



# Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO  
PEACE/LIFE  
CENTER  
PUBLICATION

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## Climate Change Was No Accident

By JILL RICHARDSON

Years ago, tobacco companies discovered the link between their products and lung cancer. Did they warn their customers? No—they denied the link entirely, misleading the public for decades while killing their customers.

Similarly, ExxonMobil scientists made startlingly accurate predictions about climate change as early as 1982—and then spent millions of dollars on a misinformation campaign to sow public doubt about climate change.

They didn't need to convince the public that the climate crisis wasn't happening. They just had to muddy the waters *enough* to prevent us from doing anything.

They provoked uncertainty: Maybe the climate crisis isn't happening. And even if it is, maybe it's not caused by humans burning fossil fuels. (Of course, it *is* happening and it *is* caused by humans.)

The result was inaction.

If we aren't even sure that a human-caused climate crisis is afoot, why should we wean ourselves off of fossil fuels? It would be highly inconvenient and very expensive to go to all of that trouble unless we're absolutely certain that we need to.

After all, the argument went, "only" 97 percent of scientists believe that humans are causing a climate crisis.

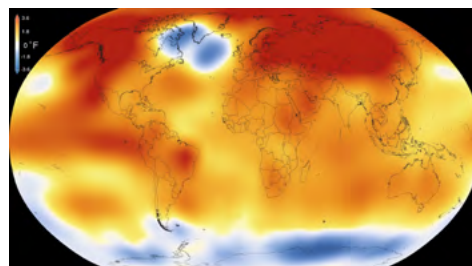
I'm a scientist. Let me tell you, when 97 percent of scientists agree on anything, the evidence must be overwhelming.

Scientists are trained to critique and argue with one another. We make our careers by pulling apart other scientists' theories and exposing the flaws in them and then supplanting them with better theories of our own.

You couldn't get 97 percent of scientists to agree that puppies are cute or chocolate is delicious.

What about the other 3 percent? You can always find one or two nutty so-called scientists with inaccurate, fringe theories out there. There's probably a scientist somewhere attempting to publish a study asserting that Bigfoot exists—or that climate change isn't happening.

Science is a community endeavor in which we try to collectively discover and advance



the truth. The goal is that the community as a whole achieves a consensus or near-consensus that is as accurate as possible.

If 97 out of 100 scientists agree that humans are causing catastrophic climate change, that's a consensus.

The difference between lying about the deadliness of tobacco and lying about the deadliness of fossil fuels is who gets harmed by those lies.

Tobacco is deadly—I've lost two grandparents to its ill effects—but tobacco is most harmful to those who use it. The climate crisis is deadly to everyone, whether or not they are responsible for causing it. It will continue to hurt people for generations, even after humans stop polluting at such alarming levels as they do now.

The Exxon Mobil executives who've profited from fossil fuels did so while knowing that they were trading a few decades of profits for the entire future of the planet and all of the species on it.

We're beyond the point where we tell ourselves that changing our light bulbs can help. The fix for the climate crisis must come from the highest levels. It requires large-scale systemic changes and not a few insufficient individual actions.

And it could start with consequences for the industry that caused the crisis on purpose.

*This article was originally published by OtherWords. It has been edited for YES! Magazine.*

Jill writes about food, agriculture, the environment, health, tolerance, and well-being. She's the author of "Recipe for America: Why Our Food System Is Broken and What We Can Do to Fix It."

## Acts of Human Kindness: A Rescue at MOES

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Ordinarily, Modesto Police Sergeant Mike Hammond has more pressing things to do than rescue cats. But Friday, May 2, Hammond was the only uniformed person in sight when a persistent cat lover kept urging him to do something about a treed cat near the entrance gate to the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES), near Modesto's Beard Brook Park.

Hammond looked at the cat, some thirty feet up a sturdy oak tree, then looked for an easy way out. The oak didn't have any real access points, not even for a good climber. The lower branches had been lopped off long ago.

The time-honored method of coaxing the cat down with an open can of tuna was out of the question because its leash had gotten tangled in the oak's leafy branches.

"Have you called for help yet," said the cat lover. "You better call the Fire Department."

Hammond sighed. The last thing he wanted to do was call out the Fire Department for a treed cat. He looked again. Even a long ladder probably couldn't reach it, and it would still have to be untangled. He sighed again. Then he called.

Most everyone agrees that the last time Modesto Fire Department came to MOES, they got there fast. That was good, because a couple of tents had caught fire and people nearby were hearing explosions. Not only did the fire department arrive quickly—some people said within five minutes—they got the fire out in what seemed like record time.

Once again, Modesto firefighters were on the job in minutes. After a quick evaluation of the cat's precarious predicament, they pulled up their big truck and extension ladder, then

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## 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday June 9, 2019

8:00 a.m. — Noon

*Benefit for  
the Modesto Peace/Life Center*

Modesto Church of the Brethren  
2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto



## All-Star Favorites

- Blueberry • Buttermilk •
- Scotch Oaties •

Fresh fruit salad  
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## 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Camp June 28, 29, and 30, 2019

Camp Peaceful Pines  
near Pinecrest, California

### Registration Form



**Adults** \$75 before May 1; \$80 before June 4; \$85 after June 4

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Child (ages 3 & under FREE)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Voluntary Donation to provide a camper scholarship = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

MEALS: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan ☐ Gluten-free Other dietary needs: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have a special need for a cabin assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### Parent authorization for minor children

I give permission for decisions to be made in my absence about the need for medical care. I give permission for my child to be treated by a physician or hospital in case of an emergency. I understand and agree that the Modesto Peace/Life Center is not responsible for my child/children. I will not hold the Modesto Peace/Life Center, its officers or leaders liable for medical aid rendered.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If adults bring children not their own, the parent/legal guardian of those children must complete and sign a separate parent authorization. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

## 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Camp June 28–30

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's 37th Annual Peace Camp in the Sierra will take place on June 28-30 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108. We'll enjoy a weekend of workshops, good food, hikes, singing, crafts, talent show, recreation, and stimulating people of all ages in a beautiful mountain setting. Families and individuals are welcome. Register early for a discount.

**Leng Nou** will present the Saturday workshop, "Courageous Conversations." The art of civil discourse is quickly fading, and we need more practitioners with this skill set if we want to effectively build community. Participants will explore the dynamics of a conversation and learn skills to help build their capacity to engage in difficult conversations ranging from political, social, and cultural issues. Participants will learn how developing curiosity and nurturing deep listening skills are practical ways to breach the polarizing rifts in our society.

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

Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Road off Hwy. 108 in the Stanislaus National Forest features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins, platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work.

The camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$80 before June 4 and \$85 after June 4. Young people 18 and under are \$60 before June 4 and \$65 after June 4. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated. The camp opens with supper at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and closes after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp. Registration forms are available online at [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org) and [www.peacelifecenter.org](http://www.peacelifecenter.org) to download and mailed. The online registration payment option can be done by searching for "Peace Camp 2019" at [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com). There will be a wait list if registration becomes full.

**Information:** Ken Schroeder, 209-480-4576, [kschroeder70@yahoo.com](mailto:kschroeder70@yahoo.com)

### Peace/Life Center looking for volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center needs volunteers to assist with projects, events, our radio project (radio knowledge, skills needed), fundraising, and administrative activities. No experience necessary. Experience in social media, Word, Excel, or other special skills are desired for some volunteer positions. We need volunteers for a few hours per week, or an ongoing commitment.

For more information, contact our volunteer/outreach coordinators: Susan Bower or Jocelyn Cooper at the Peace Life Center (209) 529-5750.



# The Biggest Question After the Mueller Report Is Not Impeachment

Life after Trump will mean reckoning with our divisions. Can we?

By CHRIS WINTERS

It's been more than a week since the redacted Mueller Report was released, and everyone now has been able to deliver their own hot takes (and a few more nuanced takes, to be fair) on what it might mean for President Trump's future. There's still one question no one has really tried to answer.

What happens after he's gone?

I think that's more important than any question of whether to impeach him now, or later, or wait until the 2020 election, or until 2024. In the end, the day will come when Trump is no longer president, and then the real work will begin.

In two long years, he's inflicted pain upon millions of people through his direct actions (locking migrant children in cages, for example) or neglect (Puerto Rico still hasn't recovered from Hurricane Maria). Whether he's at a stop on his nonstop victory lap tour in Trump-friendly cities or sitting behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, he is seeking to divide this country between parties, races, genders, sexual orientations and expressions, classes, Bernie-or-busts or never-Bernies, cities and rural areas. That is how he can maintain power with only the support of his most rabid fans, estimated to be about 30 percent of the electorate, according to the Cook Political Report. In the larger electorate, Five Thirty Eight has shown that throughout his presidency, Trump's approval rating has never been above 50 percent, so his path to re-election almost requires he split the opposition wherever he can.

This is how autocrats work. They drag people down to their level. When no one else will have them, they look to the autocrat as the only man (they usually are men) who really has their back.

That's why the Mueller Report will change very few Trump supporters' minds. They're averse to the fact-based universe most of us live in. To them, it doesn't matter that enough evidence exists in this one report to keep him, his organization, campaign, transition team, and current staff neck-deep in investigations for the next decade.

So the real Trump problem isn't so much how he leaves office, but how to repair the country afterward.

The first thing to consider is that Trump himself is not the cause of American society's deep wounds. He's just jamming his fingers into them to make them bleed more.

The second thing to consider is that we simply can't just go back to the way things were before. Clearly, our democracy was vulnerable, and the next autocrat to come along could be even worse. He could be competent.

A post-Trump America is going to need to confront not just its creaky and unreliable electoral system, but also undertake major reforms to address cultural, political, and economic flash points: institutional racism in policing, housing, employment, and, well, pretty much everywhere; the highest levels of wealth disparity since the Great Depression; the corrupting effects of corporate and untraceable "dark" money in politics; the full-scale surrender of individual rights to corporate privilege; and the existential threat of global climate change. Those make policy-level debates seem small by comparison—how to reform health care, make higher education affordable,

reduce gun violence, reform the immigration system, and rebuild our international credibility as a democracy.

To start, we will need a national reckoning that defines—yet again—what it means to be an American. We can disagree on policies now and forever, but before those conversations happen, we need consensus on what morals and values are our bedrock, what those truths are that we hold to be self-evident.

That reckoning will need to draw a line in the sand, in an era when so many lines have been crossed. That line is that the United States is a nation of laws, that no one is above the law, and that all of us have an absolute right to participate in this society equally. Recovery post-Trump will be about getting back on a path toward re-creating a country that doesn't compromise democratic ideals for political expediency.

## Peace Essay Contest: Div. IV 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner

By ANDREW SWEHLA

Hart Ransom Academy Charter  
Teacher: Susan Janis

### Community Garden



When I turned nine, I asked my mother for a planter bed to grow my own vegetables. I have grown up in a household where my parents encourage me to plant my own garden like they do every year. There is nothing like eating fresh pesto from the basil that you planted months ago. Rarely a summer day passes by when I am not tending my garden. What I love about living in California is the variety of fresh produce that is grown here. The ideal climate is the reason why our state produces over a third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts. (California) Even with all the fresh food in our state, the youth obesity rate is incredibly high. Growing one's own food with the help of community gardens can help to lower our youth obesity rate in California, thereby increasing the overall well-being of Californians.

Our youth in California have an obesity problem that needs to be confronted. In 2016, 40.7% of children ages 12-17 were overweight or obese. (Healthy) Obesity can lead to ailments such as diabetes or high blood pressure, which could lead to death. It is sad how California is the bread basket of the world, and yet we have so many people eating processed and unhealthy foods. Our soil is so rich here, that I can even find tomato plants sprouting up in my alley that I never planted.

One way to decrease obesity is for people to grow their own foods, because freshly grown foods contain more nutrients than store bought and processed foods. Fresh foods can

When debates arise, this time we'll be weighing democratic principles against the resurgent blood-and-soil nationalism that Trump represented. That should make a difference.

Restoring rights stolen by a litany of executive orders will be the easy part. Facing truth and restoring trust, in which the unharmed reach out to the harmed, will be the hard work of repair. That means building bridges to those in our communities who have been excluded, along all the social fault lines that Trump has so adeptly exploited. And maybe it means doing our healing side by side with former Trump supporters.

Will they cross that bridge and leave Trumpism behind?

Chris Winters wrote this article for YES! Magazine. Chris is a senior editor at YES! He covers economics and politics. Follow him on Twitter @TheChrisWinters.

be purchased from certain stores and markets, but growing food in a community garden is more beneficial because it is cheaper, provides exercise, and teaches good eating habits. Statistically, people who garden eat more fruits and vegetables, and this has a long-term impact on a person's dietary behavior. (Community)

A community garden is a plot of land set aside by either a city, a church, or another non profit that serve as garden space for people who do not have the yard to plant a garden. Some community gardens give whole planter boxes to individuals, while others give big plots to entire families. In Modesto, The Church of the Brethren hosts a community garden of 19x19 foot plots that can be used by anyone who wants to grow food or flowers. (Seeds) You can find community gardens in towns and cities, but California needs more in order to help cure and prevent obesity and make a positive difference in the lives of Californians.

I will never forget last spring when I harvested my Fava beans. The experience of harvesting one's own food gives a person peace and happiness with the earth. It is time for people to learn that there is nothing better or healthier than freshly grown foods. Through an increase in community gardens, youth obesity can be reduced.

#### Citations

- "California Agricultural Production Statistics." California Department of Food and Agriculture. 2017.
- "Community Gardens." What Works for Health. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. 2010.
- "Healthy Beginnings/ Reducing Childhood Obesity." Let's Get Healthy California. 2016.
- "Seeds of Peace Community Garden." American Community Gardening Association. 2009.

## "Kitchen Korner" needs small kitchen items for the homeless

By Shelly Scribner & Sandy Sample

The Peace/Life Center's Homeless Project's "Kitchen Korner" urgently needs donations of SMALL gently-used kitchen items.

We're especially in need of pots and pans, and silverware.

**ACTION:** Call Sandy (209) 523-8445, Shelly (209) 521-6304, to arrange a time to meet you at the Peace/Life Center to receive your items and give you a receipt.



# Linda Garcia: 2019 Goldman Prize Recipient North America

Linda Garcia organized Fruit Valley residents to stop the construction of the Tesoro Savage oil export terminal in Vancouver, Washington, in February 2018. Her activism safeguarded residents from harmful air pollution and protected the environment of the Columbia River Gorge. By preventing North America's largest oil terminal from being built, Garcia halted the flow of 11 million gallons of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Washington.

## A 50-year fossil fuel corridor on rails

On the heels of North Dakota's Bakken shale oil boom, fossil fuel companies launched an aggressive campaign to build infrastructure to transport coal, oil, and natural gas to West Coast refineries—and for export to Asian markets. If constructed, the cumulative impact would create five times as much pollution as the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Tesoro Savage project planned to move 11 million gallons of oil every day from North Dakota through Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, and through the Columbia River Gorge Natural Scenic Area. Estimates called for five trains daily, each measuring a mile-and-a-half long, to transport the oil to the Port of Vancouver. The facility was projected to be the largest oil terminal in North America and, if approved, would have turned the region into a fossil fuel corridor for the next 50 years.

Vancouver's port is in the Fruit Valley neighborhood. Isolated from the rest of the population by geography and industrial development, Fruit Valley sits literally on the other side of the tracks from the rest of Vancouver. The close-knit neighborhood is home to a racially diverse, low-income population and suffers from the worst air quality in the city.

Several recent oil train accidents have given the people of Vancouver additional reasons to be wary of the Tesoro Savage project. In 2013, a 14-car oil train derailed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, igniting a fiery explosion that killed 47 people. In June 2016, a Union Pacific train carrying three million gallons of oil derailed near Mosier, Oregon, in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

## An advocate for environmental justice

Linda Garcia, 51, is a resident of Vancouver's Fruit Valley neighborhood. She works part-time for the Community Roots Collaborative, a small grassroots organization that builds permanent affordable housing for homeless and at-risk families, and for the Washington Environmental Council, a nonprofit that focuses on sustainability and climate action throughout Washington State. Garcia has long been motivated to help advocate and speak for those who don't have a voice in her community.

## Taking on an industrial giant

Garcia first learned about the Tesoro Savage project in April 2013, while serving as leader of the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association. She immediately became concerned about the safety and health of her community. The details of the project—and Tesoro's troubled history—worried Garcia. The oil company already owed \$10 million in fines for air pollution and \$720,000 for safety violations in nearby



Anacortes, Washington, after seven workers died in a Tesoro refinery in 2010.

Garcia reached out to influential stakeholders, including the local chapter of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Columbia Riverkeeper, Sierra Club, and small business owners' associations. These groups were opposed to the project due to the potential environmental and health consequences for the community and for workers. Garcia soon became a spokesperson and testified as a key community witness at public hearings and city council meetings.

Garcia continued her leadership and advocacy and convinced the city council to appeal the Tesoro Savage proposal to Washington's Energy Facility Evaluation Council (EFSEC)—the state agency responsible for permitting new projects. Garcia attended every EFSEC meeting from 2014 to 2017 as a representative of the Fruit Valley Community. In July 2016, she provided key testimony before EFSEC against Tesoro, the port, and BNSF railroad at a major hearing on the project.

From 2015 through 2017, Garcia supported the campaigns to elect two key community voices to the port commission—Eric LaBrandt and Don Orange—whose presence on the commission proved critical for Fruit Valley residents.

Through much of the campaign, Garcia battled serious illness. She would often travel directly from chemotherapy to community meetings and testify on behalf of Fruit Valley residents. However, she did not let this slow her down—and never missed a meeting. Additionally, from 2015 to 2017, Garcia received death threats on a near-daily basis.

In November 2017, thanks to Garcia's activism and input, EFSEC issued an environmental impact statement asserting that the Tesoro Savage project posed "significant, unavoidable harms" to the environment and community. One week later, EFSEC representatives unanimously voted to recommend that the state deny the permit for the Tesoro Savage oil terminal. In January 2018, Governor Jay Inslee denied approval for the necessary permits. The following month, Tesoro Savage and the port agreed to terminate the company's lease, effectively canceling all plans for the oil terminal in Vancouver.

Garcia united Fruit Valley residents with unions, environmental NGOs, and local government officials to halt the construction of North America's largest oil terminal. Her leadership protected Vancouver residents—and one of the Northwest's most scenic river areas—from potentially devastating pollution.

Learn more about the [Washington Environmental Council](http://www.washingtonenvironmental.org) and its efforts to support clean energy and move away from fossil fuels in the Pacific Northwest.

Linda's work to stop the largest oil-by-rail terminal in the nation was part of a large coalition-based effort through the [Stand Up To Oil](http://www.standupto-oil.org) coalition.

<https://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/linda-garcia/>



**"Every step we take to protect our planet, no matter how seemingly minute, is a gesture of bravery."**

Linda Garcia, 2019 Goldman Prize Recipient

## The Goldman Environmental Prize

The Goldman Environmental Prize honors grassroots environmental heroes from the world's six inhabited continental regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands & Island Nations, North America, and South & Central America. The Prize recognizes individuals for sustained and significant efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment, often at great personal risk. The Goldman Prize views "grassroots" leaders as those involved in local efforts, where positive change is created through community or citizen participation in the issues that affect them. Through recognizing these individual leaders, the Prize seeks to inspire other ordinary people to take extraordinary actions to protect the natural world.

Learn more at <https://www.goldmanprize.org/>

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209-529-5750

# Trump Administration Waives Laws to Build 100 Miles of Border Wall Across Arizona National Monument, Wildlife Refuges

## From the Center for Biological Diversity

TUCSON, Ariz.— The Trump administration will waive dozens of environmental and public health laws to speed border-wall construction through federally protected sites in Arizona and California.

Today's announcement from the Department of Homeland Security says waivers will be used to build walls through Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, Coronado National Memorial and numerous designated wilderness areas. The bollard-style barriers will block wildlife migration, damage ecosystems and harm border communities.

"The Trump administration just ignored bedrock environmental and public health laws to plow a disastrous border wall through protected, spectacular wildlands," said Laiken Jordahl, borderlands campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity. "This senseless wall would rip a scar through the heart of the Sonoran Desert, kill endangered wildlife and cause irreversible damage. We'll do everything in our power to stop this destruction."

The three waivers sweep aside 41 laws that protect clean air, clean water, public lands and endangered wildlife. They cover plans to build more than 100 miles of wall in numerous Arizona locations and in California near El Centro and San Diego.

With these waivers, which take effect Wednesday, the Trump administration will have issued 12 waivers under the REAL ID Act. The waivers come during an open comment

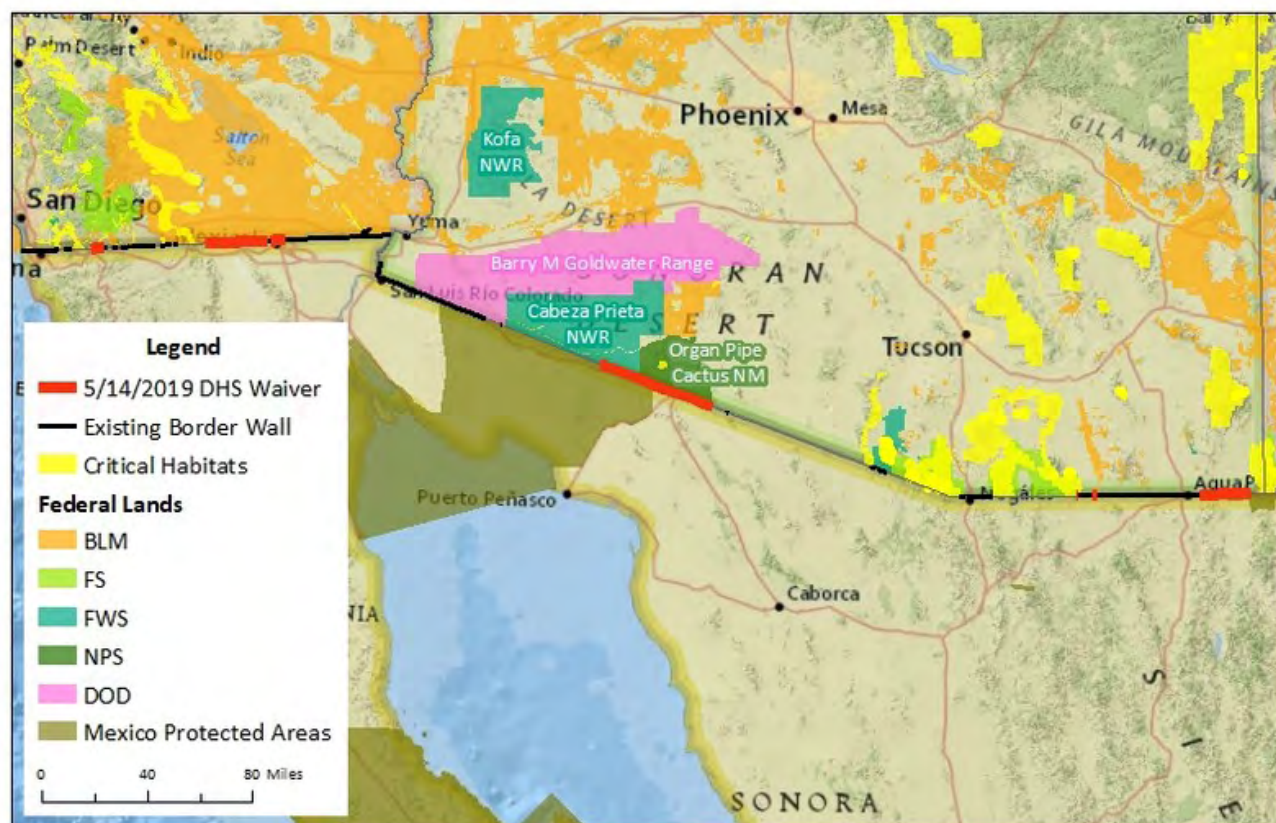
period where the public is invited to weigh in with concerns. Comments remain open until July 5.

The Center and allies have sued to challenge Trump's emergency declaration, which would fund this border wall construction. The Center also has sued the administration to challenge border-wall construction in the Rio Grande Valley and near the Santa Teresa Port of Entry in New Mexico. The Center's first border-related lawsuit filed in 2017 in U.S. District Court in Tucson with U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva seeks to require the Trump administration to do a detailed analysis of the environmental impacts of its border-enforcement program. All of these suits are pending.

A 2017 study by the Center identified more than 90 endangered or threatened species that would be threatened by wall construction along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border.

Beyond jeopardizing wildlife, endangered species and public lands, the U.S.-Mexico border wall is part of a larger strategy of ongoing border militarization that damages human rights, civil liberties, native lands, local businesses and international relations. The border wall impedes the natural migrations of people and wildlife that are essential to healthy diversity.

The waivers cast aside these laws: see list at <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/trump-administration-waives-laws-to-build-100-miles-border-wall-across-arizona-national-monument-and-refuges-2019-05-14/>





# How can allies protect communities threatened with violence?

By **GEORGE LAKEY**

This Part II of a three-part series on. Part I appeared in the January issue of *Connections*. You can read it [here](#).

A favorite tactic of the extremist right is to attack oppressed communities in order to discourage them from standing up for themselves. Milo Yiannopolous and Ann Coulter stand out as two celebrities who have done this verbally, while new groups like the Proud Boys and old groups like the Ku Klux Klan do it physically.

When those who aren't the ones being targeted show solidarity in some way, progressive movements have a better chance to grow. In the early 1970s gay men suffered a wave of physical attacks outside bars in Philadelphia's Gayborhood because we'd gained publicity while campaigning for our rights. I led nonviolent workshops for the Gay Activist Alliance on how to respond to the bashers. I remember how moved I was when heterosexuals turned up at the workshops as well.

In the proud history of LGBTQ progress, heterosexuals played an ally role even when it put them in jeopardy in one way or another. They were following the path of white people who'd risked by joining civil rights actions even though they were sometimes more severely beaten than their black comrades because whites were regarded as "race-traitors." An example is portrayed in the Danny Glover film "Freedom Song," the story of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's entrance into Mississippi Klan territory.

## Avoiding the 'white savior syndrome'

Starting in the early 1980s liberals and progressives in the United States developed a culture that prioritized defense. When the economic elite initiated its fierce pushback, symbolized by President Ronald Reagan's 1981 firing of the air traffic controllers in order to break their union, most of the major progressive movements of the 1960s and '70s became reactive. They decided to focus on retaining previously-won gains.

A brave exception was the LGBTQ movement, which remained on the offensive and continued to win victories. The rest — labor, civil rights, women, school reformers — found their gains eroding, which is what happens when people go on the defensive.

The progressives' new defense-oriented culture means that antifa's claim to defend vulnerable communities is appealing. For example, if you're a middle-class activist already trying to defend previously-achieved gains, it will only seem natural to apply that approach to your newfound embrace of identity politics. After all, if your collective identity includes privilege, shouldn't you leap to defend a group that is more oppressed? Isn't that just "common sense"?

Unfortunately, there's a problem with this new progressive mode of thinking: being on the defense means coming from an inherent place of weakness. But that's not the only problem of being on the defense — it also raises the always-tricky relationship of allies to an oppressed group.

As is so often the case in trying to untangle the discourse on oppression, we find both classism and patriarchy have edged their way into the discussion. The very phrase "vulnerable communities" is a signal; the words suggest that I,

the privileged ally, believe others — as communities — are weaker and need protection.

It's much more straightforward to respond to individuals being threatened. I've shared [stories of intervention](#) in situations where someone was being attacked or threatened. Luckily, my fellow teacher George Willoughby was nearby to step in nonviolently when I was being threatened with a knife by an outraged student.

We intervene in those situations not because we're privileged but because we're able to be useful.

**"Our movement chose nonviolent tactics because, in our judgment, more of us were likely to get badly hurt or killed if violence was used for 'protection.'"**

What's not helpful is the abstract assignment of "vulnerability" to a collective identity. The Collins Dictionary defines the word vulnerable as "weakness." The very act of describing oppressed groups as needing help from me, "the stronger one," fits all too neatly into classist, racist and other oppressive conditioning.

The reality is that most of the wins for justice despite opposition by the economic elite have been gained mainly by the oppressed, not by the privileged. Based on results, the more vulnerable have been the stronger ones.

Some men assisted in the woman suffrage movements, but most of the heavy lifting was done by "the weaker sex." In the U.S. case, it was women picketing the White House who were beaten up, not men, and their willingness to respond nonviolently changed the politics of a nation at war.

## Learning to trust 'mother wit'

I learned this phrase from a black student when I was teaching at the Martin Luther King School of Social Change. Because oppressed people have experienced so much mistreatment and survived, many of them have a finely-tuned intuition about how to handle their oppressors.

I entrusted my life to that intuition, when — in 1989 — I joined the first Peace Brigades International, or PBI, team in Sri Lanka. Our job was to act as unarmed bodyguards for lawyers who were threatened with assassination because they were standing up for activists' human rights.

Each of us followed the directions of whichever lawyer we were assigned to. In one case I was told to live with the lawyer's family and answer the doorbell at night after curfew, on the chance it was the hit squad there to kill the lawyer. Whatever delaying tactics I used, enhanced by my American white skin privilege, might give him the margin of safety he needed. He readily agreed to PBI's policy that he needed to lock up his gun, believing that nonviolent intervention gave him a better chance than a shoot-out.

After I moved into his house he took me on a "social call" to drink tea with the family of a colleague. On the way home he told me that the colleague was acquainted with the controller of the hit squad. "By tonight," he said, "the controller

will know all about PBI and possible repercussions if he kills me. He'll think twice about dispatching the next hit squad."

The lawyer's immediate tactical move once again reminded me of one reason why oppressed people have so often taken leadership in nonviolent breakthroughs. Their subordinate situation incentivizes them to look for subtle dynamics that provide openings, ways to move forward and still stay safe.

I could relate. When the epidemic of gay-bashing broke out in my town, would I have wanted heterosexual allies to come into the Gayborhood with weapons to protect us, the "vulnerable community"? No way!

As a gay man struggling in the '70s, the last thing I wanted was well-meaning allies to pack a gun to protect me. I had gay friends who'd been bashed and I knew of lesbians and gay men who'd been killed. Our movement chose nonviolent tactics because, in our judgment, more of us were likely to get badly hurt or killed if violence was used for "protection."

That's like the Jewish congregations of today who, after the Squirrel Hill massacre in Pittsburgh, are refusing to use armed guards partly because they believe it's safer to rely on the community of nonviolent allies than to risk the possibility of violent escalation with violent anti-Jewish forces.

The Sri Lankan lawyer and other human rights defenders' intuitive choice to rely on nonviolent intervention for survival has been borne out empirically. For decades now [PBI and other unarmed civilian peacekeepers](#) have been operating in violent situations, keeping people alive.

## Violence is a hatchet when a surgeon's knife is needed

The intention of well-meaning allies to assist threatened communities is made more difficult with violence. As shown by the examples above, allies to oppressed people will do better by letting go of the "father knows best" syndrome and respecting the intuitive survival knowledge of those in that community who can see the subtleties and therefore can appreciate the value of creative nonviolent intervention.

Violence is anything but subtle; in fact, it is such a gross tool that it often spins a situation out of control. Cornell West was relieved when armed anti-fascists came to the rescue in Charlottesville, Virginia when he and other pastors were surrounded by menacing white supremacists. However, because counter-violence usually amps up a confrontation, the pastors could instead have been hurt or killed by random cross-fire.

In fact, in the growing chaos other anti-racists were injured and killed in Charlottesville. Hopefully the next time professor West enters a chancy situation he'll make sure that he follows those locals who are leading the intervention and who knew their nonviolent tactics, had trained for de-escalation, and knew their community.

As the civil rights movement learned brilliantly in multiple situations of violent threat by white supremacists, tactics of disruption can be effective when we're in charge. That means, for one thing, doing our nonviolent direct action as part of a strategic campaign, as in Birmingham, Selma, and Mississippi. Chaos, on the other hand, is not our friend. Even the weapon-carrying experiment by the [Deacons of Defense](#), composed of other black people, was problematic.

continued next page



# Nonviolence

continued

## And what about winning?

In the LGBTQ community we want more than relief from the bullying and life-threatening violence we have endured. We also wanted to win equality. Those in any oppressed community ready to struggle know there are risks, would like to minimize them, and still want to choose a strategy that maximizes their chance of winning.

Political scientists Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan found in their sample of 323 cases of mass struggle that the opponent responded with violent repression 88 percent of the time – in both violent and nonviolent struggles. The opponent's power and privilege were, after all, threatened whether the movement used violence or nonviolent action. However, nonviolent campaigns that responded to the repression with nonviolent tactics increased their chance of winning by about 22 percent.

In other words, if your goals are substantial enough, expect suffering no matter which means you use. Choosing to respond nonviolently increases the chance that the suffering will result in more justice for your community. My new book, "How We Win," aims to maximize your chance of winning, by drawing from a century's worth of successful campaigns to find lessons especially applicable to today's political moment.

The civil rights movement, running ahead of the political scientists, believed that nonviolent discipline would increase their probability of success when facing terroristic violence. The overwhelming majority of black participants in the Deep South relied on nonviolent discipline instead of violent self-defense. The movement won its greatest victories in the part of the United States where the violence against it was the worst.

This wisdom about how we win is very much alive today. On November 22, 2015, five members of Black Lives Matter were shot by white supremacists during a late-night demonstration at a police precinct station in Minneapolis.

Instead of the movement asking the mostly-white members of Standing Up for Racial Justice, or SURJ, to bring armed protection for continued demonstrations, Black Lives Matter raised its level of nonviolent confrontation. They led a mass march from the precinct to City Hall. Instead of relying on masks (which signal fear), the organizers began the march by circling the precinct, urging the demonstrators to "let them see our faces, let them know who is here."

The white supremacists backed off instead of continuing to attack the campaign's actions. Expecting bullets to intimidate black people into stopping their campaign just wasn't working, and white allies worked in tandem with that.

It's only one story of many in which oppressed communities lead the way, innovating nonviolent responses to attack that not only reduced further injury but also pushed the campaign assertively forward. Antifa, and all of us, need to learn from those innovations.

*This story was made possible by our members. Become one today.*

**George Lakey** is author of "Strategizing for a Living Revolution" in David Solnit's book *Globalize Liberation* (City Lights, 2004). His 2016 book is "Viking Economics," and in December 2018 Melville House will release "How We Win: A Guide to Nonviolent Direct Action Campaigning."

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# Human Kindness: A Rescue at MOES

from page 1

sent in the crew's best cat wrangler.

Though he carried a cloth sack to confine the cat in case it struggled and fought, the firefighter didn't need it.

"That cat must have been ready to come down," said the firefighter. "It walked right into my arms."

It probably helped that the firefighter didn't even attempt to untangle the cat's leash at first. Instead, he just broke off the small branch that had entangled the leash and untangled it after the cat was secure in his arms.

One observer said the cat had run into the tree after it was chased by a dog. Whatever the reason, once it got tangled up, the cat couldn't have made it down without help.

Some of the people at MOES said that the cat's owner, Sherry Lopez, has a couple of cats and loves them dearly.

"Those cats mean everything to Sherry," said one woman.

Sherry herself didn't say much while the cat was up the tree. She just looked on helplessly as a kind stranger pleaded the cat's case. But she was obviously thankful when a kind firefighter brought her pet and placed it in her arms.

"I was really scared," said Lopez later, "but Rianne went right to the fireman."

Sherry said her cat is named after her grandmother, who is also a resident at MOES.

Having a pet is just one of several benefits of having a place to stay for Sherry Lopez, whose story, like many MOES residents, is murky. Some say she wandered away from home years ago. Lopez herself says that up until she came to Beard Brook Village last fall, "We were living under a bridge." Last year, she was seen frequently along Modesto's South 9th street, often sweeping the street with a straw broom.

Lopez says she feels a lot safer since she's come to MOES, where people can watch out for her and her pet. And she's especially thankful for the kind firefighters who took time to rescue a creature so dear to her heart. It was an act of kindness Sherry could never have seen when she lived under a bridge.



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# Hutton House: Helping Kids Figure Out Who They Are

An interview by TOM PORTWOOD

Walk into Hutton House and you'll immediately sense that you are in a safe, caring environment. With its comfortable bedrooms and quiet living room, you'll feel you have just entered someone's home – and indeed you have.

Established by the Center for Human Services in 1976, Hutton House is Stanislaus County's only shelter for runaway and homeless youth – and the only shelter of its kind between Stockton and Bakersfield. The residential facility houses up to eight children aged 13 to 17, at a time, while drop-in services are available to hundreds of youth and their families. These services include

(1) a 24-hour crisis line; (2) Shelter and beds; (3) Food and clothing; (4) Individual, group, and family counseling; (5) Advocacy, parent support and education; (6) Information, referrals, and connection to community resources; (7) Support to families experiencing parent/child conflict; and (7) Youth leadership development through the Community Youth Connection program. For all of these clients, Hutton House is like a safe harbor, a place to work through a domestic crisis that may be ruining a family. Altogether, Hutton House served a total of 427 individuals from July 2017 to June 2018.

Valrie Thompson, the longtime program manager for Hutton House, admires the strength and courage of her youthful clients. "Kids come to Hutton House in every shape imaginable," she notes, "from being incredibly angry to being incredibly hurt, to being completely non-verbal. They may be sick or they may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. They are all such unique individuals and they are all trying to survive, trying to get their needs met."

Nationally, around 700,000 youth between the ages of 13 and 17 will run away from home annually, according to research conducted at the University of Chicago. Ms. Thompson has tracked the number of runaway youth in Stanislaus County for three decades and has great empathy for each child who walks through the doors at Hutton House. "If I had to pick one reason why kids run away, it is loss – a loss of a friendship, a loss of a relationship, a loss of a parent, a loss of their home," reflects Ms. Thompson. "And loss, whether by death or divorce or just being separated, has the same effect. When you or I lose someone, we're wise enough to know that it's going to hurt a lot, but somewhere down

the road we know that loss will be bearable. But our kids don't have that experience. So a lot of our kids have lots of struggles, including parental substance abuse – maybe they've lost a mom to a heroin addiction, or a dad who has become addicted to pain pills." A lot of our kids are from divorced families and blended families, and blended families often come with difficult kinds of problems.

"Unfortunately, we have seen a great increase in the number of homeless youth. Many of these kids are still with their families, but nonetheless homeless," Ms. Thompson points out. "And, sadly, sometimes we have kids who have been thrown out or pushed out by their parents. And recently we've become abundantly aware of the number of kids who are being trafficked. We have an Outreach Specialist, whose job is to find youth between the age of 13 and 24

who are homeless and help them figure out where they are, and where they're going."

Designed to give at-risk kids a fighting chance to build toward a better, more productive future, Community Youth Connection is a youth leadership program that has shown great results. "Everybody needs to belong to something whether it's your church or your choir or your baseball team," explains Ms. Thompson in describing this Hutton House program. "A lot of kids have never connected before, but this group of 'misfit' kids is absolutely fabulous and they've connected here. They do volunteer work, and they get trained in leadership. They have found a place to be and a program to help them figure out who they are as kids."

"I first came to Hutton House as a volunteer, 31 years ago," Ms. Thompson says, when discussing her steadfast dedication to the children she has served. "Every day you learn something new, every day is different from the last day. People are so fascinating. It's much more intense now than in the past, much more multi-generational. These kids have had dysfunction in their families sometimes for two or three generations, so it has become very normal for them. The level of poverty, and the homelessness, and the mental health issues are just so much more severe now."

I think that one of the important things to me about Hutton

House is the volunteers who have come through the program," continues Ms. Thompson. "They get an education on how to deal with kids, I can't tell you the number of volunteers and employees who have come through here who are now police officers, probation officers and social workers. They're always grateful for the experience they had at Hutton House. You work with everyone in the world when you work here. That's been very rewarding for me. Of course, working with the kids is the most rewarding thing. Often they'll come back. Often the kids have done great, sometimes they're still struggling. But the good thing is that they know where to go if they need help."

While Ms. Thompson readily admits that "sometimes our successes are measured in very small increments," she also runs into "people who will come up and tell me that they were at Hutton House fifteen years ago, and 'oh, my God, it saved my life.' If we can figure out what they need, we can really help these kids."

**ACTION:** For more information on the programs available at Hutton House, or to volunteer your services, please contact Hutton House at (209) 526-1623, or visit their website at <https://www.centerforhumanservices.org/what-we-do/shelter-services/hutton-house/>. Hutton House is located at 201 Jennie St., Modesto, 95354.

## A Prelude to Summer! Music at Mistlin Gallery

Join Central California Art Association (CCAA) for "A Prelude to Summer!" on Saturday, **June 8, 7:00 p.m.** at the Mistlin Gallery, 1015 J St. in downtown Modesto. California native, Christine Capsuto-Shulman, will perform popular works from Broadway and opera, accompanied by Elizabeth Neff.

Shulman is a multi-faceted artist in the world of opera, musical theater, dance and acting. Christine's the "the ultimate package" as defined through her commanding stage presence, effortless vocal prowess, impressive musicianship skills, quirky humor and graceful poise, creating a deep and moving theatrical experience.

Tickets are available at Mistlin Gallery or online at <http://mistlingallery.eventbrite.com> for \$50 VIP seating, \$30 general seating and \$20 for students. Ticket price includes beverages and delicious desserts.

This cabaret style concert is the second in a series, dedicated to the late Grace Lieberman. The proceeds from these events are used to fund CCAA's cooperative community endeavors with other arts groups, art education, and for the development of a Grace Lieberman Young Artist scholarship fund. The series will continue on August 31 with "The Rat Pack in Review" featuring dancers from Central West Ballet, choreographed by Rene Daveluy. On November 23 the 4th in the series will be "The Passion of Flamenco" featuring David Chapman on Spanish guitar.

For more information visit <http://ccaagallery.org> or contact David Schroeder, 209-402-6092 or [schroederdavid64@gmail.com](mailto:schroederdavid64@gmail.com)

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## Maya Khosla: Wildlife Biologist and Writer

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Maya Khosla is the current Poet Laureate of Sonoma County (2018-2020). All the Fires of Wind and Light, poetry collection was recently published by Sixteen Rivers Press 2019. An accomplished essayist and screen writer, she also has been published in books, poetry journals and anthologies.

Khosla was born in London, England to a family from India. She came to the United States in 1984 and holds master's degrees in chemistry and ecotoxicology from Virginia Tech. A professional biologist, she works with Surf to Snow Environmental Resource Management in Danville and California environmental studies programs in Watsonville.

As a biologist and writer, her work has taken her across coastal India, Kenya, and the United States. Her latest film project, *Firewise - The Scientists Speak*, is an effort to create awareness about the high value of post-fire forests and the realities of forest fires in a time of climate change.

Other films and videos include *Searching for the Gold Spot*, *Turtle Diaries*, and *Rejuvenation Poem*. Her publications include books, poetry journals and anthologies, and she is an accomplished essayist and screen writer.

Following the October 2017 wildfires in Northern California, she documented the rapid regrowth of Trione-Annadel State Park in Santa Rosa, noting that left undisturbed, natural environments can recover from devastating fires.

She feels human beings need emotional release and support from devastating loss, and believes "The Natural Legacy Project," her two-year laureate project, and poetry in general, can "instill a sense of hope," as well as "serve as a catharsis, and perhaps ... encourage discovery."

The Natural Legacy Project, through recording and film, will include: 1. *Local Legacy*, a film poetry reading series of work by emerging and established local poets. 2. *Global Legacy*, an exchange program linking local poets with students and farmers from Nagaland, India, where Khosla taught poetry for several seasons, encouraging both groups to share stories. 3. Ideas and work from both *Local* and *Global Legacy* will be combined, with the goal of creating a 90-minute film with interviews and poetry interspersed.

Learn more about Maya Khosla's important work as a biologist and poet at: <https://socolitupdate.com/poet-laureates-news/>



### Four Eggs and a Ring Atop this roof

I could see smoke stacks wherever I looked,  
couldn't spot the sandals I lost, running.  
Today I'll step down:  
the bazaar may have opened again—  
long lines, a radio crackling like foil.

They say I can have four eggs  
for my toe ring of silver,  
bundles of samosas for my watch.

Burnt fields, no more cane to weave.  
Beyond, a train waits for people, coal  
to take to the city.

### What the birds know

once we have looked away  
once we have mourned  
and banished all smoldering thoughts  
about the tribe of blackened trees  
replacing the known world  
for now and another season  
and the last long fingers of smoke  
have been ushered out by wind  
a ticking begins

no one has seen them arrive in such  
numbers  
the birds are neither lost nor passing  
through  
they are simply linked tight  
to the lingering scents  
the promise of white fruits  
protein concealed by bark  
so were the ways of ancestors  
who began their journeys  
as specks in the distance

some fifty thousand years ago  
riding miles of smoky gold  
along a known line of hunger

growing closer and closer  
the black beat of instinct  
working a migration upstream  
against the flow of smoke  
into the source and its multiple riches

one preens its dusk-and-opal plumage  
others tap like a knock on the door  
whose answer is advice provided  
by the ages  
long as genetic fibers coiled  
in every cell  
beak and bone  
muscle and shiny eye  
the birds are awake to the growth  
and abundance soon to follow  
with the diligence  
of all known colors unfurling  
from the soil's chocolatey darkness  
from the trees re-greening come spring  
from the blackness

—From "Keel Bone", by Maya Khosla  
2003 winner, Dorothy Brunsman Poetry Prize

"In *Keel Bone*, Maya Khosla's words don't merely capture with precision a Himalayan winter and black-necked cranes, or a felled yellow cedar, or a child working in a match factory. Her words don't merely express the death and hope of a blue lupine spring, or the stealth of a black leopard, or the compassion of a motherly Anna ma. Her words are the very particular stones and weather, the rivers and homes, the creatures and people, trapped and free in their momentary events, in their momentary landscapes, the resonances, fears and joys of the many worlds of her poems.

These worlds, these poems, of *Keel Bone* are their own reality of reaching, extraordinary and not to be missed."

—Pattiann Rogers.

### Ravens' Undoing

Ravens stole her dentures again.  
We climbed the spindly branches,  
dug into the tangle,  
clutched at her teeth.  
The ravens in their half-made nest above,  
shouting down their thickest language,  
like dark rain, tricksters scolding.  
Achiamma below, toothless, hands on hips:  
*What do they think they are making,  
Taj Mahal?* You'd think she loathes  
animals,

but when dusk draws out the geckos,  
Achiamma offers them rice lumps  
trembling at the ends of long sticks.  
Rind-tough bodies crawl out the cracks,  
up walls, their necks thick as cane-root  
shudder, gulp, and shudder for more.

*Must feed their eye and scale,  
feed the thick meat of memory  
helps them remember us, keep us safe --*

Geckos nod, upside-down push-ups.  
The flesh-wrapped coals of their eyes  
bulge as moths spin and bump  
around the lamps' glass-cheeked fire.  
The reptiles rip forward, some catch wing-crumpled,  
some land on the floor with a clap.  
Achiamma shapes gecko-eyes into the dust  
to draw away ills, ravens' longings,  
then she darkens the windows with clove-steam,  
to suck out the evening's colors.  
*Now raven's jungly eye won't wander  
further than her nest.*



# Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'

**From the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**

Current global response insufficient; 'Transformative changes' needed to restore and protect nature; Opposition from vested interests can be overcome for public good

Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely, warns a landmark new report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the summary of which was approved at the 7th session of the IPBES Plenary, meeting last week (29 April – 4 May) in Paris.



diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems, as well as many fundamental contributions we derive from nature, are declining fast, although we still have the means to ensure a sustainable future for people and the planet."

The Report finds that around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades, more than ever before in human history.

The average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20%, mostly since 1900. More than 40% of amphibian species, almost 33% of reef-forming corals and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened. The picture is less clear for insect species, but available evidence supports a tentative estimate of 10% being threatened. At least 680 vertebrate species had been driven to extinction since the 16th century and more than 9% of all domesticated breeds of mammals used for food and agriculture had become extinct by 2016, with at least 1,000 more breeds still threatened.

"Ecosystems, species, wild populations, local varieties and breeds of domesticated plants and animals are shrinking, deteriorating or vanishing. The essential, interconnected web of life on Earth is getting smaller and increasingly frayed," said Prof. Settele. "This loss is a direct result of human activity and constitutes a direct threat to human well-being in all regions of the world."

To increase the policy-relevance of the Report, the assessment's authors have ranked, for the first time at this scale and based on a thorough analysis of the available evidence, the five direct drivers of change in nature with the largest relative global impacts so far. These culprits are, in descending order: (1) changes in land and sea use; (2) direct exploitation of organisms; (3) climate change; (4) pollution and (5) invasive alien species.

The Report notes that, since 1980, greenhouse gas emissions have doubled, raising average global temperatures by at least 0.7 degrees Celsius — with climate change already impacting nature from the level of ecosystems to that of genetics — impacts expected to increase over the coming decades, in some cases surpassing the impact of land and sea use change and other drivers.

Despite progress to conserve nature and implement policies, the Report also finds that global goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors. With good progress on components of only four of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, it is likely that most will be missed by the 2020 deadline. Current negative trends in

biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress towards 80% (35 out of 44) of the assessed targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 13, 14 and 15). Loss of biodiversity is therefore shown to be not only an environmental issue, but also a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue as well.

"To better understand and, more importantly, to address the main causes of damage to biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, we need to understand the history and global interconnection of complex demographic and economic indirect drivers of change, as well as the social values that underpin them," said Prof. Brondizio. "Key indirect drivers include increased population and per capita consumption; technological innovation, which in some cases has lowered and in other cases increased the damage to nature; and, critically, issues of governance and accountability. A pattern that emerges is one of global interconnectivity and 'telecoupling' — with resource extraction and production often occurring in one part of the world to satisfy the needs of distant consumers in other regions."

Other notable findings of the Report include[1]:

Three-quarters of the land-based environment and about 66% of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions. On average these trends have been less severe or avoided in areas held or managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

The value of agricultural crop production has increased by about 300% since 1970, raw timber harvest has risen by 45% and approximately 60 billion tons of renewable and nonrenewable resources are now extracted globally every year — having nearly doubled since 1980.

Land degradation has reduced the productivity of 23% of the global land surface. Up to US\$577 billion in annual global crops are at risk from pollinator loss and 100-300 million people are at increased risk of floods and hurricanes because of loss of coastal habitats and protection.

In 2015, 33% of marine fish stocks were being harvested at unsustainable levels; 60% were maximally sustainably fished, with just 7% harvested at levels lower than what can be sustainably fished.

Plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980, 300-400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge and other wastes from industrial facilities are dumped annually into the world's waters, and fertilizers entering coastal ecosystems have produced more than 400 ocean 'dead zones', totaling more than 245,000 km<sup>2</sup> (591-595) — a combined area greater than that of the United Kingdom.

Negative trends in nature will continue to 2050 and beyond in all of the policy scenarios explored in the Report, except those that include transformative change — due to the projected impacts of increasing land-use change, exploitation of organisms and climate change, although with significant differences between regions.

The Report also presents a wide range of illustrative actions for sustainability and pathways for achieving them across and between sectors such as agriculture, forestry, marine systems, freshwater systems, urban areas, energy, finance and many others.

Based on the systematic review of about 15,000 scientific and government sources, the Report also draws (for the first time ever at this scale) on indigenous and local knowledge, particularly addressing issues relevant to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

"Biodiversity and nature's contributions to people are our common heritage and humanity's most important life-supporting 'safety net'. But our safety net is stretched almost to breaking point," said Prof. Sandra Díaz (Argentina), who co-chaired the Assessment with Prof. Josef Settele (Germany) and Prof. Eduardo S. Brondizio (Brazil and USA). "The di-



# David Bernhardt Wants Your Water

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Trump appointee Secretary of Interior David Bernhardt may already have set new standards for an administration where turnover and scandals have become norms. Bernhardt's predecessor, Ryan Zinke, left office in December after a "resign or be fired" edict from the White House, which viewed his real estate deals with Halliburton too much even for a government where conflicts of interest are just business as usual.

Given Zinke's problems and ouster, Bernhardt's appointment is doubly puzzling. Bernhardt entered office under a cloud for his past history as a lobbyist for entities like Westlands Water District.

And just recently, investigators are probing what appear to be ongoing working relationships with Westlands during Bernhardt's term as Assistant Secretary. The interaction could be a violation of an ethics agreement that forbade working with Westlands until August 2018. An investigation of Bernhardt's calendar shows he was working with Westlands on state and federal water policy for almost the entire year prior to the August date.

It's no mystery what Westlands wants from Bernhardt and the Trump administration. Despite its status as the largest water district in the United States, Westlands has no water rights. The district depends on contractual water delivered by the Central Valley Project (CVP), a federal program whose origins date to the thirties and FDR's New Deal.

Originally promoted as a conservation and flood control program that would help promote family farms, the CVP has over the years burgeoned into a political monster with an insatiable thirst.

At one time, the notion that "surplus water" could be diverted from watersheds to deserts was seen as a triumph of human ingenuity over nature. Decades ago, the science of ecology was in its infancy and only a tiny few futurists foresaw negative consequences from growth.

Today, every river in the south west is stressed far beyond capacity, historic wetlands have been reduced to less than ten percent of their former extent, and climate change will almost certainly bring longer droughts and more unpredictable rain patterns.

The prime example of western water woes is the Colorado River, a mighty tributary no one could have guessed would

be taxed to a trickle, but it was. And now, even the Colorado River Delta, once a vast wetland that stretched farther than the eye could see has been reduced to, "a desiccated wasteland, dominated by invasive tamarisk trees and discarded trash."

But history, ecology, and science matter little to Westlands Water District, which operates under one rule only. That rule mandates that Westlands get more water, and the only place there is more water is to the north and through the pumping systems and canals of the CVP.

Given that every aquifer save one in the San Joaquin Valley is critically over-drafted, Westlands Water District has no alternative other than to appropriate water from northern California, and no one should think David Bernhardt's appointment as Secretary of Interior is unrelated to the money and political power behind Westlands Water District.

Bernhardt has already been working to assure Westlands will receive more northern California water, and he can count on plenty of support from San Joaquin Valley politicians like Devin Nunes and Kevin McCarthy. He can also count on the Oakdale Irrigation District to continue promoting water sales to Westlands, despite the decline of its closest aquifers, the last viable groundwater sources in the San Joaquin Valley.

Even decades ago, farming in an arid region where groundwater supplies were depleted made dubious sense. Today, the costs in energy and evaporation alone make water sales prohibitively expensive, but political clout will trump common sense every time.

Farming is far more cost efficient where water is abundant, cheap, and nearby, than where it is scarce, expensive, and far away, but none of that matters to the powers behind David Bernhardt and Westlands Water District. What matters is that David Bernhardt, despite glaring conflicts of interest, now has the full force of the federal government behind him, and David Bernhardt wants your water.



Source: Department of Interior

## Love Music?

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

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**Since 2005 Modesto Sound**

- Recorded 685 artists
- Trained 248 youth on audio and job skills
- Held hundreds of concerts

**Where:** Media Building on the corner of Santa Barbara and Yosemite Boulevard (110 Santa Barbara Avenue, Modesto)


**When:** The second Tuesday of every month 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Get a warm welcome from Janet Seay, Executive Director of Modesto Sound, who welcomes your ideas! No RSVP required. It's OK to just show up.

**Why**

- Network in the music industry
- Great for the resume
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**More Information**

209-573-0533 janet@modestosound.org





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### Get help if someone:

- ☐ Takes away your ID or documents
- ☐ Forces you to work against your will
- ☐ Doesn't pay you what you were promised
- ☐ Threatens or hurts you
- ☐ Offers you money or something of value for sex



## JUNE 2019

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

**1 SAT: The State Theatre presents America Graffiti.** 1307 J. St., Modesto. 2:00 pm. Join the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/Membership>

**5 WED: VIGIL:** Immigration. McHenry & J St., 4:30-5:30 pm.

**8 SAT: Prelude to Summer!** Cabaret concert with Christine Capsuto-Shulman. Mistlin Gallery, 1015 J St., 7:00 p.m. <http://mistlingallery.eventbrite.com>

**9 SUN: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast.** Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. 8 am – Noon. Silent Auction for your community radio station, KCBP 95.5 FM.

**16 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents Little Shop of Horrors.** 1307 J. St., Modesto. 2:00 pm. Join the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/Membership>

**22 SAT: Stanislaus County Social and Environmental Justice Forum.** ModSpot Event Center, 1220 J. St., Modesto. 9 am – 3:30 pm. 209-589-9277. Visit [www.valleyimprovement-projects.org](http://www.valleyimprovement-projects.org)

## LOOKING AHEAD

**28-30: FRI – SUN: Peace Camp** in the Sierra. Registration form on p. 2.

**July 15 – July 20: RECORDING ARTS CAMP.** Held at Gallo Center for the Arts, 1000 I St., downtown Modesto, and Modesto Sound, 110 Santa Barbara Ave. 10 am-2pm. For ages 8-12 and 13-17. Write, record, & perform your original song! \$175. Scholarships available. 573-0533, ModestoSound.com/camp

**Saturday Sept. 21: Modesto Sound Annual Fundraiser.** Music, Food, & Networking. Gianelli's, 602 Northgate Dr., Modesto. 5-8 pm. To donate silent auction items, get tickets, or find out more, visit [modestosound.org](http://modestosound.org), call 209-573-0533 or email [studio@modestosound.org](mailto:studio@modestosound.org).

## 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](mailto:modestovineyard@gmail.com); All Welcome.

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

### MONDAYS

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

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

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

**Silver & Gold Support group** for our senior LGBT communities' unique concerns and experiences. Come to a group that will understand and accept you where you are. For LGBT folks over 50 yrs. old. Every Monday at 3 pm to 4 pm at the Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: [stevencullen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevencullen@sbcglobal.net)

### TUESDAYS

**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.** Christ Unity Baptist Church, 601 'L' St., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 7 pm. 209-645-1909; email: [naacp.branch1048@gmail.com](mailto:naacp.branch1048@gmail.com)

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

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

**Tuesday Evening Funstrummers Ukulele Jam.** Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., Donation. 209-505-3216, [www.Funstrummers.com](http://www.Funstrummers.com).

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

**ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS,** Every Tuesday, 7 pm at 1320 L St., (Christ Unity Baptist Church). Info: Jeff, 527-2469.

### WEDNESDAYS

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

**Merced LGBT Community Center** offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: [mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org](mailto:mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org) – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. [www.mercedlgbtcenter.org](http://www.mercedlgbtcenter.org)

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

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS:** held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:30-5:30 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

**MEDIA:** Listen to Peace/Life Center radio, KCBP 95.5 FM streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org> and at 95.5 FM, 2 pm to 2 am.

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

**MEDIA COMMITTEE** of Peace/Life Center. Meetings TBA.

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

### FRIDAYS

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

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

**Latino Emergency Council (LEC)** 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Dale Butler, 522-8537.

**VILLAGE DANCERS:** Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7:30-9:30 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: 300-4253. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

**MUJERES LATINAS,** last Friday, lunch meetings, Info: Cristina Villego, 549-1831.

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

### SATURDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP,** 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email [info@stanpride.org](mailto:info@stanpride.org) or [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgsupport@stanpride.org)

**MINDFUL MEDITATION:** Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Anne, 521-6977.

**COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS GROUPS,** 2nd Wed., 252 Magnolia, Manteca.

### THURSDAYS

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

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

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

**LGBTQ+ Collaborative Meetings** are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless noted. Evening meeting, 5:30 pm to 7 pm, at Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th Street, Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: John Aguirre at cell/text - (559) 280-3864/ e-mail: [jpamodesto@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)

**Third Thursday Art Walk,** Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

**The Book Group,** First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Info: [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.com)

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

**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.