates, ridicule that continued into adulthood.

"I looked like a donkey or a rabbit," she said, "and at one time I weighed 400 pounds."

By her late 20s, she was a drug-using criminal with a specialty as designated driver of getaway cars for thieves and robbers. Attempts to establish stability and security through marriage and work were thwarted by a husband who stole and squandered money. She fell into homelessness repeatedly, even after stints with Sacramento's Loaves and Fishes program.

Carrie's life began to change when Beard Brook Village opened for permitted camping in the fall of 2018. In 2019, not long after Beard Brook closed down, Carrie moved with hundreds of others to the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES).

For a woman who had been belittled, ridiculed, beaten or ignored most of her life, MOES became a haven, even though she still suffered from occasional bullying and taunting. The biggest difference for Carrie was she found people who listened and tried to help.

"Doug Holcomb was wonderful," she said of the camp's director of logistics and support. "He listened to me and he really cared. Red Hawk [Darnelle] was always there when I needed him. That lady at the Spotlight Café [Angel Huerta] is a miracle worker and so is the man with the red truck [Frank Ploof]; they are angels," she said of the staff and volunteers who were an almost daily presence at the campsite.

For almost the first time in her life, Carrie began to feel a sense of self-worth and dignity. At times, though, she still felt helpless and vulnerable. She also got a much-needed rest.

"You never have a chance for R&R [rest and relaxation]



when you're homeless," she said. "You're always being told to move from wherever you are. You can't even get a good night's sleep."

At MOES, Carrie qualified for dental assistance. Later, she received new teeth and corrections for her overbite. She lost the teeth when they were confiscated by a self-appointed custodian of the Tuolumne River.

"I was fishing along the river one day when I left my stuff for a few minutes," she said. "When I came back this man in a pontoon boat had taken my pole and belongings. I asked to at least give me back my teeth and the medicine for my dog, but he told me I had no rights and didn't belong along the river."

Losing her teeth was a devastating blow, but it was even worse to lose the medication for her beloved dog, Peanut.

"For a lot of homeless people, their dog is all they have," she said. "They would commit a major felony to get their dog back from the pound. That's why it's so hard for homeless people when they have to give up their dog to go into a shelter or even when they have to put it in a cage at night."

When Carrie moved into a local shelter after MOES closed, she had a long talk with Peanut about having to stay in a cage at night.

"I kept telling her everything was all right and I was still there for her," she said.

Carrie was able to adjust to having Peanut in a cage, but had difficulty understanding some of the rules at the shelter, especially when the Covid pandemic brought about more complicated requirements.

"I got kicked out when they thought I was exposed to Covid. All I asked them was how to understand exposure. I said that 'does it count as exposure if you talked to someone who talked to someone who talked to someone who had been exposed.' I didn't know what counted as exposure."

Still struggling to adjust to shelter living, Carrie found the path she'd been looking for when she joined the [Downtown Streets Team](#) (DST).

DST offers a deceptively simple program with a remarkable record of success getting homeless people off the streets.

"We don't have a handbook," said DST Project Manager Meggan Clifford. "People grow organically from peer inspi-

ration and instruction."

Rules at DST are simple.

The most important rule, said Clifford, is, "show up. Once someone joins, all we say at first is, 'show up, and walk with the team.'" At first, there are no other requirements, not even a drug test.

"Sometimes we have to send someone home," said Clifford, "but not often."

DST is designed to get homeless people off the streets and into housing by means of gainful employment. One key to its success is buy-in from team members, who volunteer to join.

Volunteers join teams that pick up trash. They agree to receive stipends in the form of coupons redeemable at local retailers. Almost unconsciously, they learn simultaneously the value of work and necessary skills of resource management, i.e., how to manage money through the use of the coupons.

"It's not enough to get people housed," said Clifford, "you've got to teach them how to stay housed. The longer people are homeless, the less able they are to become self-sufficient, even when inside. We've had people go shopping for groceries then put the meat they've bought into cabinets. They don't know it goes in the refrigerator."

Designed to last a year, the DST program puts fundamentals like showing up ahead of filling out forms, traversing a labyrinth of services and care providers, and producing credentials and job histories. A basic principle is that useful work bestows dignity and self-respect, especially when guided by peers.



Carrie Turnquist (left) and Downtown Streets Team members

"We have 60 people in the Modesto program, and 40 on the waiting list," said Clifford, attesting to the popularity of a program for people who often refuse help of any kind.

Ask Carrie Turnquist what she's learned working with the Streets Team, and she says, "Meggan [Clifford] taught me I am valuable, worthy and important."

Today, Carrie Turnquist proudly wears the green shirt of a team leader for the Downtown Streets Team. After qualifying for rental assistance, she has an apartment of her own.

She says, "I feel like a giant. I even understand now what happened to my mother. She went through so much I never understood. She's a giant too."

Like a lot of working people, Carrie has a routine for when she gets off work:

"I go home and I snuggle with Peanut," she says. "I snuggle with Peanut."

27 Ways to Beat the Supply Chain Slump

from page 2

Thomas, co-owner of [Pinch Spice Market](#). “Whether it’s something like a casserole or a pie left on their doorstep, or a holiday card with a coupon for a meal at a time of their choosing, you’re pouring heart and care into the gift, and recipients feel that.”

Here’s a holiday gift for outdoors-lovers that won’t be impacted by the global supply chain: a **digital version of the America the Beautiful Pass** (\$80), which grants recipients (plus three accompanying adults aged 16 and older) free entry into 2,000+ federal recreation areas (including all 63 national parks) for a year. Even if your giftee already has a pass, they can use your present to renew their own once it expires. And you can feel good about the fact that proceeds from pass sales are used to fund public lands. In the same vein, REI offers an **Annual Northwest Forest Pass** (\$30) good for entry in all US Forest Service-managed forests in Washington and Oregon for a year. Trust us, these kinds of gifts truly inspire adventures.

Here’s another digital slam dunk for the happy (and about to become happier) campers on your list: **The Dyrt Pro** (\$36). The premium offering available from camping app The Dyrt (free to download from Apple and Google Play App Stores), this service helps camping enthusiasts plan road trips, find free campsites on public lands, use the app even while offline, and grants access to more than 4 million user-generated campground reviews and tips.

‘Tis the season to get crafty—which is more feasible than it probably was the last time you busted out the scissors and glue, as we now live in the Age of Instructional YouTube. If you’ve got extra cotton rope hanging around the house, Tina Hawk, CEO and founder of Choice Mutual, says to go online to learn how to **make macramé hangers for houseplant lovers**. “Make more if you get the hang of it—it’ll save you a ton of money buying expensive gifts.” Hawk also recommends looking into how to **upcycle wine corks into ornaments** and adds that gifting homemade food items is one of the most festive ways to beat the supply-chain slump. “As long as you can find basic baking ingredients, you’re good to **gift gingerbread cookies, festive jams and marmalades, and traditional Christmas puddings**,” Hawk says. “Even better? Come up with creative recipes using what you already have in reserve. You’ll be surprised with just how far some ingenuity and a bit of risk-taking in the kitchen will get you.”

Even better? Craft an uber-personalized item. **Cobble a loved one’s old tee shirts into a quilt** (those who don’t sew can use iron glue) or **create a coupon book of activities and favors custom-tailored to your recipient**. Lifestyle and fashion blogger Maria Juvakka loves to **make personalized photo candles**. “All you need is a tall white candle, clear packing tape, and a few laser-printed photos,” she says. “Once you have photos laser-printed from the local copy shop, and any printed-out quotes you want to include, cover them with tape and soak them in water for 10 to 15 minutes. Then, peel off the paper, dry the photo, and stick it to the side of a candle.”

Not an artiste or craftsperson yourself? You can still get around the supply chain meltdown and **give the gift of one-of-a-kind art**. It gives you a great excuse to check out local galleries and art shows, and your purchases will help sustain your community’s artists. You can even commission personalized pieces for friends and family members (though if you decide to go that route, be sure to order well ahead of time to give the artist time to create it).

Who doesn’t love tea, coffee, and/or cider? Most of us have some variety packs of tea and coffee festering in our pantries (after all, we tend to only use the flavors we like best) that we can bundle into unused mugs (let’s be honest; most of us have a cupboard-full of them but only use one or two). This tip

comes care of Ian Sells, CEO of RebateKey, who also plans to **give out homemade fire cider**; i.e., the folk remedy/health tonic used for decades to protect against colds and flus, and ease sinus congestion. “There are tons of recipes out there, the ingredients are easy to find, and it’s always great to master your own flavor—experimenting with content ratio, or adding a different spice for a new kick,” he says. “Get nice bottles and label them for the holidays.”

Create a collection of positive affirmations. Certified stress management coach Stephen Light recommends gathering some paper and markers to create a personalized “self-care kit” for loved ones. For every day of 2022, write down an affirmation (these can be as simple as “I am loved” or “I am worthy” or hyper-specific to your loved one’s experiences and goals, such as “I am attracting the work that is right for me” for someone going through a career change). “The idea is to write from the heart and reinforce their inherent self-worth,” says Light, who further recommends “releasing your inner artist” by decorating each page and personalizing every corner of the booklet “so the recipient feels even more seen and loved.”

Similarly, you could **create a stack of “just in case” letters for a loved one**. This idea comes from writer Emily Appelbaum, who recommends penning a series of sincere letters for different situations and marking them accordingly: “Read this when you’re feeling gloomy” or “Read this when you have something to celebrate.” Applebaum says, “This is a present loved by everyone. It doesn’t require expensive things, but it does require time and effort.”

Familiarity can be a great (and comforting!) gift. Kyle MacDonald from [Force by Mojio](#) likes to **pay for subscriptions to services the recipient already digs**, like Netflix or Spotify. “There’s often pressure for gift-giving to be all about novelty, but sticking with what’s familiar ensures the gift will be enjoyed and used.” If COVID rates stay low, MacDonald adds that a good old-fashioned cookie swap can always serve as a replacement for a traditional gift exchange at a family or office party. Victoria Cornell, founder of Motherhood Life Balance, likes to **bake a few different types of cookies and mix them up in giftable cookie jars**. “I also include a recipe card so they can make a favorite cookie for themselves.” Cornell also recommends finding old frames you no longer use and re-gifting the frame with a picture you know a friend or family member would love.

Make a donation in a loved one’s name to a cause they’re passionate about. The holiday season is as good a time as ever to consider setting aside fancy gadgets and other goodies and instead giving the gift of your support to an organization that matters—those on the front lines of civil liberties, women’s rights, LGBTQ causes, immigrants, and of course, the climate and environment. Better yet, you could let your loved ones be strategic about their own causes and **give the gift of a gift card to Pennyloafer**. They’ll not only be able to learn about all sorts of different organizations involved in their cause, but spread their support among multiple organizations, and work with others to affect collective impact around select causes (like fighting the climate crisis, or mental health).

Throw loved ones a unique experience—a virtual experience. Kevin Burke of Extension PR recommends the following offerings from Squarespace entrepreneurs:

-**Pilates by Amanda:** Virtual pilates classes taught by celebrity trainer Amanda Kassir (whose clients include Sofia Richie and Whitney Port).

-**The Strology:** Astrologer Kirah Tabourn offers unique, one-on-one astrology readings, webinars, and workshops via Zoom.

-**We Met at Acme:** Lindsey Metz of the popular podcast [We](#)



[Met at Acme](#) sells custom matchmaking services, and personal dating app profile consultations.

-**Orange Glou:** Virtual wine tastings and subscriptions selected by sommelier Doreen Winkler, including tasting notes, vinification info, and recommended food pairings.

-**Duett Interiors:** This residential design firm offers an e-design package to spruce up one’s home via virtual stylings, curated personal shopping lists, and organization tips.

-In a similar vein, PR pro Christina Gregor points to the **virtual gift of Singdaptive**, which she describes as “kind of like Masterclass for singers/performers—used by beginners, Broadway professionals, choristers, singer/songwriters, and more.” This instructional singing video service allows users to record their own singing and receive direct feedback from a vocal coach, and comes in **two subscription packages**: Singdaptive Standard (\$25/month), which provides one-on-one asynchronous coaching, hand-picked lessons and exercises, and access to more than 350 on-demand lessons, and Singdaptive Premium (\$99/month), which provides additional customizable learning and unlimited exchanges with instructors. In any case, it sounds pretty ideal for that family member who can’t stop singing in the shower.

Kids can be particularly tough to gift during times of supply unrest. For young’uns, I’ve long referred to [Wired’s 2011 list of the greatest toys of all time](#) (which, spoiler alert, includes cardboard boxes and tubes, sticks, and dirt) because seriously, **can you recall ever having access to a cardboard box and not having a total blast?** For slightly older kids, a less free (but very financially empowering) option lies in the fee-free app and debit card from [Till Financial](#), which is designed to **help kids and teens develop real-world-applicable money skills**. It’s the gift that keeps giving—for you, too! Because kids can use the app to indicate they’re saving for a new skateboard, car, trip, etc., family and friends, moving forward, can contribute directly to their goals.

For the kid who just has to open something new (to them), **check out online toy trading groups and Facebook “Buy Nothing” exchanges**. Parents and grandparents would also be wise to **look into Sierra’s guide to buying a good used bike**. Oh, and secondhand book stores, too!

Don’t worry, you can even gift techies during times of supply chain collapse. **Check out plug, an online retailer of the latest certified pre-owned tech devices**, offering up to 70 percent off other retailers’ prices for devices such as iPhones, Androids, iPads, Apple watches, Macs, AirPods, Beats, and more. All used devices are hand-cleaned, sanitized, inspected for functionality, and come with free two-day shipping (overnight options are available too), as well as a **12-month warranty and 30-day money-back guarantee**. Considering the UN reports that global e-waste volumes grew by 21 percent between 2014 and 2019, it’s a gift that treads lightly, helps to reduce e-waste, and takes a bite out of **planned obsolescence**.

Katie O’Reilly is [Sierra’s](#) adventure and lifestyle editor. Follow her on Twitter [@katieowrites](#).

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Mark Nicoll-Johnson – Outstanding Central Valley Poet

Mark Nicoll-Johnson was raised in Reseda, California, and educated in Los Angeles public schools, Occidental College & the University of Oregon, among other places. He began teaching in the late 1970s and spent most of his 37-year career in the Department of English at Merced College. Now he and his wife Teri divide their time between Modesto and Pacific Grove. His work has appeared in *Hardpan*, *More Than Soil*, *More Than Sky*, *In the Grove*, and in his chapbook, *3 x 3: Nine Poems from L.A.* (Weather Bird Press, 1982).

Ars Poetica

The gleaner on his silver bike with plastic bundle
Crosses against the light. The front yard sign
Says prayer is our only hope. Gray morning, street
Doves scattering. What to make of the sparks

Glimmering all the way from there to here?
Line them up, count, breathe. Against the white
Of the page the eyes lose focus. Wait.
Move, pace, find shape between sounds

And spaces, fill some and choose empty
Places. Something red here for the humming
Bird. Pockets for cold hands. Tea.
Another little pill for the heart. One waits.



Sestina after a Sleepless Christmas Night

We had that millennial discussion again
Is a new decade about to begin
Or is this just the end of the old one?
I think we resolved it this time
Rather quickly by counting
The years one to ten on our fingers.

We'll seek more solace from those fingers
As the tally of sorrows brings us again
To our knees, counting
The days till the next weekend. To begin
A year is to hope and dread. We know time
Will do what it does and one

Of these years will be our last, one
Of these days we'll feel the fingers
Tighten around our throats for the last time.
It's a new year again
And whether we like it or not time to begin
Our whispered reflexive prayers, counting

The minutes till the next meltdown, counting
Six five four three two one
For the big detonation, the missile strike to begin
Another bad war. The fingers
Caress the buttons and triggers again
And not for the last time.

We'd like someone to call time
Tired as we are of keeping score and counting
Fouls. But the gods are on strike again
And our incense burns at vacant altars. One
Hand tangled in a rosary, cold fingers
Numb and stiff about to begin

The race around the worry beads, begin
Tapping the desktop in time
With the funereal music of the spheres, fingers
Shaping signs for homeboys, counting
The cash and the cartridges, one
Eye on the rearview mirror again.

We begin our rote counting
Fingers on the keyboard one
Time again.

Local Spirits

We dress them with our imaginations
They have their favorite places
in shadows, corners and puddles
If they had eyes, they'd be curious
They have their favorite places
With wings they'd fly like birds
If they had eyes, they'd be curious
With tongues, they might speak
With wings they'd fly like birds
Below our feet they thread like mushrooms
With tongues they might ask
what is it doing now

Below our feet they thread like mushrooms
Sometimes we may fear to question
what is it doing now
There's never a clear answer

Sometimes we may fear to question
the dank draft or glints on the glass
There's never a clear answer
We forget and don't forget

the dank draft or glints on the glass
We dress them with our imaginations
We forget and don't forget
in shadows, corners and puddles

Christmas Brings Out the Worst in Me

Like it or not,
This is the time for soul cleansing.
Though we'd rather not remember that
To complete him, Santa is accompanied by
A sinister companion whose specialty is
Tending to rowdy children like us.
In cold or mountainous places
Such as Iceland, Japan, or the Tyrol, where
People must be just a little harder on one another
The dour companion of winter's
Jolly divinity may be better, though
Dimly, remembered than here.
All over the world wherever we are,
Because no one is naughty any more,
Our greatest unease is marked in jokes
About finding ourselves seated at dinner
Next to some wayward kin. Our secret fear:
To be that awkward tablemate.
In the brilliance of the artificial light
On the darkest nights of the year,
Our shadows are unnaturally pale.
That lump of coal, that uninvited guest,
Are the least of what we need,
Like it or not.

Listen to The Voice of the Valley, 95.5FM

Selected Programs on KCBP 95.5 FM, The Voice of the Valley or streaming on www.kcbpradio.org

PSAs in English and Spanish broadcast multiple times a day about Covid-19 vaccination, produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

NEW PROGRAMS:

Bucks Stallion's Radio Transmission Emporium – Cyber Music – Sundays, 1am

I'll Take You There – A musical journey with Modesto's El Comandante - Fridays, 5:00pm; Sundays, 9:00pm. October program focused on Hispanic Heritage Month

Down on the Farm - topics important for our San Joaquin agriculture with Madera organic farmer, Tom Willey - Saturdays, 6am & 8pm

LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS: *AREA 5150 UFO RADIO* – Saturday night at Midnight.

KeeHive - LaKiesha McDonald talks with men and women who have overcome great odds. Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:00am

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>. Recent show: interview with Modesto Dr. Juan Solorza focused on Covid-19. In English and Spanish.

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.

Local Music Programs

Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA) 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.

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



Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

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

Sounds Irish Music from County Wicklow - Saturdays, 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Sojourner Truth - 4:00pm. Interviews, panels focusing on issues that affect people of color.

Democracy Now! - 7:00pm. Reporting by veteran journalist Amy Goodman.

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

Children's Programming

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

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

Science

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

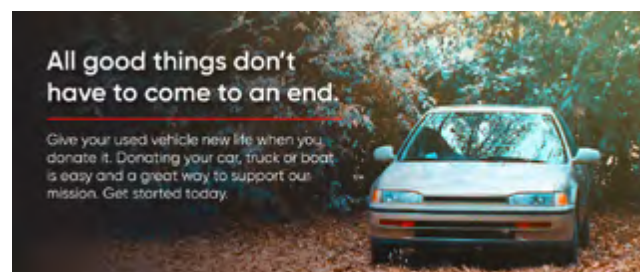
Big Picture Science - 1:00pm Sundays

Planetary Radio – 2:30pm Sundays

Got Science – 4:00 pm Sundays

Find a complete programming schedule on our website, www.kcbpradio.org

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Have you considered donating a vehicle to KCBP Radio? **Not only will you cruise past the hassles altogether, but you'll make a lasting impact.**

1. It's easy and the pick-up is free!
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3. Donating saves time and money on repairs and maintenance.
4. Donating beats the hassles and worries of selling.
5. Our Vehicle Donation Support Team is here to guide you every step of the way.
6. We help you take care of the paperwork and provide you with any necessary tax documents. Vehicle donations are tax-deductible.

To donate, call (855) 500-7433, or submit the secure online form at <https://careasy.org/KCBP>. We accept all types of vehicles that meet the following basic requirements: Vehicle has a clear title, is in one piece, is accessible for safe towing, does not need to be running.

Unbearable Burden of Shelters

from page 6

workers. What are staff members supposed to do when tasked with problems even qualified experts struggle to resolve?

Given the nature of congregate living, it's no wonder shelters everywhere are staggering under the load of responsibilities they were not designed to handle. Emergency shelters were originally conceived and constructed to deal with short-term emergencies, especially for temporarily unemployed men.

Today's shelters have become the default alternative for the mental institutions we shut down long ago. They've become improvised board and care facilities and understaffed convalescent homes. They've even taken on the burden of caring for people priced out of the housing market due to statewide shortages of affordable housing.

For most of us, the word "emergency" suggests an urgent issue in need of quick resolution. Today's emergency shelters often have the same residents for months at a time because there's nowhere else to go.

The exigencies of extreme poverty, overcrowded hospitals, and broken systems of care have proven to be enduring

and they're getting even more dire. In the case of Stanislaus County's low barrier shelter, some residents went in when it opened in November of 2019 and are still there. Given the inherent difficulties imposed by congregate living, it's a wonder the shelters haven't had more problems.

Even with the multitude of almost impossible challenges he faces every day, Major Harold Laubach remains firm in his opinion that shelters are today's best option for people in distress.

"We're still far better than the only other alternative," he said, "which is sleeping in the street."

Like many of today's contemporary saints toiling in the fields of charity and compassion for compensation that amounts to a vow of poverty, Harold Laubach soldiers on, knowing full well a tsunami of need has breached the dike and risen over his head. As today's last resort for people with nowhere to go, he will continue doing all he can to keep at least one door open.



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U.S. and Its Allies Are Fueling Worldwide Erosion of Democracy, Analysis Shows

"We cannot rely on the U.S. or its allies to 'champion' democracy around the world," said global grassroots movement Progressive International.

By JULIA CONLEY, Common Dreams

Recent internal attacks on democracy and human rights by the United States and many of its allies—which often portray themselves as exporters of such ideals—are driving an overall erosion of democracy worldwide, according to a new analysis.

The *New York Times* analyzed an annual report released earlier this year by V-Dem, a Swedish research institute that collects data on democracy and autocratic governments around the world, finding that the United States and several of the countries it's considered allies in recent decades have shifted substantially away from operating as democracies—with attacks on voting rights, judicial independence, and the rights of the media among the factors driving the erosion.

The U.S. and its allies drove increases in "democracy scores," according to V-Dem's reporting, throughout the 1990s, accounting for 9% of democratic growth around the world. But in the past decade, the *Times*' analysis showed, 36% of all democratic "backsliding" has happened in the U.S. and U.S.-aligned countries, including Turkey, Hungary, and Israel.

"Much of the world's backsliding is not imposed on democracies by foreign powers, but rather is a rot rising within the world's most powerful network of mostly democratic alliances," wrote Max Fisher at the *Times*.

V-Dem's report, titled *Autocratization Turns Viral*, pointed to the arrests of Turkish journalists for their reporting on the coronavirus pandemic and the detention of "hundreds of citizens for discussing the issue on social media" as examples of democratic erosion that has intensified in the last year.

"The decay in freedom of the press, academia, civil society, and increasing spread of false information in Turkey predates 2010 but has continued since, with legal restrictions to further limit civil society activity and freedom of expression," the report notes.

The group pointed to an assault on the judiciary and the press in Hungary as evidence of the deterioration of democracy, "dating back to as early as 2010 when [the] right-wing government led by Viktor Orbán and his Fidez party enacted several media laws that curtailed media freedom substantially."

The *Times*' analysis comes amid an intensifying assault on voting rights and elections by the Republican Party in the U.S.—and the failure of the Democratic Party, which controls the White House and both chambers of Congress, to eliminate the legislative filibuster to allow the passage of far-reaching voting rights legislation.

As *Common Dreams* reported earlier this month, state-level congressional maps drawn by Republican legislatures could give the party "a 13-2 advantage among representatives to the U.S. House," while the conservative takeover of the federal courts including the U.S. Supreme Court has put reproductive rights in peril.

V-Dem's report also pointed to the spread of disinformation that the U.S. government has "frequently engaged in" regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, with anti-science claims from the right—including former President Donald Trump—contributing to a stark partisan divide in recent Covid-19 deaths, as *Common Dreams* reported last week.

However, the *Times* emphasized, V-Dem's data shows that the trend away from U.S. democracy "accelerated during [Trump's] presidency but predated it."

"It would be too easy to say this can all be explained by Trump," Seva Gunitsky, a political scientist at University of Toronto, told the *Times*.

V-Dem's findings and the outlet's analysis left critics of American exceptionalism and U.S. foreign policy—including numerous wars which both Democrats and Republicans have claimed were aimed at "spreading democracy"—asking how the U.S. will continue to claim authority on democratic ideals.

"If the U.S. actually undermines democracy, how else shall we justify U.S. primacy?" tweeted Dr. Annette Sheline of the Quincy Institute.

As the *Times* noted, the erosion of democracy in the U.S. has not gone unnoticed by the global community.

"Very few in any public surveyed think American democracy is a good example for other countries to follow," a recent Pew Research Center study found. On average, only 17% of people in surveyed countries called U.S. democracy worth emulating, while 23% said it had never offered a good example. American prosperity may no longer look so appealing either, because of growing problems, like inequality, as well as the rise of China as an alternate economic model. And

awareness of the United States' domestic problems—mass shootings, polarization, racial injustice—has greatly affected perceptions.

To people worldwide, tweeted David Adler, general coordinator of the global grassroots movement Progressive International, it comes as no surprise that "we cannot rely on the U.S. or its allies to 'champion' democracy around the world."

"We need a new champion," said Progressive International, "owned and operated by the popular forces of the world."

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EXPLORING THE DIVERSITY OF BELIEFS IN OUR VALLEY

Monday, December 13th 7:00 PM

Please join us while we learn more about each other's beliefs and practices. There will be four pre-recorded presentations followed by a live Q&A session with our local presenters.

This ZOOM session will include presentations by:

Father Patrick Walker, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Turlock

Venerable Wimalajothi Rathvita, Watt Khmer Modesto Buddhist Association

Reverend Darcy Baxter, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County

Pundit Maanav Dutt Sharma, Hindu Religious and Cultural Center of Modesto

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83564602720?pwd=R2tCT0xvaTlxclV6TUE3QkpCekE3dz09>

Find us on Facebook and online at:

<https://www.facebook.com/stanislausinterfaith/http://www.stanislausinterfaith.org>

KCBP RADIO-95.5 FM - THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY SEEKS VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH UNDERWRITING

The right person(s) should

Be personable

Have good communication skills

Have experience with selling

Be passionate for promoting community radio

Businesses: Support a program and have your services mentioned on the air.

Contact KCBP Development Director, Jocelyn Cooper, jocelyncooper2012@gmail.com

Other volunteers needed!



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IN MEMORIAM

Shelly Scribner

*Peace Activist – Special Education Teacher
Modesto Peace/Life Center Board Member*

Gary Phillips

*Professor of English and Film Appreciation -
Modesto Junior College*



DECEMBER 2021

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

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/>. Resumes in the spring.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science): free MJC science programs. Watch past presentations at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2pMYnCos9w0xwd_5lcw3Pg. Participate by logging on to an Internet Link: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/maps.php> to sign up for notification of the link. **Friday, Dec. 10**: Zoom/YouTube. Dr. Margaret Turnbull, (Ph.D. Univ. of Arizona, SETI Inst., NASA Ames), discusses planetary systems capable of supporting life as we know it. She developed a Catalog of Nearby Habitable Systems for use in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). Dr. Turnbull will briefly address recent UFO news appearing on the popular media.

The State Theatre is open! Visit <https://thestate.org/2021/10/new-website/>.

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

1 WED: NO VIGIL in December.

2 THURS: Peace/Life Center ZOOM Monthly Board Meeting, 6:30 pm. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org

LOOKING AHEAD

Jan. 11: John McCutcheon returns to Modesto for Modesto Peace/Life Center Concert Benefit. Tickets, information, see page one.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

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

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org Food Addicts Anonymous in Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

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 to receive the Zoom number and password.

MONDAYS

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the second Mondays at 7:00pm. 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; <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.

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. Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

Silver & Gold Support Group for mental health and wellness. Catering to the needs of the LGBTQ+ Community. (Age +55). Every Monday 1pm-3pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D Modesto. Contact Kellie Johnson, 209.918.0271 or Sandra Vidor, 209.859.4299.

TUESDAYS

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@mapride.org, 209-284-0999.

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

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

Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/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., Donation. 209-505-3216, www.Funstrummers.com.

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

Womxns Support Group for Womxn 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 1pm-2pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto CA (Ages +18). Contact Sandra Vidor-209.652.3961 or Kellie Johnson 209.918.0271

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

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

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

FRIDAYS

OUT on a Friday Night, a social and discussion group designed for individuals who identify as transgender, Non-Binary, or any identity on the transgender spectrum. Every Friday at 6:00pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto CA. (Ages +18). Contact Katalina Zambrano: 209-412-5436.

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

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.

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

SATURDAY

New HIV support group: +NET Peer Support Group meets at the LGBTQ+ Advocacy Center, every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 12-1pm. Focuses on supporting individuals with their struggles regarding HIV and AIDS. Providing information about community resources, promoting wellness with an emphasis on LIVING! Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto. Contact Vincent, 209.505.2863.

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 UUFC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THURSDAYS

Can We Talk... LGBTQ+ Senior (age +55) Coffee Meet up! Every Thursday @ 1pm at Queen Bean, 1126 14th St., Modesto. Weekly social group to provide connectedness and community inclusion for LGBTQ+ Senior Citizens. Refreshments, snacks provided. Contact Steven Cullen, 559.799.0464.

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@nvlif.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

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: jpamodesto@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

Third Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 209-529-3369, <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

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.