



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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What Science Says About Wood Colony Soil

BY ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

[Ed. Note: Connections thanks Eric Caine for allowing us to print this article from The Valley Citizen. Readers should view his video interview with Vance Kennedy at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nhbuD_IBwU&feature=youtu.be]

One of Vance Kennedy's first jobs for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) was a study of "sediment transport" in streams throughout the state of Georgia. He probably got the job because of his degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and because he was the first student ever in the first course ever in the subject of Applied Geochemistry.

Kennedy will tell you the soil at Wood Colony, like the soil on his farm, is world class sandy loam.

When you study the streams and sediments of an entire state you acquire a lot of first-hand knowledge about soil and water. Kennedy's study took two years and provided a nice pragmatic base for his later college courses in geology and hydrology. Kennedy has a PhD in hydrology from the University

of Colorado.

He also has an award from the Department of Interior for "Distinguished Service." It's the highest possible award for an employee of the USGS. Among the things Kennedy did to earn the award was his research into the causes of acid rain. He also developed methods for tracing the origins of sediments and minerals in streams and rivers.

Though he's been retired for years, Kennedy stays current with USGS research in soil and water. At ninety years old, he still farms eight acres north of Modesto. He's just a short jaunt from Wood Colony. Wood Colony has been in the news because the City of Modesto wants to designate the land there for industrial uses.

Kennedy will tell you the soil at Wood Colony, like the soil on his farm, is world class sandy loam.

"The only other places I know with soil like this are in Chile and New Jersey—but New Jersey really doesn't have the ideal climate we have here," he says.

Vance Kennedy rates soil on the basis of several criteria. One is permeability. There has to be a precise mixture of sandy grains:

"It's a combination of grain size distribution and the minerals involved. As far as grain size distribution is concerned, a sandy loam,



Vance Kennedy

which is what many our best soils here are, has enough fine grains to hold moisture and enough larger grains to allow permeability. So you have the ideal situation where, from a physical aspect, oxygen can easily get to the roots, and yet there's enough moisture held on the clay that the moisture stays there."

The right proportion of large grains to fine also allows the water to infiltrate the soil and recharge the aquifer.

Kennedy also rates soil fertility. The fer-

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Modesto Peace/Life Center

Annual Meeting

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2014

PEACE/LIFE CENTER

720 13th ST., MODESTO

8:30 AM

— Coffee and Conversation

9:00 AM

— Business Meeting:

- Financial Report
- Committee Reports
- Nomination of Board Members

— Discussion:

- Action plans, ideas and strategies

12:00 PM

— Adjournment

For over 40 years the Modesto Peace/Life Center has been a meeting place for people concerned about peace, justice, equality, a sustainable environment, education and working for a more peaceful community and world. Please join us!

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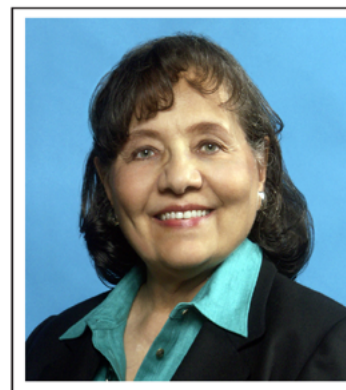
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Keynote Speaker: Civil Rights Activist DIANE NASH



SATURDAY, February 1, 2014
PUBLIC RECEPTION

King-Kennedy Center
601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto
5:00 p.m. — 6:00 p.m.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
COMMEMORATION

Performing Arts & Media Center
Modesto Junior College
435 College Ave., Modesto

- 6:00 p.m. - Doors Open
- 7:00 p.m. - Free program

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Great Valley Songwriters' Series features Juni Fisher

By CINDY van EMPEL LEMAIRE

San Joaquin Valley native Juni Fisher joins Great Valley Songwriters' Series on Friday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m. (\$10 at the door) at the Central Grace Community Church, 918 Sierra Dr. in Modesto. Her first Western release, "Tumbleweed Letters" (1999) reached Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival director Gary Brown in late 2003 and soon Juni was playing music full time.

Now living in Tennessee, Juni tours the country playing her original music, more personal and intimate than traditional western music, which has earned her numerous accolades from the Western Music Association: 2011 Entertainer of the Year, 2009 and 2011 Female Performer of the Year, 2007 and 2008 Songwriter of the Year, among others. In her spare time, Juni is an accomplished competitive horsewoman and a former 4-H and FFA competitor.

Welcome Juni to Modesto and enjoy her award-winning music. Google "Great Valley Songwriters" for previews.



Juni Fisher

Film night at the Modesto Peace/Life Center

By JOHN LUCAS

If you like movies that educate, make you think, or lead you to action, you'll like the Center's new monthly Film Night.

Our first film will be Freedom Riders on Wednesday, February 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Center, 720 13th St., Suite D. A discussion will follow the film.

An inspirational documentary by filmmaker Stanley Nelson, Freedom Riders is the first feature-length film about the courageous people, many of them the first in their families to attend a university, who decided to risk everything by getting on a Greyhound Bus bound for the Deep South. They called themselves the Freedom Riders. They brought President Kennedy and the nation face to face with the challenge of correcting civil rights injustices that plagued the country.

The film chronicles a chapter in American history that stands as an astonishing testament to the accomplishments of youth and what can result from the incredible combination of personal conviction and the bold determination to act against all odds.

Long time peace activist Dan Onorato urges all to see it: "This film, like few others, helps you understand the core of nonviolence—the depth of faith and courage needed to face danger, and the willingness to sacrifice self for a greater good."

Says filmmaker Stanley Nelson, "The lesson of the Freedom Rides is that great change can come from a few small steps taken by courageous people. And that sometimes to do any great thing, it's important that we step out alone."

Hope you can come.

ACTION: Mark your calendar now. For more information about this film, see

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/>. A Teacher's Guide can be found at

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/teachers-guide>

Nicaragua Cultural Tour, February 15-23, 2014

Nicaragua is sunny and warm this time of year! And the city of Granada is preparing to host its Tenth International Poetry Festival, featuring artists from around the world – poets, musicians, dancers – and people like you who appreciate them.

Nicaraguan Cultural Alliance invites you to join us on the shores of beautiful Lake Nicaragua, for a tour which will include the Poetry Festival as well as other cultural and natural delights of the Granada region.

Deadline for final payment is February 5. Information: Call 1-800-746-1160, or email Barbara.Larcom@gmail.com. Visit <http://www.ncfairtrade.org>

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Interfaith Group Organizing In Stockton Area

By GLORIA FEARN

An interfaith group is organizing in the Stockton area to foster an understanding of and a response to the Israel-Palestine conflict and the United States' political, military, and economic role in it. We will emphasize listening to and learning from those immersed in the reality of the conflict, and advancing the work of Israelis and Palestinians committed to nonviolent struggle and peace with justice.

We seek to empower participants to educate their local communities and the media, counter unfair or inaccurate stereotypes, and advocate for a more just US foreign policy that actively promotes a respect for international law, civil, political and human rights for all people in the region. We are

inviting people from all faith traditions to join with us in this endeavor. The first meeting will be on Saturday, February 8th, time and place to be arranged.

ACTION: For more information contact: Gloria Fearn at 209-464-2246



**DON'T AGONIZE.
Organize.**

Volunteers Needed for Modesto High School's Day of Respect

Modesto High School's Sixteenth Annual Day of Respect will take place Tuesday, February 11.

The purpose of the school-wide event is to sensitize students to the effects of discrimination by having community volunteers tell their stories. Subject areas include race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, bullying, and class.

Presentations need not be long (fifteen minutes); they need not be formal (classroom setting). The only requirement is life experience.

ACTION: Please call Sharon Froba at 521-7265 to sign up or to receive more information.



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Wood Colony

from page 1



Photos: Courtesy of the Valley Citizen

tile soil in the northern San Joaquin Valley has exactly the right amount of illite. Illite plays an important role in crop production because it enables plants to better benefit from the potassium in fertilizer. Illite adsorbs potassium (as opposed to absorbs), which means it holds the potassium for a while but later releases it for the plants to take it in via their root systems.

The fertile soil is just one reason the northern San Joaquin Valley can grow over 400 different crops. The other key factors are climate and water.

The long hot summers provide plenty of sunlight and the pure Sierra snowmelt delivers enough water to grow everything from almonds to zucchini. When people talk about agriculture, they almost never acknowledge that only a tiny few places on earth can grow such a wide variety of crops.

According to Kennedy, the soil is a prime component not only in fertility and recharge, but sustainability of farming. If the soil is too compact, not only is there no recharge of the aquifer, there's also a deadly accumulation of salts. If a hard clay or rocky layer is too close to the surface, the result is "perched water," which also results in rapid accumulation of salt and nitrates.

Ask Vance Kennedy to sum up the differences between soil in the northern San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere, and he's got a short answer: "This soil is a national treasure," he says.

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<http://thevalleycitizen.com/what-science-says-about-wood-colony-soil/>

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Torture and the Harvard Man

By GLENN L. CARLE

The United States Senate recently produced a massive report assessing the merits of "enhanced interrogation"—America's euphemism for torture—which sits classified and unpublished in a Capitol Hill vault.

The Obama Administration opposes declassification, but that doesn't mean we don't know what it says. Indications are that the report confirms what I learned in 23 years of working in the CIA and revealed in my book, "The Interrogator": Torture does not work and provides virtually no useful intelligence.

I was involved in the enhanced interrogation program and served as a senior officer responsible for terrorist reporting. The foundation of my understanding, however, came not from my government training but from the lecture halls of Harvard.

The realization came as an al-Qaida prisoner sat frozen before me, my own fingers numbing from the cold. My CIA superior had ordered me to "do whatever it takes" to get the prisoner to talk and lead us to Osama Bin Laden, emphasizing the point with a jab to my chest. I stared at the shackled detainee. Incongruously, Sanders Theatre, 12,000 miles and 25 years away, came to mind. And I thought of Mr. Magoo.

My sophomore year I took Humanities 103: "The Great

Torture does not work and provides
virtually no useful intelligence.

Age of Athens" with the fabled John H. Finley '25. Legend was that a former student of Finley's had created Mr. Magoo based on the scholar's eccentricities. And the professor was ... distinctive. He hemmed, and wheezed, and held the text he was reading an inch from his eyes, bottle glasses forgotten atop his head. He spoke like bagpipes, in disjointed clauses, an incomprehensible nasal drone in iambic pentameter, communing with shades 2,400 years dead, unaware that 400 undergraduates were suppressing giggles before him.

But I thrilled to "The Iliad," "The Odyssey," "The Oresteia," and above all, Thucydides' "Peloponnesian War." When the lectures ended I had to run across the Yard, down Boylston Street (now John F. Kennedy) to Watson Rink (now the Bright-Landry Hockey Center) for hockey practice.

As I ran from Sanders to hockey I took away the political and moral lessons Finley taught in his lecture on "The Peloponnesian War." The Melian dialogue, of course, is perhaps the most distilled case in the Western canon of the clash between morality and realpolitik. But it was Thucydides' psychological insights that were most relevant to me in my career; few of my peers had studied the humanities as I had.

Thucydides teaches that understanding the deep human motivators of fear, honor, and interest enables us to understand foreign relations as well as our enemies. Understanding those motivators also makes a good operations officer, one better equipped to recruit spies and conduct successful inter-

rogations.

For intelligence work and interrogation are profoundly human enterprises.

My superiors, and particularly the neoconservative armchair interrogators who designed and ordered "enhanced interrogation," lacked this psychological insight. They equated power with strength and were obtuse to human nature. It was clear that "enhanced interrogation" was illegal; it was also clear to me that enhanced interrogation created fear and anger, and made psychological understanding, and therefore successful interrogations, impossible. Torture is atavistic, an expression of power, the humiliation of a foe. It has nothing to do with obtaining intelligence. These impulses are

rooted in our fears and in our amygdalas, not the reasoning portion of our brains, and so torture recurs whenever humans are afraid, or angry, and have power over one's imagined foe. Only our laws—reason codified and applied—can protect us to any extent from our impulses.

I rejected "enhanced interrogation"—torture—out of hand. Instead, I talked with my prisoner. Sixteen hours a day sometimes. I established a rapport with him. We spoke of religion, his aspirations and motivations, his preferences on all sorts of topics. I assessed his fears, what would give him honor or tarnish it, what he wanted—his "interest." I wanted to understand, and so take advantage of, my prisoner's own needs.

It all went back quite consciously to Sanders Theatre. I had learned from Thucydides to understand the subject, while the architects of enhanced interrogation believed it necessary to "break" them. And as they ignored their opponent's humanity, we became inhuman ourselves, failing both practically and morally.

The case, like the entire program of enhanced interrogation, proved a disgrace. The man was not what we believed him to be. It is a long, painful story, an allegory for the horrors of the War on Terror. But I was able to retain my humanity and my honor and yet fulfill my mission of interrogating an al-Qaida detainee successfully, quite explicitly because of my study of Thucydides in Sanders Theatre long ago.

I am sure the blocked Senate report on enhanced interrogation will show what I lived: Enhanced interrogation does not work. Interrogation based on rapport does. The report needs to be published so that the truth is known and the false debate ended.

I re-read "The Peloponnesian War" 30 years after taking "The Great Age of Athens" as a sophomore and years after interrogating my al-Qaida detainee. It made me cry.

Glenn L. Carle, Harvard '78 is a former CIA field officer. He spoke in the Winthrop House Perini-Woods SCR Memorial Speaker Series on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 at 7 p.m. in the Senior Common Room.

Reprinted with permission of the author.

From <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2013/11/19/Torture-and-the-Harvard-Man/>



Compost Happens

By JENIFER WEST

Most people are aware of what a great idea composting is, for both the environment and the gardener. It's pretty easy, and well worth the small amount of time and effort it takes. Hopefully, our experience with it will help anyone who's considering getting started, or wondering why their compost efforts aren't quite getting the results they'd like.

We've been backyard composting for a while now, and the finished product has always been ok – certainly good enough to use in our garden, but a little smelly. I thought I just wasn't waiting long enough – I generally dig into the compost bins whenever it's time to plant for the upcoming season, and, outside of dumping in kitchen scraps, chicken poop and garden trimmings, pretty much ignore them the rest of the time.

But recently I've read up a bit on the process, and have realized that there was definitely room for improvement. The mix of materials, for example, and adding soil and water when needed, as well as taking the time to turn the pile every now & again can all result in the compost "cooking" much "hotter", which means a better finished product that's ready to use within weeks instead of months. To be painfully honest, I'd never seriously looked into it, and so didn't realize that compost piles need both nitrogen-based, "green" materials and carbon-based, "brown". (The best ratio is 2 parts green to 1 part brown.)

Green materials are easy to find: garden trimmings, spent plants, fresh lawn clippings and other fresh garden refuse; fruit and veggie peels and trimmings; wilting, molding or otherwise tired veggies; coffee grounds and tea bags. Other, less-obvious things that can also be composted: hair (dog, cat or people!), dryer lint, and, if you keep chickens, feathers and manure (the latter of which really jump-starts the process!). So the nitrogen component is pretty easy to cover.

Brown compostable materials are also easily found, if you

Virtually anyone can compost, and it doesn't have to be a messy, smelly proposition

know where to look. Junk mail, as long as it's not plastic-coated, can be put through a cross-cut or, even better, micro-cut shredder, for an excellent addition to compost. Empty paper towel and toilet paper rolls, torn up, will also boost the ratio of carbon to nitrogen materials in the pile, as will shredded newspaper. Dried leaves and other dried vegetation also fall into this category, as do dried grass clippings, hay, straw and things like peanut shells. Torn-up cardboard and paper bags can also be added. (Word to the wise – don't put brown bags through your paper shredder, unless you plan to replace it soon!) If you do keep chickens or other small animals, their spent bedding can also be added.

Virtually anyone can compost, and it doesn't have to be a messy, smelly proposition. It can be done in 5-gallon buckets, plastic garbage cans (60-gallon or smaller – larger cans are unwieldy), or in a traditional pile, either free-form or confined in some type of enclosure. We're currently using the garbage



can method: Drill random holes in the bottom and halfway up the sides of a plastic garbage can. Dump in materials, approximately 2 parts green to 1 part brown, and a layer of dirt on top. Sprinkle with water. (If available, a shovelful of finished compost will really help get things going.) Continue to add things as you have them, remembering to add shredded paper, dried leaves, grass clippings, paper towel and toilet paper rolls and whatever other brown materials you can find, adding dirt and sprinkling with water occasionally. Turning the pile every week or so will keep it aerated, and therefore cooking faster. At peak activity, it will be warm or even hot to the touch. That's a good thing – it means the pile is hot enough to kill any "bad" microorganisms.

There are other ways to compost, which generally involve creatures of some kind. Using chickens to assist with composting has been mentioned in this space before, as has vermicomposting (with a specific variety of red worms). I've kept a worm bin in the past, but accidentally killed them off. (Boy, did I feel awful about that!) I'm happy to be getting the bin going again.

Vermicomposting is as easy as maintaining a compost pile – perhaps even easier – and much neater, and is actually best done indoors. The only requirements the little red guys have are a cool, moist environment, and food that's easy for them to consume. They're not even all that picky about the food – as long as it's plant-based, and soft enough for them to "slurp up". (They don't have teeth – just a gizzard, as birds do.) If you want to try vermicomposting, bins are available online. A bin system with three trays should be adequate at first, for most people.

However you choose to go about it (buckets, plastic garbage cans, piles, worm bin; with or without chickens), composting can do wonders for you, your plants, and the environment!

Under Amazon's CIA Cloud: The Washington Post

from page 11

In a statement just released by the Institute for Public Accuracy, McChesney added: "If some official enemy of the United States had a comparable situation — say the owner of the dominant newspaper in Caracas was getting \$600 million in secretive contracts from the Maduro government — the Post itself would lead the howling chorus impaling that newspaper and that government for making a mockery of a free press. It is time for the Post to take a dose of its own medicine."

From the Institute, we also contacted other media and intelligence analysts to ask for assessments; their comments are unlikely to ever appear in the Washington Post. See <http://www.accuracy.org/release/cia-cloud-over-jeff-bezos-washington-post/>

"What emerges now is what, in intelligence parlance, is called an 'agent of influence' owning the Post — with a huge financial interest in playing nice with the CIA," said former CIA official Ray McGovern. "In other words, two main players nourishing the national security state in undisguised collaboration."

A former reporter for the Washington Post and many other news organizations, John Hanrahan, said: "It's all so basic. Readers of the Washington Post, which reports frequently on the CIA, are entitled to know — and to be reminded on a regular basis in stories and editorials in the newspaper and online — that the Post's new owner Jeff Bezos stands to benefit substantially from Amazon's \$600 million contract with the CIA. Even with such disclosure, the public should not feel assured they are getting tough-minded reporting on the CIA. One thing is certain: Post reporters and editors are aware that Bezos, as majority owner of Amazon, has a financial stake in maintaining good relations with the CIA — and this sends a clear message to even the hardest-nosed journalist that making the CIA look bad might not be a good career move."

The rich and powerful blow hard against the flame of truly independent journalism. If we want the lantern carried high, we're going to have to do it ourselves.

Norman Solomon is co-founder of www.RootsAction.org and founding director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death*. He writes the Political Culture 2013 column.



Green Tips for a Green Planet: Opt out of Junk Mail

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

At the very least unsolicited mail is a nuisance, and repeated mailings, even from companies promoting green causes, certainly don't support "green" sustainability.

Why so much junk mail? It's no wonder when each time we send in a subscription or warranty card, buy on credit or with a check, enter a contest, or even make a donation our addresses are entered onto mailing lists.

Good news! There is a way to reduce junk mail up to 75% as outlined in the "Citizens' Guide to RECYCLING in Stanislaus County," published under the Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources.

We can start the slow down of unsolicited mail by sending a "do-not-mail" request via postcard or letter to DIRECT MARKETING ASSOCIATION'S MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE, PO Box 643, Carmel NY 15012-0643, or by calling (212) 768-7277 or on line free at www.dmchoice.org. By mail be sure to include first, middle and last name, address, city, state, and zip code and ask to be added to the "do-not-mail" file. A \$1.00 registration fee payable by

credit card on-line or money order for mail registration will insure registration. Requests will remain on file for 5 years and can be renewed. Allow up to 3 months for changes to begin. The site also provides help to remove names from telemarketing and e-mail lists

Other options for reducing unrequested mail:

- Write "refused, return to sender" on unopened mail stamped "address correction requested" or "return postage guaranteed" or mail back a note in pre-addressed and pre-paid envelopes provided in unsolicited mail with a note requesting no further mail for your address.
- To stop direct mail and credit offers based upon demographics, including zip code, income band and credit payment patterns, gathered by such companies as Equifax, Trans Union, Experian and Innovis, call 1-885-5 OPT OUT (1-888-567-8688).
- Contact catalogue companies at the 800 number's provided and keep the label handy to give the necessary information to be removed from their lists.
- To rid your mail box from those paper-wasting scads of business and supermarket fliers, look for the address cards required by postal regulations, locate the number of the distributing business and call to be removed from their list.

ACTION: If you have other junk mail reducing tips, please share them with our readers by sending an email to seekerseer@sbcglobal.net.



It's time for homemade Valentines and Grace Lieberman and Friends

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Grace Lieberman has invited some of her special musical friends to help area residents get "In the Mood" for love and romance at the Sunday Afternoons at CBS annual Grace Lieberman and Friends Valentine concert 3 p.m. February 9 at 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto.

Joining Grace this year will be favorites Joe Wiggett, vocal professor at California State University Stanislaus; Darrel Lingenfelter, piano accompanist; Darrell Tucker, sing-a-long accompanist; Greg Pyatt, Actor's Equity member and sought after California performing artists; Shelly Bort, winner of Valley's Got Talent; Kodi Maddox, Yes Company and finalist in Valley's Got Talent; Anthony Edwards, singer/guitarist; Claudia Ridgway, local soprano; and Marvin Zeuner, member of the Modesto Symphony Opera Chorus and MJC exchange student from Germany.

As always the afternoon will include Grace's funny anecdotes and homemade Valentines with words for popular audience sing-a-longs.

Tickets for the concerts are available through the CBS office at 571-6060 or online at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/556600>



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Modesto Chapter
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Many Thanks for the John McCutcheon Concert

By KEN SCHROEDER

The 13th annual benefit concert by John McCutcheon is history. Once again we were treated to John's stories, music and positive energy. Many thanks are in order.

Thanks to all those who planned the event, assembled the mailing, distributed and sold tickets, put up posters, distributed postcards, invited friends, promoted the event on social media, did media work, baked cookies, strummed a ukulele, set up and put away chairs and tables, staffed ticket sales at the concert, ushered, worked on the program, sold buttons, sold John's CD's and books, supervised parking, staffed the universal health care table, made coffee, set up food, organized hospitality, coordinated tech and sound, cleaned up, vacuumed, tracked finances, made sponsorship donations, organized the silent auction, donated auction items and services, bid on items, sang along, applauded wildly and created an atmosphere of love and community.

It was a great time in good company and raised a substantial sum to support the work of the Modesto Peace/Life Center. Let's do it again next January!

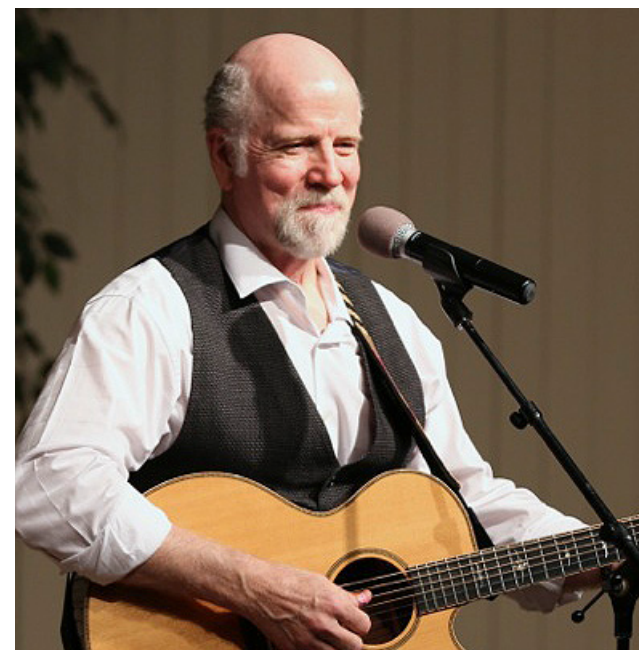


Photo: Lynn Lucas

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My homage to MLK

By **MICHAEL N. NAGLER**

President, founder of the Metta Center

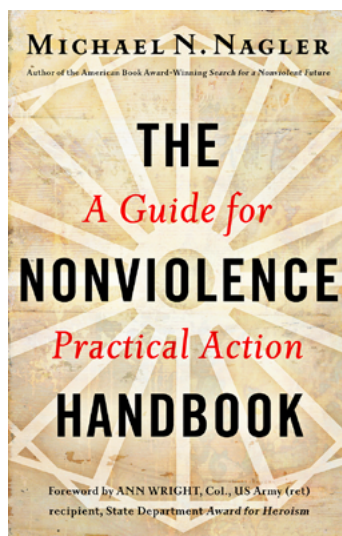
I never knew Martin Luther King, Jr., but I grew up politically in his America. My personal awakening to nonviolence came one day in Greenwich Village when I happened to listen in to a radio broadcast covering a Civil Rights rally going on somewhere down south. A justifiably angry African American man said to the rally organizer, "They beat us, they hit us: why don't we use violence back?" The leader, whoever it was, calmly said, "Because that is not who we are." From that moment on I lived with the vague feeling in the back of my mind that not only is nonviolence a key to what I want to be, it's what we *are* as human beings, nonviolence is the destiny toward which we have to strive – if the human experiment is to go on planet Earth.

It is common knowledge, I think, that King had an unusually deep grasp of nonviolence. What this means may not be so commonly acknowledged, namely that it lead him into a

**nonviolence is the destiny toward
which we have to strive – if the
human experiment is to go on
planet Earth.**

profound understanding of and optimism about the nature of reality itself. When he says that "darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hatred cannot drive out hatred; only love can do that," he is pointing out a simple, polar difference between the two forces that determine the quality and direction of our life. St. Augustine long before him had said repeatedly in his monumental *City of God*, "there are two loves" (or basic drives), that lead respectively to two world orders." There are times when we fail to see things because they're too simple. It takes a kind of courage to peer into that stark, underlying simplicity, to grasp that those two forces, with their opposite character *and opposite results*, really make up the texture of the moral choices facing us every time we address the major issues of our lives, personal or political. It is the failure to see these two forces as the underlying criterion of our choices, almost without exception, that makes our decisions such a disastrous incompetence. Why does raining bombs on, say, Afghanistan, not make it a peaceful, democratic country? Why doesn't it just eliminate "bad guys" and let "good guys" take over? How come, as one commander said about our war in Iraq a few years ago, "we are making terrorists faster than we can kill them"?

The simple answer is, you cannot use darkness to drive out darkness, violence to drive out violence. And the name of the positive and negative drives which makes the most sense for



Manichaeism that Christians are supposed to reject though the vast majority of self-identified Christians today still unconsciously hold it, because our modern culture cannot advance to such a bright view of reality or human nature, Christian or not. But it was a practical reality for King. He said, when someone challenged him that the movement roused a lot of anger, no, we did not cause outbursts of anger, "we expressed anger under discipline for maximum effect." That mature understanding of the dynamics of anger and the nonviolent effect of its containment or re-direction is rare even among activists today.

The roots of violence/nonviolence are harbored in social conditions favoring one or the other long before the former erupts in open conflict. King was well aware of this. He clearly saw that life is organized along a principle of unity-in-diversity that again seems to elude most of us (I learned it slowly from my spiritual teacher in whom it was second nature even when he was not using the term itself):

I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.

This is a revolutionary statement that would overturn the most basic, unspoken value of modern culture: competition. We so closely hold competition as the valid organizing principle of life) that we have made it the sacred cow of business, economics, foreign policy, sports – even education. It is probably an underlying reason for our tremendous fear of

us today, that most helps us to see their nature and what we're really dealing with, is nonviolence and violence.

Furthermore, King understood, with Gandhi, that of these two forces – let's call them anger and compassion for the moment – one was more real. Anger is really a distortion, or perversion, if you will, of compassion, which alone is real. To say otherwise is actually a heresy called

**you cannot use darkness to drive
out darkness, violence to drive out
violence.**

communism, which in its primitive form downgrades competition, especially competition for wealth, though its modern forms show little trace of that awareness (was it Galbraith who said that in capitalism it's man against man, while in communism it's exactly the other way around?).

Because I was not at home in King's Christian vocabulary, and because I was dazzled by the courage of his achievements, it took me a while to discover that Martin Luther King, Jr. (whose official birthday, like my real one, is today), was one of the wisest humans that lived among us in the modern world. Perhaps if he had been allowed to live we would be following his advice to "rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented civilization to a person-oriented civilization." And perhaps the best way to honor his legacy would be to begin it now

The mission of the Metta Center, founded in 1982, is to promote the transition to a nonviolent future by making the logic, history, and yet-unexplored potential of nonviolence available to activists and agents of cultural change (which ultimately includes all of us). We help practitioners use non-violence more safely and effectively, and anyone interested to understand and articulate it more fully. Visit the Center at <http://mettacenter.org>



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A hollow power: Reclaiming our humanity by letting go

By **MADELINE SCHAEFER,**
American Friends Service Committee

On the plane to Seattle to attend one of AFSC's Tyree Scott Freedom Schools, I was seated across from a young white man who looked roughly my age. Toward the end of our flight, we struck up a conversation. He was from Oklahoma, he told me, the youngest of five. He was only the youngest by a very small margin, as he was one of triplets. I had never met a triplet before, I told him. He had never met a Quaker.

We touched on nearly everything—our backgrounds, our politics, our taste in movies, our careers. He told me he was currently studying law at a major university in Philadelphia and that, honestly, he hated it. He hated the school and his peers, most of who appeared to be completely obsessed with money, in no small part due to the fact that many of them would be facing debts of up to \$200,000 upon graduating.

If he could do anything in world, he said, he would get a Jeep, raise a golden retriever, and work as a park ranger. But that was completely out of the question; how could a career like that possibly pay the bills? After I assured him that many (actually, all) park rangers probably live and thrive on a fairly modest salary, he had to agree. So why did this fairly simple dream seem so farfetched?

He somewhat sorrowfully admitted that he had bought into the game of scarcity, where key players are required to remain firmly on top if they are going to survive in this world. He used to like movies and books, he said, but those days were over. Right now he was focused on his career, and he had no time for hobbies.

How miserable to see a young white man with such privilege refusing to enjoy life, all for fear of losing status. He has power but such little real fulfillment.

As a white, upper-middle-class woman in the United States, I was born into similar privileges, and am equally prey (and often the victim) to a culture of consumerism and materialism that feeds on dissatisfaction and self-obsession. I have to work hard to shake it off and remember my own humanity. And that weekend, I was to learn how fighting to end racism and oppression can give you back the power to be human.

On Dec. 27, the Tyree Scott Freedom School gathered 25-

30 young people, including white people and people of color, from around Seattle to learn about the history of racism in the United States. By uncovering that history through interactive discussions and analysis based on their own experience, the workshop helped the participants understand the injustice that they face in their daily lives as fitting into a larger history of marginalization.



During the discussion, we defined racism as prejudice plus power. My own racism, therefore, is a result of benefiting from a society with deep structural racism. It has less to do with being a "good" or "bad" person and more to do with participation in a system with deeply racist roots.

But is the participation in this system evidence of true power? The young man on the

plane was in a position of power and privilege; but he certainly did not feel empowered. As white people, we are often kept in traditionally destructive systems, with dehumanization as our sedative, unable to access our deeper, real capacity to share power with others in this world. While racism is an equation that leaves some of us with disproportionate wealth, it leaves all of us spiritually bankrupt.

As long as I understand that I am racist simply by taking part in the structures of racism that have kept our society unjust and unequal, my role is not just to "be better"—an often ambiguous and guilt-ridden quest. My role is to fight to change those systems and create new ones based on equality and justice. My role is to reclaim my power to create change.

And that is the work of a lifetime.

One of the men who presented during the Freedom School, Martin, asked what white people have to gain from being part of this anti-

racism work. In other words, "what's in it for us?" What will we gain when give up this constant lusting after more money, more security, more success?

There are no easy answers, of course. But it is clear to me that when white people begin to uncover the systems of oppression that undergird our privilege, we can finally see the ways in which we are also imprisoned by those systems. And when we begin to see, perhaps we can begin to reclaim our capacity to live our own lives, rather than a life of fear

and consumption, dictated to us by society.

This answer to what white (particularly wealthy) people gain from being involved in work for racial justice can seem almost offensively abstract given the immediacy of this issue for communities of color. But I have to keep searching. Because connection, like the connection I felt with the inspiring young men and women I met that weekend, is addicting; it fills you up with the power of transformation.

The author is the Friends Relations Associate. She grew up in Philadelphia surrounded by Quakers of all shapes and sizes. Madeline lives in a collective house in west Philadelphia and is involved with Quakers throughout the Philadelphia region.

From the American Friends Service Committee, <http://www.afsc.org/friends/hollow-power-reclaiming-our-humanity-letting-go>

My role is to fight to change those systems and create new ones based on equality and justice.



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The endless arms race

By LAWRENCE S. WITTNER, HNN

It's heartening to see that an agreement has been reached to ensure that Iran honors its commitment, made when it signed the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to forgo developing nuclear weapons.

But what about the other key part of the NPT, Article VI, which commits nuclear-armed nations to "cessation of the

Chuck Hagel announced what Reuters termed "ambitious plans to upgrade [U.S.] nuclear weapons systems by modernizing weapons and building new submarines, missiles and bombers to deliver them."

nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament," as well as to "a treaty on general and complete disarmament"? Here we find that, 44 years after the NPT went into force, the United States and other nuclear powers continue to pursue their nuclear weapons buildups, with no end in sight.

On January 8, 2014, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced what Reuters termed "ambitious plans to upgrade [U.S.] nuclear weapons systems by modernizing weapons and building new submarines, missiles and bombers to deliver them." The Pentagon intends to build a dozen new ballis-

tic missile submarines, a new fleet of long-range nuclear bombers, and new intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Congressional Budget Office estimated in late December that implementing the plans would cost \$355 billion over the next decade, while an analysis by the independent Center for Nonproliferation Studies reported that this upgrade of U.S. nuclear forces would cost \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. If the higher estimate proves correct, the submarines alone would cost over \$29 billion each.

Of course, the United States already has a massive nuclear weapons capability — approximately 7,700 nuclear weapons, with more than enough explosive power to destroy the world. Together with Russia, it possesses about 95 percent of the more than 17,000 nuclear weapons that comprise the global nuclear arsenal.

Nor is the United States the only nation with grand nuclear ambitions. Although China currently has only about 250 nuclear weapons, including 75 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), it recently flight-tested a hypersonic nuclear missile delivery vehicle capable of penetrating any existing defense system. The weapon, dubbed the Wu-14 by U.S. officials, was detected flying at ten times the speed of sound during a test flight over China during early January 2014. According to Chinese scientists, their government had put an "enormous investment" into the project, with more than a hundred teams from leading research institutes and universities working on it. Professor Wang Yuhui, a researcher on hypersonic flight control at Nanjing University, stated that

"many more tests will be carried out" to solve the remaining technical problems. "It's just the beginning." Ni Lexiong, a Shanghai-based naval expert, commented approvingly that "missiles will play a dominant role in warfare, and China has a very clear idea of what is important."

Other nations are engaged in this arms race, as well. Russia, the other dominant nuclear power, seems determined to keep pace with the United States through modernization of its nuclear forces. The development of new, updated Russian ICBMs is proceeding rapidly, while new nuclear submarines are already being produced. Also, the Russian government has started work on a new strategic bomber, known as the PAK DA, which reportedly will become operational in 2025.

This nuclear weapons buildup certainly contradicts the official rhetoric

Both Russia and India are known to be working on their own versions of a hypersonic nuclear missile carrier. But, thus far, these two nuclear nations lag behind the United States and China in its development. Israel is also proceeding with modernization of its nuclear weapons, and apparently played the key role in scuttling the proposed U.N. conference on a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East in 2012.

This nuclear weapons buildup certainly contradicts the official rhetoric. On April 5, 2009, in his first major foreign policy address, President Barack Obama proclaimed "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." That fall, the UN Security Council — including Russia, China, Britain, France, and the United States, all of them nuclear powers — unanimously passed Resolution 1887, which reiterated the point that the NPT required the "disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons." But rhetoric, it seems, is one thing and action quite another.

Thus, although the Iranian government's willingness to forgo the development of nuclear weapons is cause for encouragement, the failure of the nuclear nations to fulfill their own NPT obligations is appalling. Given these nations' enhanced preparations for nuclear war — a war that would be nothing short of catastrophic — their evasion of responsibility should be condemned by everyone seeking a safer, saner world.

Lawrence S. Wittner, (<http://lawrencswittner.com>), is Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany. His latest book is a satirical novel about university corporatization, *What's Going On at UAardvark?*

<http://hnn.us/article/154488>

WORLD NUCLEAR FORCES, January 2013

All figures are approximate. The estimates presented here on nuclear forces are based on public information and contain some uncertainties.

Country	Year of first nuclear test	Deployed warheads	Other warheads	Total inventory
United States	1945	2 150	5 550	~7 700
Russia	1949	~1 800	6 700	~8 500
United Kingdom	1952	160	65	225
France	1960	~290	~10	~300
China	1964	—	~250	~250
India	1974	—	90–110	90–110
Pakistan	1998	—	100–120	100–120
Israel	..	—	~80	~80
North Korea	2006	6–8?
Total		~4 400	~12 865	~17 270

SOURCE: STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Poetry Happenings

MoSt Poetry Festival: Patrice Vecchione (poet/author/artist/editor): morning workshop presenter. **Persona Poetry session with Gary Thomas**, local poet and MoSt vice president. Saturday, February 8, 9 am to 4 pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oakdale Rd. and St. Paul's Way, Modesto. Lunch included. \$35 at the door. Info: khh425@hotmail.com or nhaskett@sbcglobal.net

Pounding the pavement for poetry: A Gathering of Voices features Stanislaus County/Central Valley Area activist poets/poetry on topics pertaining to the Modesto Peace/Life Center focus of peace, justice and a sustainable environment. Please submit poetry in MS Word or other text format for possible publication in future issues along with your name and contact information to: seekerseer@sbcglobal.net

Renaissance

The rain had stopped, the mist swirled back to earth,
the sun hung stranded in the dead blue sky,
yet all that morning felt like a rebirth.

And those I passed seemed capable of mirth,
though they nor I could voice a reason why
the rain had stopped, the mist swirled back to earth.

The silence sought comrades and found a dearth
of quiet brothers midst the passersby,
yet all the morning felt like a rebirth.

We seek a family, a kindred's berth,
whatever truth we find inside each lie;
the rain had stopped, the mist swirled back to earth.

The globe is but a growth of each child's worth,
and each child fails, and some may die,
yet all that morning felt like a rebirth.

We all are strangers, cousins, common earth,
we speak each other's silences and sigh.
The rain has stopped, the mist swirls back to earth,
and all this morning feels like a rebirth.

— Gary Thomas

Dead Presidents

Founding fathers ring
February's Liberty Bell
Make great excuses for
Three-day weekends

Old political rhetoric
Washes up on common shores
Strikes up marching bands
Ritual salutes

Good feelings National pride
Drop off at end
Of short month to
Business as usual

American Dream abandoned
In background of hedonistic blindness
To uncaring arms
Of evil inclination

— Tina Arnopole Driskill

Grayscale

At eight bits per pixel there are two hundred fifty-six shades of gray.

Wikipedia

If you stand on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial
you see them, thirty-six fluted Doric columns
formed from small blocks of Yule marble snubbed together,
ninety-nine percent pure white calcite, few dark streaks.
Light shifts and bends between these giants,
shadows play among them creating
varying intensities, a monochromatic continuum
between black and white.

Behind these columns sits the statue of Abraham Lincoln,
his stone face looks toward reflection pond on Capital Mall.
Faced with the struggle between slavery or freedom for all,
instead of black or white, Lincoln saw shades of grey,
a color pallet of diverse people,
each with his own intensity,
each with her own worth,
a grayscale linked by common values:
unity and social justice.

From here Marian Anderson's contralto voice
penetrated a segregated society as she sang
My Country 'Tis of Thee, Easter Sunday, 1939;
On these steps, Martin Luther King Jr. proclaimed his dream,
equality for all, culminating in the civil rights March on Washington, 1963;
Before these columns the pre-inaugural celebration for Barack Obama,
another man from Illinois, began, January 2009.
If you stand on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial
you see them, thirty-six fluted Doric columns,
perfect backdrop for the grayscale of America.

— Lynn M. Hansen

From: <http://www.nlapw.org/category/nlapw-poem-of-the-week/>

CLOUDED SKY, NO RAIN

The grass begins to grow, then stops. When will it rain?
In the mountains, when will it snow? We talk of climate-
change. I gather shower-water in a pail for the pyracantha:
berries and safe haven for the birds – sapsucker, towhee,
sparrow, waxwing, robin – creatures who never change
the weather as they fly. What have we done? I leave tracks
in dust wherever I go. Might prayer or dancing bring rain?
The lake is almost dry; a thread of water mumbles over
the river's beaded rocks. We humans do so much, so little.

— Taylor Graham



Covering basic living expenses poses big challenge for many Californians statewide, new CBP study shows

Analysis highlights need for policies that boost wages, help families make ends meet

SACRAMENTO – Many families across California struggle to cover the costs of housing, child care, health care, food, and other necessities, according to a study released today by the California Budget Project (CBP), a nonpartisan public policy research group. The report underscores the need for targeted public policies that help boost workers' earnings and that help Californians pay rent or buy a home, afford child care, and cover other basic family costs.

Making Ends Meet: How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Family in California? looks at the income needed to support a family with two children or to live as a single adult in California, allowing only for basic expenses: housing and utilities, child care, healthcare, food, transportation, and other necessities. The report provides estimated household budgets for four different family types, with both statewide averages and *estimated budgets in all 58 counties*. These estimated budgets assume no assistance from public programs and no job-based benefits outside of earned income.

"When you look at what it takes to cover day-to-day necessities in California, it's clear that our economy is not meeting the needs of many workers and families across the state," said Luke Reidenbach, CBP policy analyst and author of the report. "This study provides a key benchmark for assessing family well-being, and our findings point to a need for investments in child care, housing, education, and other underpinnings of broad-based economic opportunity."

Making Ends Meet finds that for a California family of four with two children and one working parent, it would take – on average – an annual income of \$60,771 to afford a modest standard of living. This is equal to an hourly wage of \$29.22 for full-time work, which far exceeds the statewide median hourly wage of \$19.07 in 2012 and is well above the state minimum wage.

For the other three family types covered in the report, *Making Ends Meet* finds that:

- A single parent with two children needs an annual income of \$74,477, equivalent to an hourly wage of \$35.81 for full-time work.
- A family with two working parents and two children needs an annual income of \$81,553, equivalent to both parents working full-time, each with an hourly wage of \$19.61.
- A single adult needs an annual income of \$32,625, equivalent to an hourly wage of \$15.69.

Estimated budgets at the county level show how widely the cost of living varies across the state. For a family of four with two children and one working parent, for example, the basic family budget ranges from a high of \$71,646 in Marin County to a low of \$50,350 in Modoc County.

In addition, *Making Ends Meet* highlights some of the

specific economic challenges faced by California families. These include:

- **A lack of affordable housing in California.** High housing costs in California present a major hurdle for many individuals and families. In 2012, nearly one-third of households (30.5 percent) spent at least half of their income on rent. In addition, from 2010 to 2012, California's homeownership rate was the second-lowest of all states, averaging 54.9 percent.
- **High child care costs.** The CBP's analysis estimates that child care costs in California average more than \$1,100 a month for families with two children. State policymakers have cut support for child care and state preschool in recent years. Between 2007-08 and 2013-14, combined funding for California's child care and state preschool programs fell by nearly 40 percent, after adjusting for inflation, resulting in the loss of 110,000 funded slots in these programs.
- **Rising family health care costs which implementation of federal health care reform will help address.** The cost of health coverage has risen sharply over the last decade in California increasing at roughly five times the rate of inflation between 2002 and 2012. Statewide, the monthly cost of health care including insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs averages nearly \$500 for an individual and slightly more than \$1,400 for a two-parent family with two children, according to CBP estimates. In many California counties, health care costs are the largest single expenditure in the basic family budget. Beginning next year, subsidies provided by the federal Affordable Care Act will lower insurance costs for certain families who purchase their own health coverage.

"State and federal policies can play a huge role, not only in helping working families pay the bills, but also in connecting people to good jobs," said Chris Hoene, executive director of the CBP. "The right kinds of public investment are always important, but they're especially key right now with so many families still reeling from the impact of the deepest economic downturn in generations."

The *Making Ends Meet* report – including an interactive family budget calculator with data from all 58 counties – is available online at www.cbp.org/MakingEndsMeet.

The California Budget Project (CBP) engages in independent fiscal and policy analysis and public education with the goal of improving public policies affecting the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians. Support for the CBP comes from foundation grants, subscriptions, and individual contributions. Please visit the CBP's website at www.cbp.org.

Treasurer's Report for Annual Meeting

Expenses for 2013

Rent	\$6,000.00
Phone and Utilities	\$1,300.89
<i>Connections</i> , layout, printing & delivery	\$10,475.36
Liability Insurance	\$1,466.00
Postage	\$1,290.28
Miscellaneous Business Expense	\$1,338.90
Peace Essay contest	\$5,036.73
McCutcheon Concert	\$2,578.46
Peace Camp	\$3,816.56
Pancake Breakfast	\$354.83
Outreach	\$539.98
Other Program expense	\$992.75
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$35,190.74

Income for 2013

General & Miscellaneous Donations	\$9,678.44
Pancake Breakfast	\$2,404.00
McCutcheon Concert	\$4,310.30
Peace Essay contest	\$6,025.00
Peace Camp	\$3,720.00
Outreach	\$1,305.00
Insurance Refund	\$436.52
TOTAL INCOME	\$27,879.26
 Deficit	 \$7,311.48

Dave Tucker, treasurer

Stanislaus CONNECTIONS, published by the non-profit Modesto Peace/Life Center, has promoted non-violent social change since 1971. Opinions expressed DO NOT necessarily reflect those of the Center or Editorial Committee. We welcome pertinent, signed articles, 800-1000 words or less, and letters with address, phone number. DEADLINE: 10th of the Month PRECEDING the next issue. Send articles and ads to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org. Submit PHOTOS as high-resolution JPEGs; ADS as PDF files.

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Being a gigging musician can be a slog

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

Sometimes being a gigging musician is a slog. You send out emails and make follow up phone calls. Club hosts, event producers, and booking agents remain non-committal. It takes months, sometimes years, to weasel your way into a festival you feel you were born to play. People compliment your performance on one hand and then float away when you ask about a repeat gig. It is a frustrating experience day after day to push yourself in the direction of people who seem less than receptive.

Then once in a while you find yourself in a truly amazing moment with an audience and all that shit flies out the window. Not only do you remember why you perform music, you get the visceral feeling you're doing exactly what you were born to do.

Here in Britain, most people who attend folk clubs are themselves musicians of some sort. They sing in church, attend the open mic nights, go to sing-arounds, etc. They sing along at shows too.

Lots of clubs are small and hold much less than 100 people. It's a bit like a house concert at no-one-in-particular's house. There's no stage. You're within feet of your audience who can hear you at the back of the rather small room.

And you can hear your audience sing too.

Recently, I decided to challenge myself:

- To be in every moment of every song
- To leave nothing in reserve when performing
- To enjoy my audiences and let them know I wanted them to enjoy themselves
- To arrange the order of songs in my sets with a purpose and a flow

Mostly I hit two of those points in a night. I get distracted

easily on stage. I have a baby and a pregnant wife at home who need my time and energy as much, if not more, than one audience on a random night. I forget to enjoy myself, so they do too. And writing sets is a skill so arcane that it moves beyond art and slides into more eldritch endeavors. I don't get it just right very often.

But one night recently, I hit all four points. The result was a gig that will stay with me for a long time.

My set started with a statement. "I can sing. I can play. I am serious about this." Bill Monroe's "Walls of Time" set the level. Then I changed gears quickly by asking them to sing along to the chorus of an original. "Old Calapina" invited their participation. The ante on the musicianship gamble went up with my arrangement of the traditional song, "I'm Going to the West."

After that I cruised a little bit, giving my audience a little rest with "A Winter's Night." Only the diehard singers stayed with it. I filled the middle of the set with a murder ballad, "Virginia Claire," that left the room silent.

A couple of up-beat tunes in A changed the mood, "Rolling with the Circus" was followed by "Bury Me Beneath the Willow." I joked about the passive aggressive nature of the latter song.

I thought, between songs, that it seemed to be going well. I had been able to maintain focus during the songs and I was in very good (if not great) voice. I was secretly thankful for the smallness of the room.

Some months ago I wrote a song about being a dad for the first time. It's called, "All the Things You Are." This song usually pulls at sensitive heart strings. I get comments like, "that song gets to me," and "I almost cried." But on this particular night the tables turned.

A few gigs ago I realized the chorus of "All the Things You Are," which changes one line every time it gets repeated, is something people like to sing to. So I started teaching it on the last time through. On this night my audience of music lovers and singers sang my own song about my daughter back to me. They did it so beautifully that I nearly cried. At the end of the song all I could do was acknowledge their effort and say, "Thank you for sharing your voices with me. It is the greatest gift you can give a songwriter."

After short pause while I caught my breath by switching mandolins, I finished in encore fashion with Paul Simon's "Under African Skies." I needed to hear them sing some more, and given how well the night had gone, I felt capable of leading them in a two part sing-along. The bridge of the song is a bit of non-English: "Ta oomba oomba oomba, whoa oooo" into which "Wimoweh a-wimoweh a-wimoweh a-wimoweh fits nicely. When you get two halves a room going the effect is lovely and it gives the audience a sense of being a part of the performance in a real sense.

The members of St. Neots Folk Club must have been practicing because when we got to the bridge. They were ready for it and sang with such joy that they rendered the third verse utterly unnecessary. I stood at the top of the room feeling 45 voices wash over me, fulfilling a promise no one ever makes but everyone hopes someone will keep. All I could do was say, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you." I think they understood I was as grateful for their performance as I was for their appreciation of mine.

And today the slog isn't quite so onerous.

The author, a former Modestan, is a new resident of England.

Under Amazon's CIA Cloud: The Washington Post

By NORMAN SOLOMON

Norman Solomon's Blog | Op-Ed

News media should illuminate conflicts of interest, not embody them. But the owner of the Washington Post is now doing big business with the Central Intelligence Agency, while readers of the newspaper's CIA coverage are left in the dark.

The Post's new owner, Jeff Bezos, is the founder and CEO of Amazon — which recently landed a \$600 million contract with the CIA. But the Post's articles about the CIA are not disclosing that the newspaper's sole owner is the main owner of CIA business partner Amazon

Even for a multi-billionaire like Bezos, a \$600 million contract is a big deal. That's more than twice as much as Bezos paid to buy the Post four months ago.

And there's likely to be plenty more where that CIA largesse came from. Amazon's offer wasn't the low bid, but it won the CIA contract anyway by offering advanced high-tech "cloud" infrastructure.

Bezos personally and publicly touts Amazon Web Services,

and it's evident that Amazon will be seeking more CIA contracts. Last month, Amazon issued a statement saying, "We look forward to a successful relationship with the CIA."

As Amazon's majority owner and the Post's only owner, Bezos stands to gain a lot more if his newspaper does less ruffling and more soothing of CIA feathers.

Amazon has a bad history of currying favor with the U.S. government's "national security" establishment. The media watch group FAIR pointed out what happened after WikiLeaks published State Department cables: "WikiLeaks was booted from Amazon's webhosting service AWS. So at the height of public interest in what WikiLeaks was publishing, readers were unable to access the WikiLeaks website."

How's that for a commitment to the public's right to know?

Days ago, my colleagues at RootsAction.org launched a petition that says: "The Washington Post's coverage of the CIA should include full disclosure that the sole owner of the Post is also the main owner of Amazon — and Amazon is now gaining huge profits directly from the CIA." More than 15,000 people have signed the petition so far this week, with

many posting comments that underscore widespread belief in journalistic principles. See http://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=8979

While the Post functions as a powerhouse media outlet in the Nation's Capital, it's also a national and global entity — read every day by millions of people who never hold its newsprint edition in their hands. Hundreds of daily papers reprint the Post's news articles and opinion pieces, while online readership spans the world.

Propaganda largely depends on patterns of omission and repetition. If, in its coverage of the CIA, the Washington Post were willing to fully disclose the financial ties that bind its owner to the CIA, such candor would shed some light on how top-down power actually works in our society.

"The Post is unquestionably the political paper of record in the United States, and how it covers governance sets the agenda for the balance of the news media," journalism scholar Robert W. McChesney points out. "Citizens need to know about this conflict of interest in the columns of the Post itself."



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

ACTIONS FOR PEACE

Sonora - Stockton

SONORA: Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

PEACE AND JUSTICE NETWORK OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY (<http://www.pjnsjc.org>). Info: James Walsh, jwprod1956@clearwire.net

FEBRUARY

Ongoing: MJC Modesto Area Partners in Science 2014, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. **2/28:** Kevin Mitchell, UCM, *Chaos and Fractals*. **3/28:** Judy Van de Water, UCD, *Autism and Immunology*. 4/25: Joel Hagen, TBD. More at <http://maps.events.mjc.edu>

Ongoing: MJC Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, Science Community Center Rm 115, MJC West Campus, 3-4 pm. **Feb. 5:** John Buckley, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, "Last summer's massive Rim Fire in the Yosemite region: its far-reaching effects on wildlife, water, and recreation." **Feb. 12:** Minda Berbeco, National Center for Science Education, "Climate and Evolution in the Classroom." **Feb. 19:** Dr. David Martin, "The International Trade in Reptile Skins: How Policy and Science Meet through Forensics." **Feb. 26*:** Teri Curtis' MJC Zoology class members, "Term Report Animal."

1 SAT: MLK Commemoration with Civil Rights pioneer Diane Nash

8 SAT: MoSt Poetry Festival, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto. 9 am to 4 pm. See article, this issue. Lunch included. \$35 at the door. Info: khh425@hotmail.com or nhaskett@sbcglobal.net

8 SAT: 8th Annual Chinese New Year Celebration. 18 performances: Chinese traditional dances, songs, music instruments, Taiji, and Kung-fu, Chinese calligraphy, origami demonstration, arts craft and book show. Free to the community. Senior Citizens Center, 211 Bodem, Modesto, 2-4 pm.

9 SUN: Grace Lieberman and Friends Concert, Sunday Afternoons at CBS. 3 p.m., 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Tickets available at 571-6060 or at www.brownpapertickets.com

14 FRI: Gallo Center for the Arts presents the Sankofa Theatre Company production of "Freedom Riders." 7:30 pm. Gallo Center, www.galloarts.org

16 SUN: Modesto Film Society hosts *Pillow Talk*, 2 pm, State Theatre. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/96>

19 WED: Film night-Modesto Peace/Life Center: Freedom Riders. 720 13th St., Suite

D, Modesto. 6:30 pm. Discussion follows film. See article, this issue.

21 FRI: Great Valley Songwriters' Series: Juni Fisher. Central Grace Community Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. \$10 at the door. See article, this issue.

23 SUN: Modesto Film Society hosts *The Kite Runner*, State Theatre, 2:00 pm, <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/109>

LOOKING AHEAD

Friday March 21, 2014: Peace Essay Contest Awards and Reception.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

LifeRing Secular Recovery: Sunday 10:00 am, Kaiser CDRP, 1789 W Yosemite Ave, Manteca. Support group for people living free of alcohol and drugs. Each person creates an individualized recovery program. We avoid discussion of religious or political opinions so our meetings can focus on sobriety skills. 526-4854, <http://goldendrippings.com/lifering/>

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 12:30-2:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>

LifeRing Secular Recovery: Sunday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto.

MONDAYS

LifeRing Secular Recovery Morning Mtg. Monday 7:00 am. Deva Cafe, 1202 J St, Modesto.

LifeRing Secular Recovery Women's Mtg. Monday 6:30 pm, private home, 1905 Kienitz Ave, Modesto. Bonnie, 324-7095.

TUESDAYS

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

LifeRing Secular Recovery. Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 526-4854

Ukulele class/play-a-long led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. www.funstrummers.com

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 6:30-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori for more information at 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>

PFLAG Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays support group. 7 pm, 566-2468. First and third Tuesdays. Emanuel Lutheran Church, 324 College Ave., Modesto, <http://www.pflagmodesto.org>

PFLAG Merced, Second Tuesday, Merced United Methodist Church, 899 Yosemite Park Way, Merced. 7 pm. Info: 341-2122, <http://s444531532.onlinehome.us>

PFLAG Sonora/Mother Lode, third Tuesdays of January, April, July, and October, 6:30 to 8 pm, Tuolumne County Library Community Room, 480 Greenley Rd.,

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

CENTER TV: News and interviews you won't find elsewhere on Comcast Public Access TV Ch 26, Wed. & Sat. 9:00 pm - 10 pm. Also: Listen to local Valley Community Radio KQRP 104.9 FM, <http://www.kqrp.com>

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

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace Life Center. Meetings TBA. Call John Lucas, 527-7634.

CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS: Meets twice a month. New workers welcome. Call to confirm time and place. 537-7818, jcostello@igc.org

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

Sonora, Info: 533-1665. Info@pflagsonora.org, www.pflagsonora.org

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

WEDNESDAYS

LifeRing Secular Recovery. Wednesday 6:30 pm, Reynolds Room, 1700 McHenry Village Way, Modesto. Back of McHenry Village across from the Memorial Health and Education Center. Meeting offering support for people in relationships with people wrestling with addiction.

Modesto Folk Dancers All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 578-5551.

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 non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

PFLAG Oakdale, third Wednesdays, Golden Oaks Conf. Room, Oak Valley Medical Bldg., 1425 West H St., Oakdale, 7 pm. Info: flagoakdale@dishmail.net

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: Stan, 549-7770, stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com, or Anne, 521-6977.

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

THURSDAYS

Third Thursday Gallery 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: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

Latino Community Roundtable (LCR) meets on the second Thursday of each month at Noon at Bel Piatto Italian Cucina, 1000 Kansas Ave., Modesto, CA. Info: call Maggie Mejia, (209) 303-2664, <http://lcrstan.org>

CVAN (Central Valley Action Network) 3rd Thursday, 7-8:15 pm, Peace/Life Center 720 13th St. Contact: Jocelyn at jocelyncooper@gmail.com or 510-467-2877 or 209-312-9413

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter. 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact: Joanna Rose-Murray, 209-484-8276, jrmcompassionate@gmail.com, <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.org>

NAACP. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S M.L. King Dr., Modesto, 7 pm, 3rd Thursdays. 549-1991.

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

Occupy Modesto: General Assembly meets each Friday, 5:00 - 6:30 pm at Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St. All interested members of the 99% are welcome. Time will change when it stays light later.

LifeRing Secular Recovery. Friday 6:30 pm. Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. Every first Friday we alternate between a LifeRing & 12 Step speaker with a discussion following.

Funstrummer Ukulele Band every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 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.

Village Dancers: Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

Sierra Club: Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 549-9155. Visit <http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

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

Hispanic Leadership Council, 1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Other meetings at Terrace Cafe, Double Tree Hotel. Info: Yamilet Valladolid, 523-2860.

SATURDAY

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabee potluck/meeting every third Saturday of the month, 11:30 AM- 1:30 PM. Info: Kathy or Chris, 209-529-5360; email kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

SERRV: Saturdays, 10 - Noon and after church Sundays or by appointment. Call Mary, 522-6497 or 523-5178. Gifts from developing countries. Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland, Rm. #4, Modesto.

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.