



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

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Common Sense Advice about COVID-19

By JAMES H. STEIN, M.D., University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

COVID-19 update as we start to leave our cocoons. The purpose of this post is to provide a perspective on the intense but expected anxiety so many people are experiencing as they prepare to leave the shelter of their homes. My opinions are not those of my employers and are not meant to invalidate anyone else's – they simply are my perspective on managing risk.

In March, we did not know much about COVID-19 other than the incredibly scary news reports from overrun hospitals in China, Italy, and other parts of Europe. The media was filled with scary pictures of chest CT scans, personal stories of people who decompensated quickly with shortness of breath, overwhelmed health care systems, and deaths. We heard confusing and widely varying estimates for risk of getting infected and of dying – some estimates were quite high.

Key point #1: The COVID-19 we are facing now is the same disease it was 2 months ago. The "shelter at home" orders were the right step from a public health standpoint to make sure we flattened the curve and didn't overrun the

health care system which would have led to excess preventable deaths. It also bought us time to learn about the disease's dynamics, preventive measures, and best treatment strategies – and we did. For hospitalized patients, we have learned to avoid early intubation, to use prone ventilation, and that remdesivir probably reduces time to recovery. We have learned how to best use and preserve PPE. We also know that several therapies suggested early on probably don't do much and may even cause harm (i.e.; azithromycin, chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir). But all of our social distancing did not change the disease. **Take home: We flattened the curve and with it our economy and psyches, but the disease itself is still here.**

Key point #2: COVID-19 is more deadly than seasonal influenza (about 5-10x so), but not nearly as deadly as Ebola, Rabies, or Marburg Hemorrhagic Fever where 25-90% of people who get infected die. COVID-19's case fatality rate is about 0.8-1.5% overall, but much higher if you are 60-69

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Avoid touching
your
EYES, NOSE,
AND MOUTH.



CLEAN AND DISINFECT
frequently touched
objects and surfaces.



STAY HOME when
you are sick,
except to get
medical care.

WASH YOUR HANDS
often with soap
and water for at
least 20 seconds.



PLEASE KEEP YOUR SOCIAL DISTANCE.

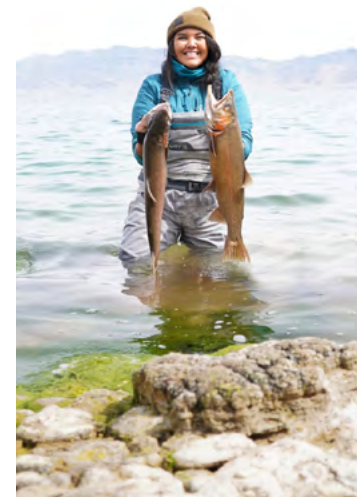
COVID-19: What Indian Country Remembers About Survival

The community care at the heart of Indigenous response.

By JADE BEGAY

In Indian Country, there is a collective experience known as blood memory. Words seem to fail explaining this phenomenon because, first and foremost, blood memory is a feeling or a knowing, but my interpretation is that blood memory is an embodied remembrance passed down from generation to generation. Some people refer to blood memory as akin to genetic or ancestral trauma or epigenetic inheritance. The bottom line when understanding blood memory is, simply, that we pass down in our familial lineages experiences and memories. Sometimes they are good and joyful and sometimes they are traumatic and rooted in grief.

As the coronavirus spreads, North America's Indigenous Peoples hold a unique experience of stress and fear because of this blood memory. In the 18th century, as European settlers sought to colonize Indigenous lands, they weaponized germs, giving blankets infected with smallpox to tribal communities to slow down Native resistance and to decimate Native populations. In addition to smallpox, measles and influenza were also brought to North America during these early periods of colonization. It is estimated that together these diseases killed 90% of



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What Next?

By JOHN MCCUTCHEON

When COVID-19 told us to sit down, shut up, and figure out a whole new world, it couldn't have come at a more interesting time for me. I'd been trying to figure out how to find time to rummage through my old papers, years of field recordings, old photographs, song lyrics, past project begging to be organized. Plus, I'd been wondering what the next chapter of my life might be after touring constantly for almost half a century. Suddenly I had time and a chance to be home and feel more grounded than I have in years.

I've been exploring the technology of performing for people who cannot or will not go to concert halls...something I suspect we'll be living with for awhile, even after the "all clear" is given. Plus, many of the familiar places we have gathered for these many decades will, in all likelihood not survive these times. But we still hope and try to be useful.

And that, really, is the bottom line for me, trying to be useful. I'm writing more...and I'd like to think better...than I ever have. But this begs the question of how to get the songs out when the current delivery systems for music conspire to limit the ways in which music can get to listeners. It makes no economic sense to produce CDs these days. Or even digital albums, for that matter. And mounting the kinds of "special"



projects like a Joe Hill album, a baseball album, a Woody Guthrie album...hell, a John McCutcheon album...forget it.

And, while I love my job, I don't know how much longer I can get on an airplane every weekend. Or even want to.

So the pandemic has provided me with time to ponder all this. Lots of ideas, but no determinations as yet. I'll keep you posted.

New music

[Cabin Fever: Songs from the Quarantine](https://www.folkmusic.com/store/p295/CabinFever.html) is available

for download at <https://www.folkmusic.com/store/p295/CabinFever.html>. It is remarkable to see all this go from a blank page to a finished product (albeit digital) in less than two months. But it is really a thing of its time. Not only that the songs themselves (though not all about COVID et al), but the fact that it was all written in isolation, recorded in isolation, mixed and mastered in isolation, and the designer even worked on it after tucking in her children for the night. It's a mark of the generosity of spirit that has come to define much of this time.

As I've mentioned before, this is a pay-what-you-can album. There are plenty of people these days who've lost their jobs and their income. And they need music too, maybe more. So, if this is your situation, the album is free, no questions asked. If you find yourself in better shape and want to kick in a little extra, great. Or not. Again, no questions asked.

I'm really excited about this album. It's the most stripped down and intimate recording of my career: just me and an instrument. I love the songs and I love that they came to me and that we live in a time when I can get them out to you so quickly. Hope you enjoy!

The song list is at the URL above.

John McCutcheon is scheduled for a Modesto benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on January 12, 2021.

Calling on Americans to Vote Trump Out, The Lancet Eviscerates US President Over 'Incoherent' Covid-19

"The Lancet isn't playing. They want Trump out."

By JULIA CONLEY, STAFF WRITER

The [journal's frustration](#) with Trump centered on the president's downplaying of the pandemic and his refusal to coordinate a robust national effort of social distancing, lockdown orders, and a testing regime to stem the Covid-19 outbreak.

"The administration is obsessed with magic bullets—vaccines, new medicines, or a hope that the virus will simply disappear," wrote the editors. "But only a steadfast reliance on basic public health principles, like test, trace, and isolate, will see the emergency brought to an end, and this requires an effective national public health agency."

Washington Post journalist Christopher Ingraham called the editorial a "scathing indictment" of the Trump administration's approach to the pandemic.

Public health experts including [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#), director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and [Dr. Rick Bright](#), a whistleblower at the Health and Human Services Department who was ignored by leaders in January when he [pushed to procure medical supplies](#), have issued dire warnings in recent days about the need to ramp up testing and avoid reopening the economy too quickly.

But the CDC, once a "national pillar of public health," has been "marginalized" and undermined by the Trump administration since even before the pandemic began, hampering its ability to lead the nation's response, *The Lancet* editorial reads.

CDC Director Robert Redfield is heard from infrequently

at press briefings, and in April [joined Trump](#) in suggesting the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine could be useful as an experimental treatment for Covid-19 patients, saying "I think I would be confident to try hydroxychloroquine" and that the drug "does appear to be safe."

"The CDC needs a director who can provide leadership without the threat of being silenced and who has the technical capacity to lead today's complicated effort," wrote *The Lancet* editors. Last summer, an "intelligence vacuum" was left at the United States' CDC office in China when the administration called back the last remaining officer there, months before the first case of Covid-19 was reported in Wuhan.

The director of the agency's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Nancy Messonnier, has not been seen at a press briefing on the pandemic since late February, when she [warned](#) that Americans should prepare for strict social distancing and disruption to their daily lives. Messonnier's message was one that Trump has consistently resisted, preferring to push for quickly reopening the country just days after the White House [reluctantly enforced](#) a shutdown in March, and [complaining](#) that governors who have pleaded for more medical equipment were doing so only to hurt Trump's reelection chances.

The CDC's failure to take control of the pandemic—including its admission in mid-February, as the virus was [beginning to spread](#) across the U.S. that the test kits the agency had developed were flawed—has left the U.S. "nowhere near able to provide the basic surveillance or laboratory testing infrastructure needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic," wrote the editors.

The Lancet linked the CDC's ineffectiveness partially to decades of weak support for the agency by Republican presidents, including Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, who failed to provide funding to fight HIV/AIDS and to provide global reproductive health programs.

"Funding to the CDC for a long time has been subject to conservative politics that have increasingly eroded the agency's ability to mount effective, evidence-based public health responses," wrote *The Lancet*. "The Trump administration's further erosion of the CDC will harm global cooperation in science and public health, as it is trying to do by defunding WHO."

The editors concluded by calling on Americans to vote Trump out of office in the general election as a way of protecting the nation from further damage to its public health response.

"Americans must put a president in the White House come January, 2021, who will understand that public health should not be guided by partisan politics," the editorial reads.

The journal's firm stance against a sitting president appeared to be "unprecedented," wrote *NPR* correspondent Lulu Garcia-Navarro.

"The Lancet isn't playing. They want Trump out," wrote physician Barry Schapiro. "His anti-science, anti-intellectual, fantastical thinking that there's a magic bullet or a miracle cure has crippled our response. There is good science behind pandemic response and it's been ignored."

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Community Profile: Modesto Poet, Writer, & Activist, Tina Curiel-Allen

By TOM PORTWOOD

In sharp, powerful images from her poem “The Things I Stole,” the fine *Xicana/Boricua* poet, writer, and activist Tina Curiel-Allen recalls one of the most painful but transformative experiences of her life:

It wasn't until jail that I found a place that could steal from me, I found walls that ate time and tears like money And offered no form of recompense. I felt the extent of my debts in those walls, lying on a metal cot, reading desperate messages scraped into the bed above me. I realized then I had taken more than I could ever give. All lost to that hole of insatiable need known to addicts And thieves alike.

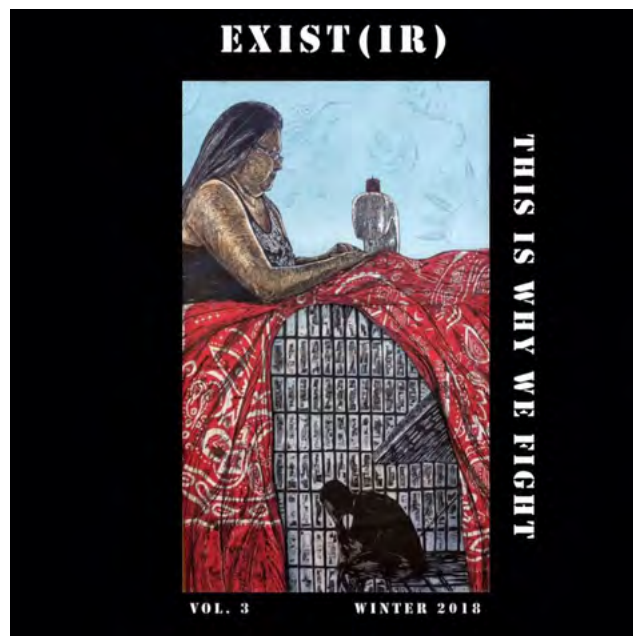


“I am a writer and a confessional poet, so I write about my life and experiences pretty explicitly,” Mrs. Curiel-Allen said recently. “That’s the personal form of writing I share with the community. But I also use writing as a way to build community. I have co-edited or co-created a number of zines to bring representation, or counter-narratives, or different voices, to reflect the diversity in

the Central Valley and the communities I come from, as a *Xicana* and *Boricua*.”

As “The Things I Stole” and other writings detail, Mrs. Curiel-Allen’s life could have taken a much different path than the one that it has. But the long arc of her story reveals how courage and resiliency can heal even deep wounds when a caring community is nearby.

“I was born in the Bay Area and grew up in Ceres, which was a pretty small, conservative, agricultural town at the time,” she related. “I often felt like an observer or an outsider. I was a pretty weird kid and I started doing drugs when I was about twelve. When I think of the young child that I was, I feel some pain for that child. But as a kid, I didn’t know. Beginning in eighth grade I started getting in trouble at home - my parents didn’t know what to do with me, so they put me on independent studies. I never went to traditional high



school, which I think shaped some of my learning styles and tendencies. I didn’t get the kind of socialization that comes from being in school. Then I was arrested for the first time when I was 18 years old.”

Mrs. Curiel-Allen has written about that first incarceration in a moving article she penned for *Teen Vogue* in 2017. “I think it’s important to lead with my life experiences, to have a purpose with my writing,” she noted. “My writing all hangs around representation, truth-telling, visibility, building community, and using writing as a tool to do all that - which is what reading did that for me when I was younger. I feel it’s my obligation as a writer to do that now that I am an adult.”

Following several difficult years in her late teens and early twenties, “I started going back to school in my mid-twenties, and last year got my degree from U.C. Davis. I’m 38 now, so it was a long road – ten, almost eleven years. I hit all the non-traditional boxes, in a lot of different ways. What that gave me was a different type of appreciation for education. And it gave me an idea, once I started going back to school, of what I wanted education to do for me. And what I wanted from it was for me to be a credible voice of my experiences and my community. So I took school very seriously – I was there to learn. It definitely shaped what I put into it, and what I got out of it.”

At U.C. Davis, Mrs. Curiel-Allen became a leader, co-founding **Beyond the Stats**, a group for formerly-incarcerated and system-impacted students. “That was a really powerful moment of realizing how much the experience of being incarcerated had shaped our lives,” she notes of that time. While at the university, she also co-authored a syllabus and

was one of the leaders of a class geared for writers of color. “We wanted to examine institutions and how they shaped us, and examine our role within them – to push for more visibility and truth-telling.”

For Mrs. Curiel-Allen, being actively engaged in the community isn’t just a choice she’s made – it’s a commitment and, one senses, a labor of love. She is currently working for **Fathers and Families of San Joaquin**, a non-profit agency focusing on social justice and human rights issues and programs. She is also part of a trio of *Xicana* women who have developed and published the zine *exist(ir)*, which “documents the *Latinx* experience in the Central Valley. We are working on our fourth edition now and planning to have a release party sometime this summer, though we may have to figure out a different way to hold the event. It honors all the *Latinx* in the Central Valley, from Sacramento to Bakersfield.”

In the past, copies of *exist(ir)* were often sold at *mercaditos*. “Our intention with *exist(ir)* was always to be representative of our community, and to take space to make space for others. *Mercaditos* are a one way we did that. We would put the call out for local vendors while also keeping in mind other events we have attended locally or other *Xicanx* or *Latinx* owned vendors we might know of through social media. The *mercaditos* or *mercados* are markets where folks can bring their goods and share in commerce and community.”

In March, 2018, Mrs. Curiel-Allen was asked to write a second important article for *Teen Vogue*, titled “What Decolonization Is, and What It Means to Me.” (<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/what-decolonization-is-and-what-it-means-to-me>).

“Decolonization is a topic that is hard to talk about in a way that is accessible because the term is so loaded, she remarked. “I was so honored to write that piece, it was like a prayer, and I feel like you can see that when you read it.”

“I don’t know how unique I am with the experiences I’ve had,” reflected Mrs. Curiel-Allen. “Life often determines people’s access to resources or certain possibilities. Sometimes the way to make bridges is for the other person to ask. I really want to emphasize that I am a product of the people who helped me, loved me, supported me, and were mirrors for me when I needed it the most. I am also the product of different communities where I found help. I try to pay that forward in the work I do to build community. There are all sorts of different people in the Valley from different backgrounds and it just makes the community richer.”



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Division III - 1st Place 2020 Peace Essay Contest

Works of a True Hero

Isabella Salzer
Oakdale Jr HS



In today's world, it is hard to find someone who is a true hero. Nobody in our society has a pure heart, but some people go above and beyond to make our world a better place. Joseph Campbell once said, "A hero is someone

who has given his or her life to something bigger than one-self." I believe this to be true, and that to be a true hero, they must be able to inspire others to do so as well. I believe a great example of a hero is Leymah Roberta Gbowee.

Leymah is a peace activist, social worker, and women's rights advocate who helped lead a non-violent movement, which ended the Second Liberian Civil War. In 2011, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her amazing efforts in ending the fourteen-year-old war in a peaceful and fair manner. She became the founder of the Women in Peacebuilding Network and helped run protests with multiple races of people

to get rid of President Charles Taylor. It brought many people to the cause and eventually, Taylor resigned and went into exile. In his wake, a peace treaty was signed which mandated a transitional government.

Leymah became a global leader and was requested at the United Nations Commission to share her opinion on matters such as women's rights. She has inspired people around the world for her strength and perseverance, as well as her ability to peacefully solve horrible situations. Leymah once said, "You can never leave footprints that last if you are always walking on tiptoe." When Leymah started to unite people she didn't intend to leave a whisper; she would leave an entire story that would be passed on to inspire others.

Leymah shows that we don't need to use violence to solve problems. In America, there are riots that sometimes end up in bloodshed and grief. The Women in Peacebuilding Network made sure that everyone would stay safe and calm during their protests. At one point the military arrived and attempted to arrest Leymah. She used smarts instead of strength and threatened to disrobe them which, according to traditional beliefs, was a curse that would bring a horrible misfortune upon them. They immediately stood down and Leymah

created a turning point that would lead to the resignation of President Taylor.

I am inspired by Leymah Gbowee because she makes me feel as if I have the power to do something in this world. Violence is not needed to leave a mark on society. Leymah and her network inspire all people around the world, not only women, to stand up for themselves in a peaceful and just manner. Leymah believes, "As we build peace, let's not forget the youth as they are our future." She understood that the foundation beneath the peace they built, needs to outlive them. It lets me and other youths around the world believe that we can help add to that foundation and even build upon it. I hope that more people can learn and be inspired by the true hero that is shown by Leymah Roberta Gbowee.

Citations

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- Ed. Note: visit the [Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa \(GPFA\)](http://GboweePeaceFoundationAfrica.org).

What Indian Country Remembers About Survival

Native Americans.

Colonial violence led to other public health injustices and crises within Indigenous communities. In the 19th century, the federal government forced Native peoples onto reservations, disenfranchising Native populations and creating to this day vast injustices in access to public health services. During the 1970s, the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act led to the sterilization of Native women. According to Time magazine, between 1970 and 1977 at least 25% of Native American women of childbearing age were sterilized.

This history matters in this moment because our communities remember. As individuals, our bodies remember. And because of this, Native people may be experiencing anxiety and distrust in our government's commitment to public health.

This is why "indigenizing" community care is so critical as we work to protect Indigenous communities and people from COVID-19.

In mid-March, as the coronavirus pandemic was beginning to put stress on cities across the country and as the federal government slowly acknowledged the crisis, putting millions at risk, I wrote an article aimed at grounding our community in the cultural and spiritual practices that fortify our spirits. It included a call for an Indigenous response to the pandemic.

Now, when we are having to practice "social distancing," is a perfect time to learn traditional medicines—tinctures and syrups, traditional foods, plant medicines, and fermentation. Traditional medicines that support immune and respiratory systems and are also antiviral include: osha, fire cider, garlic, elderberry, lemon balm, and oregano. While these traditional food ways aren't guaranteed to cure or prevent COVID-19, we know that they can support resilience and contribute to healthier life ways.

Working collectively at community care is more important now than ever. When we are able to quiet all the worries, the

media, and public frenzy, we can see a bigger picture: This moment is an opportunity to come together in community, in care, and in preparation. Grave threats like climate change and pandemics are real—we know this as crisis scenarios become more frequent and more extreme.

Community is central in the Indigenous response. Identify who in our community is most vulnerable and strategize the best ways to protect them. Think about food security, and not in an individualistic sense, but in a collective sense, ensuring that there is abundance to share.

All communities can reflect on some universal questions: Are we overly dependent on food and materials coming from nonlocal sources? Do we have energy security in case the electrical grid is damaged by extreme weather or we cannot access fossil fuels? What are the most fundamental collective values we will draw upon in high stress moments? How do we make decisions? And how do we not turn on each other?

As the pandemic progressed through April, these questions became more urgent. We have seen American society fall into toxic individualism; masses began to panic shop and hoard supplies, creating shortages of food and health care supplies across the country. We have also witnessed exacerbation of the inequities in this country—access to health care, water rights, housing, income, and job security.

This is especially true in Indian Country.

In the Navajo Nation, one of the largest tribes in the U.S. and where the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has been growing exponentially, there aren't enough doctors, hospital beds, and respirators. To be sure, this kind of problem isn't new; the coronavirus has just amplified the consequences of underfunding health services in Indian Country. While these communities struggle to respond with emergency health care, they are also facing food and water shortages. In the Navajo Nation, it is estimated that 1 in 3 families haul water to

their homes every day. It can take multiple hours to drive to a water-filling station. Strict but necessary stay-at-home orders disadvantage Navajo families' ability to survive, let alone protect themselves from COVID-19 by washing their hands.

Yet Indigenous communities are showing how community care and self-determination can provide security and solutions during times like this.

Former Navajo attorney general Ethel Branch quickly organized a COVID-19 relief fund that, as of April, had raised \$600,000 to provide support to Navajo and Hopi families across New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. The Navajo are designing technology and social media systems to connect community members far and wide, enabling urban family members to fill out forms so that supplies can reach their families living in rural areas. Many Navajo do not have access to wifi or cellular networks.

The result of this community organizing is food and water delivered safely across the 16 million acres of the Navajo

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Thank You, Peace/Life Center

By SHARON YOSIPH FROBA

Peace/Life Center, during this time of social isolation, I have spent hours reflecting on my seventy-six years. You, Peace/Life Center and *Connections*, your publication, have been an important part of my life, and I'm sorry to say that I've never thanked you for the many ways you've influenced me, educated me, and improved my community. We go way back to the 1970s together when I moved here and started teaching at Modesto High. Please forgive me if my memory isn't as accurate as it should be.

My first encounter with you occurred in the 1970s. A proposition was on the ballot having to do with an effort to buy power from a nuclear power plant built in Arizona. I think that's when I met Dan Onorato, a leading voice in the effort to stop the proposition from moving forward. There was an office on H Street where activists went to sign up for precinct work. I joined that effort. I walked a precinct and enjoyed talking to people until a German Shepherd bit me through my denim skirt. I persevered, wound and all. We were successful in our efforts to defeat the proposition. Thank you, Peace/Life Center.

During the 1980s one of your most outspoken activists, Jim Higgs, the most bellicose pacifist I have ever known, approached me about using Modesto High as a venue for the showing of *The Last Epidemic*, an anti-nuclear film that the group, Physicians for Social Responsibility, wanted to show to influence the public against building nuclear weapons and continuing the arms race. A colleague and I spoke to our principal, Dick Lang, about scheduling the film in the school auditorium. We wanted it to be shown every period so that all students and teachers in school that particular day would see the film. Dick Lang was hesitant because he felt



that we would be presenting only one side of the nuclear issue to students. We wondered what the other side of nuclear annihilation would look like, but my colleague called the Lawrence Livermore Lab and presented our situation.

The Lab decided to send two nuclear scientists to Modesto High to speak to students. At the time the Lab was considering building Star Wars, President Ronald Reagan's proposed Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) as a safeguard against nuclear annihilation. Most scientists considered SDI impractical, expensive, and dangerous. As a result you, Peace/Life Center, supported a three-day school-wide event. The first day was devoted to the showing of the film; the second day the Lawrence Livermore scientists presented their case; during the third day, Peace/Life Center volunteers filled English classes to discuss the events of the previous two days. We all increased our knowledge about the pros and cons of nuclear energy. Thank you, Peace/Life Center.

Because of you, Peace/Life Center, I got involved in Modesto's Sister City Project. Gene Palsgrove, local educator and peace activist, gave a presentation at the Center which I attended. He was recruiting people to accompany him and Mayor Peggy Mensinger to Khmelnytsky, Ukraine in 1987 in order to sign the official agreement binding our two cities officially as Sister Cities. The success of that trip led to another one two years later, the first student exchange with Khmelnytsky. I still have lifelong friends from those years.

Thank you, Gene Palsgrove and Peace/Life Center, for

helping us make friends with our "enemies" in the former Soviet Union.

Then in 1998, when the Modesto City Schools determined that two words, "sexual orientation," needed to be added to its Tolerance Policy, a policy that was supposed to protect all students from discrimination, an idea came to me, and Day of Respect was born. I thought that if people heard the stories of those who have suffered discrimination because of color, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc., they would be more understanding of what some people endure due to the intolerance or ignorance of others. My principal, Mary Byers, and my entire English department supported my idea. During the summer of 1998, I recruited speakers. I called agencies, churches, friends, colleagues, asking for people with fifteen minute stories of discrimination for our October event. Practically no one turned me down. I didn't want lecturing, preaching, or moralizing; I wanted personal stories, stories uttered in the intimate setting of classrooms.

I sensed that organizing sixty-five speakers into mostly English classrooms, three to a room, would be a huge undertaking, so I appealed to the Peace/Life Center for help. Several people encouraged me including Jim Higgs and Kay Barnes, but it was Kay who did the lion's share of the scheduling. She made the event the success that it was by making last minute changes, substituting speakers when there were no-shows. Years before with the showing of *The Last Epidemic*, the Peace Center provided a model for organizing Day of Respect. Thank you, Peace/Life Center. It has been twenty-two years since that first event. Nearly all of Modesto's high schools hosted speakers at least once. Beyer High teacher Jeanette Rosenthal organized many events until her retirement. Day of Respect continues yearly at Modesto High, thanks to Andrea Pegarella, who has continued to keep it alive after my retirement in 2002. Thank you, Andrea and Peace/Life Center. You have made a difference in the lives of many.

Of course, there have been many additional ways the Peace/Life Center has benefited our community as a whole, ways too numerous for me to mention. Again, thank you, Peace/Life Center and *Connections*, may you have a happy birthday and continue to enrich our community.

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A would-be CO remembers the Navy

By DAVID TUCKER

This is a Facebook post that I wrote on May 16.

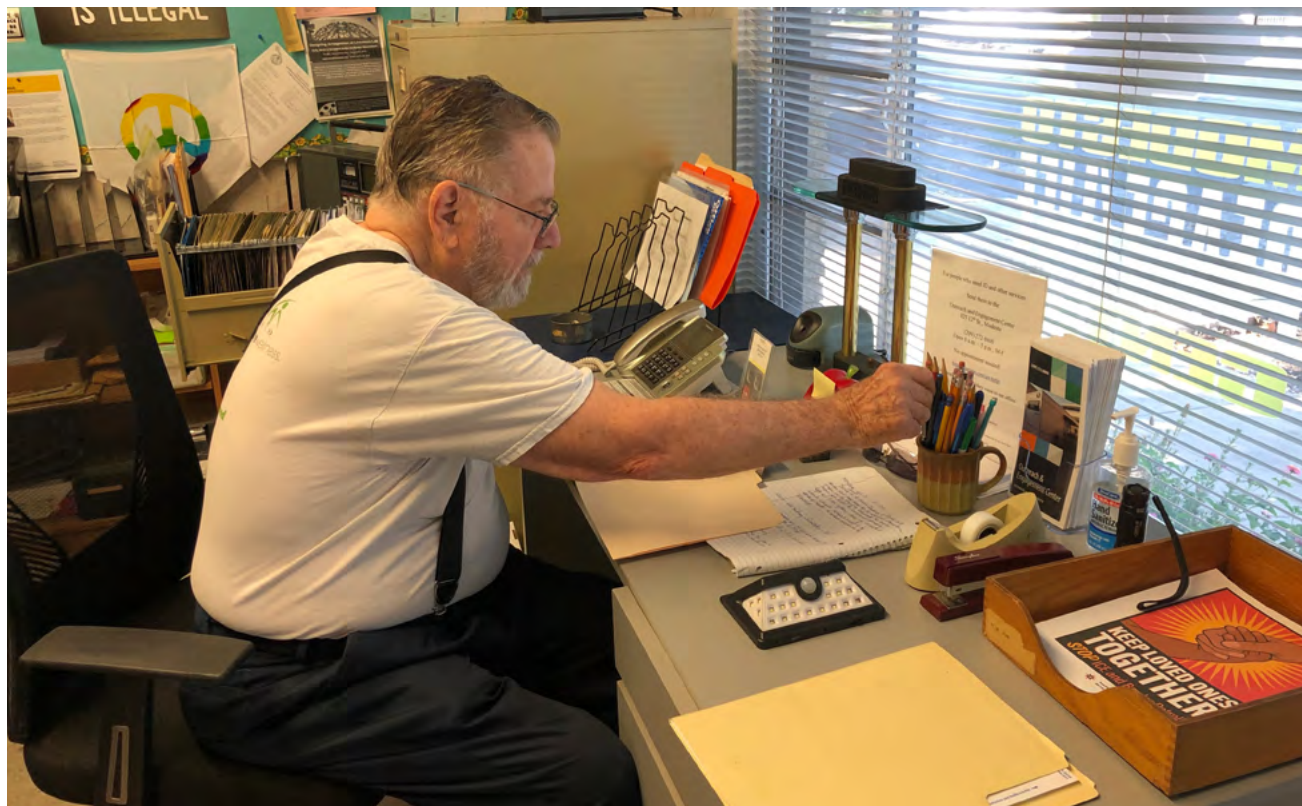
Today is Conscientious Objector Day commemorated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

My twin brother, Bob, and I signed up as conscientious objectors (CO) at the age of 17 in 1953. I ended up taking the easy way out because I had a local preacher's license in the Methodist Church and had been pre-enrolled at the Methodist post graduate ministry school in Berkeley at the Pacific School of Religion and was eligible for a IV-D deferment. Brother Bob went through three Presidential appeals without getting the conscientious objector status. The Methodist Church was not considered an historic peace church according to our draft board so we were denied CO status. This was a trying time in my life for a number of reasons. We became social outcasts in our town even though Bob was our High School Valedictorian and had been selected as the outstanding Eagle Scout in the 6 Western States, Alaska and Hawaii (not yet states then).

The American Legion in our town called in the FBI alleging that our Methodist Youth leader, George Burcham, (who some of you in Modesto may remember) was guilty of sedition for influencing Bob and me. Several members of The High School Board of Trustees threatened to fire my Mother who taught math for 21 years at our High School. We were able to get Ernest Bessig of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in San Francisco to come out and get the FBI off of our backs. Interestingly, I had to study *Search for the Historical Jesus* by the theologian Albert Schweitzer in order to get my local preachers license and that ultimately turned me into an Atheist which I have been now for 60 years. By the time Bob's appeals were over the Korean War was "over" (still not over) and the Vietnam War had not yet begun, so Bob was never drafted. Bob ultimately obtained a PhD from Duke University in biochemistry, served as the director of the Office of Science and Technology for New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and then taught at Rutgers University.

In the Facebook post, I said that "This was a trying time in my life for a number of reasons." I will explain, but first a little background.

My mother was 36 when Bob and I were born. We had an older brother, Donald, who was 2½ years older. My parents separated when I was 6 months old, so I grew up without a father. Mother raised three boys by herself although her mother lived with us until I was about 8. Because Mother was much older, there was no socializing with other mothers of kids our age, so I was pretty much of a loner, except for Bob. Mother was raised in a wealthy family. Her father died in 1928 and the family lost much in the Depression. Mother graduated from USC in 1921 with a degree in Chemistry and taught physics and chemistry in Maricopa in the Kern County oilfields in the 1920s. We were poor growing up. Mother taught high school math and had to work in a cannery cutting fruit in the summer to make ends meet. During the war she worked as a chemist in explosives research for Standard Oil but went back to teaching in 1944. She taught



in Weed for two years before we moved to Tracy where she taught math for 21 years.

Growing up there were only three adult relatives in my life. My mother, her older sister (6 years older) and their mother. Aunt Dorothy was widowed in 1944. These women often did not get along with each other, and I became the family peace maker.

After graduation from high school, I went to Reed College in Portland Oregon as a pre-med major. I knew I could not be a minister but I was still very idealistic and impressed by Albert Schweitzer

who had become a medical missionary in Africa. So I was going to follow in his footsteps. Reed's courses were for the whole year, 2 semesters, with a final exam covering the entire year. During this year, I was consumed by guilt for abandoning my CO request and for not supporting Bob. My Mother would write to me and tell me what a good boy I was for supporting her and what a bad boy Bob was for jeopardizing the family and, of course, this made matters worse. I sought help with the school counselor for stress. He asked me to come to his home one evening and then made a homosexual pass at me, which I was not equipped to handle. Upshot was that I had no one to turn to for help. Just before finals, I was hospitalized in the school's psych ward.

Mother drove up to Portland, bought me home and put me in a private psychiatric hospital in Livermore. When she visited, she would tell me how expensive it was and I was causing trouble. I became so angry with the whole situation that I climbed over the fence (I am not sure that literally climbing over the fence might be an exaggeration) and went and enlisted in the Navy. My attitude at that point was that if society wanted us all to be killers, I would be a killer, but

I chose the Navy for the likelihood that I would not have to kill directly.

After two months of Boot Camp, I was posted to Class A Electronics School at Treasure Island. The school lasted 9 months, and I graduated second in a class of 72. There were 2 billets for the Federal Office Building in San Francisco (hub of all communications for the Pacific) and 70 billets for the very remote Kwajalein Island in the middle of the Pacific. The top graduate chose San Francisco and so did I.

When I reported for duty, I was told that I was on "subs and quarters", which meant that I was responsible for my own housing and subsistence. I found a nice apartment in San Francisco, and I was going to have Bob and my Grandmother live with me. I was told that my housing situation had to be approved, but "wink and nod", approval personnel were backlogged by at least a month. So I moved in, having no other place to live. My grand-mother was on the outs with both my mother and my Aunt and she also had no place to live.

The first weekend I drove to Tracy. Bob took my car to "fix" it and on Sunday I drove my Mother's car up to Columbia to visit a girl friend from college. The Valley became deeply covered by Tule fog, so I arraigned for Bob to fly in a Piper Cub out of Tracy up to Columbia Airport. He left my car at the Tracy airport and drove Mother's car home. He did not have permission to drive Mother's car. I tried to explain that it was an emergency, nevertheless she was really pissed.

The problem with my car was that the gasoline was contaminated. When Bob "fixed it" he forgot to screw the cock into the gas drain underneath the car. So I headed for Federal

continued next page

from previous page

Office Building San Francisco. My duty shift started at midnight. I filled up with gas in Livermore. I filled up with gas in Castro Valley, but forgot to save out 25 cents for the bridge toll. At the toll booth, the toll taker was just getting off duty and took pity on me and said that if I would drive him into San Francisco, he would pay my toll and buy enough gas to get me to the Fed Office Building. I waited and waited. Finally I found the toll taker break room and there he was playing poker with others who had just gone off duty. The upshot was that I was late and I was called for a disciplinary "Captain's Mast."

The Captain bawled me out for being late. Then he started in on me. He wanted to know why I had moved into my apartment without waiting for it to be inspected. He would not buy that I had no other place to live. Then he wanted to know why my brother and grandmother were listed on the lease. I explained that Bob was going to school at San Francisco State College. That seemed OK. But then he wanted to know why my Grandmother was going to live with us. I tried to tell him politely that the dynamics of my family situation were none of his business. I was standing at rigid attention for almost an hour while he harangued me about my disrespect and other failings. I collapsed. The next thing I know I was in the Psych ward at Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland.

After the first of several consultations with the psychiatrist, he told me that there was nothing really wrong with me except for conflict between service in the Navy and my pacifist ideals. Interestingly I had entered the Navy weighing about 160 pounds and was now down to about 125 pounds. However, he told me that he was keeping me in the hospital for a month. I was very unhappy about this. Finally after being in the Navy for one year and three days I was released from the Navy in August 1956 with an Honorable Discharge. The only time that I was in a boat was during leave between boot camp and Electronics School when I took a water taxi over to Catalina Island.

In the fall of 1956 I went to work as an Engineering Technician for the California Department of Water Resources, beginning my career as a Civil Engineer. I continued to be unhappy with the Navy psychiatrist, until I discovered the reason why he had kept me in the hospital for a month. Since I had been in the service for over a year, I was able to go back to school on the GI Bill. And I was able to buy our first house in Lafayette using a Veteran's Loan.

Another good thing, I discovered much later was that despite not taking finals, I had not flunked out of Reed, but had received Cs for all three of my courses.

The author is Treasurer for the Modesto Peace/Life Center.

Building Walls

By JOAQUIN ZALDIVAR

Today our President is desperately trying to build a wall between us and our Southern neighbors.

I am a "wartime baby," writing with the perspective of more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century. At that time, we had a President that was promoting a "good neighbor policy" resulting in the creation of the Organization of American States in 1948, an organization fostering cooperation and stabilization between all the nations of the Western hemisphere. It was Americans working with fellow Americans for, as many of us know and many more forget, "America" was the name given to the lands that the invasive Europeans came upon in the late 15th century. It includes the entire Western Hemisphere made up of two continents: South America, North America and even Central America. Thus, a more accurate name for our country would be the United States of North America.

The wall is meant to shut out the many seasonal workers (*braceros*) who, for generations, have been coming North in search of the most menial jobs they could find in order to improve and sustain the lives of their families. Usually the eldest would undertake the arduous journey to help their families, that quite often, were eking out an existence. It used to be mostly Northern and Central Mexican men who would undertake the seasonal migration. Today they are referred to as "illegal aliens." The first time I heard the term alien, it referred to extra-terrestrials.

Today the people that Ma Joad in the *Grapes of Wrath*, said can't be stopped and just keep coming are coming from much farther away. They are more destitute and more desperate than ever. You would have to be desperate to make such a difficult journey. These huddled masses from the Southern part of Mexico, Oaxaca, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador are mostly Native Americans. They are the forgotten people far from the Colonial capitol of Mexico City. Today many of these refugees are called Hispanics. Hispanics, however, come in all colors. In the Colonial era there existed a caste system with the Spanish "whites" on top, Criollos or Spanish born in the Americas, second, then Mestizos, Spanish mixed with Native Americans, and the Native Americans and African slaves on the bottom, often used and abused as laborers making profits for the wealthy, similarly as today.

Today there are more refugees than ever before all over the world due to drought, famine, wars, etc. In 1989 we were urging others to tear down walls. Today we and Israel are



building walls, promoting separation rather than cooperation. Robert Frost asks his neighbor in the poem, "Mending Wall," Why do fences make good neighbors?

Why do they make good

neighbors? Isn't it

Where there are cows? But here

There are no cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to

know

What I was walling in or walling

out.

And to whom I was like to give

offense.

Something there is that doesn't

Love a wall,

That wants it down.

Among the earliest colonists in the Americas, the Puritans in New England built stockades and feuded with the Native Americans that had helped them survive their first winter, culminating in what they called King Philip's War. By the 1680's the heathen Natives had been killed or driven out of Massachusetts by the civilized, Christian Puritans. Conservatives try to maintain the status quo. Thus, they go against one of the basic laws of Nature—change. Evolution cannot be stopped. Isn't it time we worked harder at atoning for the brutal landgrab our forebears committed?

As a Christian Nation, should we be helping the less fortunate or building walls due to an atavistic tribal fear of our neighbors?

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And the Winners Are...

By LYNN M. HANSEN, Aileen Jaffa Young
Poets Contest Chair

Judges for submissions to the 26th Annual Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest have made their choices of winners. The judges for this contest were Cleo Griffith (Grades K-3), Tom Myers (Grades 4-6), Louise Kantro (Grades 7-9) and Sal Salerno (Grades 10-12).

Although the poetry reading and celebration for the winners was of necessity cancelled due to temporary closure of the Carnegie, their certificates and cash awards have been mailed to them. Two Grand Prizes sponsored by the National League of American Pen Women, Modesto Branch were awarded for Grades 7-12 to Lauren Bowman for her poem Red Poppies and for Grades K-6 to Nate Doub for his poem Doub House. The MoSt Poetry Center sponsored cash awards

for 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes for each of four categories. The winning poems will be posted on the Most Website info@mostpoetry.org

The following is a list of the Winners for each category:

K-3

First Place: "Doub House" Nate Doub

Second Place: "Delectable Desserts" Ellie Bowman

Third Place: "Snowflake" Nate Doub

Grades 4-6

First Place "Life in Metaphor" Maverick Paul

Second Place "Snake Haiku" Noah Doub

Third Place "Snowflake Tanka" Noah Doub

1HM "Haiku Poem Foggy Day" Isabella Elliott

2HM "The Fall" Kayvan Banankhah

Grades 7-9

First Place "Red Poppies" Lauren Bowman

Second Place "Apathetic Americans" Lauren Bowman

Third Place "Bird" Stella Whitler

HM "Sunday Afternoon" Stella Whitler

Grades 10-12

First Place "Serendipity" Kaylie Winkelman

Second Place "Eyes Speak" Jordan Black

Third Place "A Worldly Love" Jordan Black

Waiting

There's that moment between the time you
open your eye wide and the puff of air
makes you flinch or
that second just before your finger is pricked.
There's that hour in the neighbor's basement after
the tornado siren that pierced your nap.
There's that week between
the lab test and the phone call.
There's that bedside vigil after
her breathing slows and
time stands still.
These kinds of waiting we know.
But not this waiting
stretched out for miles and mountains
because we cannot tell where the horizon shifts
or what lies beyond that blurred line.
Together and apart we tend
our anxious thoughts—
baby birds that must be fed
before they can fly away—
hoping for mercy and maybe
giving mercy too.
A fire consumes the familiar and
we wait
for shoots of greening life
raw and tender.
We will love that holy ground with
a fierceness we did not know we had.

Wendy McFadden

The author is editor of the [Messenger](#)

Common Sense Advice about COVID-19

from page 1

years old (3-4%), 70-79 years old (7-9%), and especially so if you are over 80 years old (CFR 13-17%). It is much lower if you are under 50 years old (<0.6%). The infection fatality rate is about half of these numbers. **Take home: COVID-19 is dangerous, but the vast majority of people who get it, survive it.** About 15% of people get very ill and could stay ill for a long time. We are going to be dealing with it for a long time.

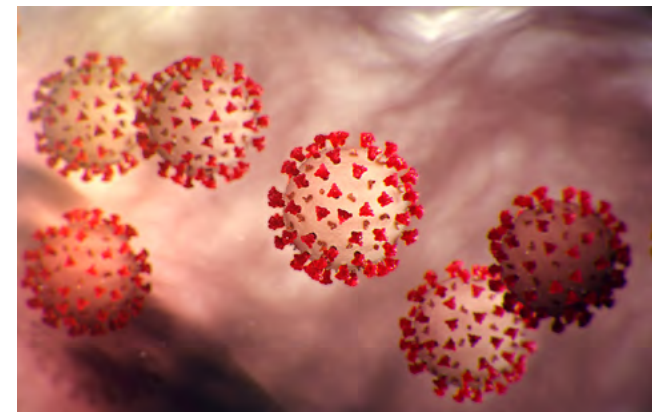
Key point #3: SARS-CoV-2 is very contagious, but not as contagious as Measles, Mumps, or even certain strains of pandemic Influenza. **It is spread by respiratory droplets and aerosols, not food and incidental contact. Take home: social distancing, not touching our faces, and good hand hygiene are the key weapons to stop the spread.** Masks could make a difference, too, especially in public places where people congregate. Incidental contact is not really an issue, nor is food.

What does this all mean as we return to work and public life? COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon. It may not go away for a year or two and may not be eradicated for many years, so we have to learn to live with it and do what we can to mitigate (reduce) risk. That means being willing to accept *some* level of risk to live our lives as we desire. I can't decide that level of risk for you – only you can make that decision. There are few certainties in pandemic risk management other than that fact that some people will die, some people in low risk groups will die, and some people in high risk groups will survive. It's about probability.

Here is some guidance – my point of view, not judging yours:

1. People over 60 years old are at higher risk of severe disease – people over 70 years old, even more so. They should be willing to tolerate less risk than people under 50 years old and should be extra careful. Some chronic diseases like heart disease and COPD increase risk, but it is not clear if other diseases like obesity, asthma, immune disorders, etc. increase risk appreciably. It looks like asthma and inflammatory bowel disease might not be as high risk as we thought, but we are not sure - their risks might be too small to pick up, or they might be associated with things that put them at higher risk.

People over 60-70 years old probably should continue



to be very vigilant about limiting exposures if they can. However, not seeing family – especially children and grandchildren – can take a serious emotional toll, so I encourage people to be creative and flexible. **For example, in-person visits are not crazy – consider one, especially if you have been isolated and have no symptoms.** They are especially safe in the early days after restrictions are lifted in places like Madison or parts of major cities where there is very little community transmission. Families can decide how much mingling they are comfortable with - if they want to hug and eat together, distance together with masks, or just stay apart and continue using video-conferencing and the telephone to stay in contact. If you choose to intermingle, remember to practice good hand hygiene, don't share plates/forks/spoons/cups, don't share towels, and don't sleep together.

2. Social distancing, not touching your face, and washing/sanitizing your hands are the key prevention interventions. They are vastly more important than anything else you do. Wearing a fabric mask is a good idea in crowded public place like a grocery store or public transportation, but you absolutely must distance, practice good hand hygiene, and don't touch your face. **Wearing gloves is not helpful** (the virus does not get in through the skin) and may increase your risk because you likely won't washing or sanitize your hands when they are on, you will drop things, and touch your face.

3. Be a good citizen. If you think you might be sick, stay

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POET: Lynn M. Hansen

Lynn M. Hansen, a retired Modesto Junior College professor of marine biology, is a member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, Orinda, CA, MoSt Poetry Center, Modesto and National League of American Pen Women. Her work reflects her sense of place and the art of story-telling. She enjoys gardening with native plants, photography, cooking and writing. With her husband, Richard Anderson, she has traveled to all five continents and enjoys adventures in different cultural realms. In 2013 a collection of her poems was published by Quercus Review Press entitled *Flicker: Poems by Lynn M. Hansen*. She is currently writing an historical novel about her maternal grandmother, Mernie Daisy Lewis, 1882-1963.

Love In the Time of COVID 19

In a time of social distancing
we find ourselves adrift,
at first,
then slowly devise ways
to connect, express love
give thanks.

We Zoom in to a birthday party,
call our friends and relatives,
porch-deliver bouquets of flowers,
wave at grandmother through the window,
shop for elders so they stay safe,
skype between grandparent and child,
shout-out to healthcare workers and first responders
place candles and teddy bears in windows
write hopeful chalk messages on sidewalks
order-out from local small businesses

pay-it-forward to the self-employed
send notes of appreciation to others
sew facemasks for relatives and others
donate money to food banks

In a time of social distancing
look for the helpers,
they are there.

Lynn M. Hansen
April 5, 2020

Rio Madre de Dios, Peru

Our long boat skimmed along a wide ribbon
of muddy water – the Madre de Dios –
aquatic highway into upper Amazon basin.
A young boatman stands in the bow,
directs the driver through a maze
of submerged logs and around shallows,
our transport to Manu Biosphere Reserve.
We pass men cutting lumber from fallen
mahogany trees, skirt around sand bars
pocked with puma footprints,
where crocodiles lie like stones,
their yellow eyes directed our way.
We are greeted on the muddy
bank by the world's largest rodent –
the capybara – standing like a statue
as we pass. Under the boat canopy,
cooled by the breeze of speed
we are startled as one-hundred-fifty
squealing pig-like white-lipped peccaries
lunge into our path, brave a crossing.
As their buoyant bodies reach the steep bank,
sharp hooves gouge into slippery red clay,
clamber upward, disappear into rainforest cloak.
For days the river reveals its treasures –
giant river otters hunting piranha,
scarlet macaws at clay lick, hoatzin's display,
network of strangler fig limbs,
buttress drapery of kapok tree. At night,
we are lulled to sleep by insect song or
rain showers – music
along the Madre de Dios.

First Prize, *Spaces and Places*, Ina Coolbrith Circle
Poets' Banquet, March 24, 2018

A Swatch of Family Fabric

To follow a thread through family history,
visit Ancestry.com or Family Search,
unspool layers of relationship.
Search marriage documents,
census forms, grave marker images,
photographs, military discharge papers,
homestead applications and personal letters

from those long deceased.
The treasure trove of documents connects
present ancestors with those of the past
weaving a family story.

This is how I found Great Uncle Lloyd,
grandmother's brother whose mother died
when he was seven months old then was wet nursed
by his oldest sister. At nine, he lost
his father from a gunshot wound.
His oldest brother became his guardian;
at seventeen he married, fathered two children.
After his wife died during the 1918 flu pandemic
he married his children's nanny
fathered more children, then I lost his thread.
I had no idea what he looked like or his occupation.

After some detective work I located
some of his living descendants, contacted
them for photos or memorabilia. In response,
a message from his granddaughter –

*Pop was a pedophile. I was his victim.
He never took responsibility for his actions.
I have no memorabilia for you.*

– a swatch of family fabric unravels.

1HM in 8th Annual MoSt Poetry Festival:
Following the Thread Category

Blood Moon

You ask me to explain why
tonight the moon is reddish,
tell me it is due to scattering
of blue light by atmosphere,
red light less so.

It fits our situation. We are scattered
by the demise of our parents,
our friends, our health.
Our eyes redden.

This celestial event reminds
of my place in the universe –
small, fragile, wounded.
They say another blood moon
will arrive in 20 years, after I
have passed through shadows
I don't see coming today.

In the cold morning hours I rejoice
as I sip tea, experience lunar eclipse.
The moon returns to its full brilliance,
reflects all the light I need
to resume my journey.

Previously Published in *The Song of the San Joaquin*,
Winter Issue 2019

Green Tips for a Green Planet: Precycle to save \$\$ and reduce your environmental impact

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

If you throw something away, where is “away”? Keep this long-time thought in mind when you reach for anything “disposable.”

Then consider [precycling](#), a proactive consumer choice to avoid waste by becoming aware of product sourcing, packaging, reuse and recycling options, referred to as “smart buying” by [Taylor Ratcliffe](#) of Earth911.

The “how to” of precycling takes into consideration whether an item is made from recycled materials or can be recycled, the amount of packaging used, your need for the product, and whether something you already have can be reused or repurposed instead.

In the short and long run these considerations will reduce the volume of your recycling, as well as your spending and your environmental impact.

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[Democracy Now!](#) - 7:00pm

[Flashpoint Magazine](#) - 10:00pm

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Whether a product is single use or can be reused countless times is a major consideration. One of the biggest offenders are single use water and drink bottles. Personal drink bottles are always an easy reuse item to have on hand, especially for water, coffee, tea and homemade drinks.

The millions of plastic bags used are also very easily replaced by sturdy reusable cloth and multi-use plastic bags. The use of cloth hand towels and good old fashioned dish rags to replace paper towels, and of course, cloth instead of paper napkins are a no brainer, as well as the use of reusable rather than disposable razors, or a mop and bucket or a dust cloth or dust mop instead of “disposable” cleaning items.

Precycling takes into account larger purchases such as appliances and cars. Ms. Ratcliffe encourages producer

responsibility and asks us to consider whether the product was manufactured with minimal impact on the environment, whether its parts will be recyclable or whether the manufacturer will take responsibility for its safe disposal at the end of its useful life.

How we spend our dollars talks directly to manufacturers as we express our precycling choices. Ms. Ratcliffe sums up the precycling effort as the consumer's voice to creating a “circular economy in which materials flow through many lifetimes as recycled products,” thus dramatically reducing the amount of waste each household will produce.”

What Indian Country Remembers About Survival

continued from page 4

Nation. This effort to support families across vast distance is no small feat and requires a deep understanding of how to navigate supporting a community this large. It makes sense for the help to come from within—accounting for language, knowing how best to reach people and collect data, and of course understanding the environment and landscape itself.

Indigenous values are woven throughout implementation. Elders are being prioritized, culture and language are being integrated and honored, and above all the organizers and volunteers are practicing compassion and care for the whole, rather than individualism.

The Lummi, in the coastal Pacific Northwest, are showing us how self-determination benefits tribal communities. Decades ago the Lummi declared themselves a self-governing nation. This has enabled more financial flexibility and health autonomy, as the tribe works outside the bureaucracy of the Indian Health Service. Lummi medical teams led the way in responding to COVID-19 by creating preventative measures in their community long before the federal government did. They turned a fitness center into a field hospital to be ready as cases emerged.

The Lummi response stands as a model for other tribal communities—all communities, in fact—for how self-determination can create meaningful infrastructure and better allocate resources.

Because of its self-governing status, the tribe is not reliant on federal programs for accessing emergency funds. In April, many tribes worried about how they would receive funding from a stimulus bill that provided \$10 billion to tribal governments. Would federal and state bureaucracy create barriers to slow the distribution of “emergency” funds while tribal members face their normal food, water, and health care shortages?

While these examples illustrate the potential of nations and communities, I want to shine light on what individuals are capable of when we reclaim our Indigenous traditional

ecological knowledge.

“Although I can't make monetary contributions to elders during this time, I can use my fishing skills to help put ancestral foods on the table,” says Autumn Harry, who lives in Numu territories in northern Nevada. Photo from Autumn Harry.

In northern Nevada, in Numu territories, Autumn Harry is putting her passion and traditional knowledge of fishing to use during this time. “Living in a rural community, it is difficult to access healthy, nutrient-dense foods. Due to the pandemic, our nearest grocery stores are still getting ransacked and items are being hoarded, forcing our rural communities to pick from the scraps. Although I can't make monetary contributions to elders during this time, I can use my fishing skills to help put ancestral foods on the table,” says Harry.

Throughout March and April, Harry fished for trout in the mornings. She would take her catch home and create sterilized and safe packages for elders, demonstrating that we as Indigenous people have knowledge useful not just in this COVID-19 crisis but for generations to come.

There is no sugar coating this moment. It is hard, it is unfair, and it is extremely sad. That said, it is a moment of profound clarity for tribal communities, for the United States, and for the world: The systems that are supposed to offer us health, safety, and shelter do not work; they put profit over the well-being of countless citizens. As challenging, as scary, and as dark as this time is, it is a political and spiritual opening for people everywhere.

We will survive COVID-19. And when this pandemic has stabilized, I encourage you not to forget the feelings and the lessons of this moment. How did your community take care of one another? How did your government take care of you?

JADE BEGAY is Diné and Tesuque Pueblo of New Mexico. As creative director of NDN Collective, she leads multimedia content development through strategic narrative development and creative content design.

From Yes! Magazine

Class War - Not the Media Hokey Pokey - Is What It's All About

By **NORMAN SOLOMON, Reader Supported News**

Journalists aren't supposed to "bury the lead." But when death is the topic and corporate power is the culprit, the connection routinely goes unmentioned.

Class war — waged methodically from the top down — is so constant and pervasive that it might seem unremarkable. The 24/7 siege to make large companies more profitable and the wealthy more wealthy is going on all around us. In the process, it normalizes avoidable death as a cost of doing business.

Overall, news media are part of that normalization. While negative coverage of Donald Trump has been common due to his handling of the pandemic, media outrage has been muted in relation to the magnitude of the dying in our midst — at a time when most of the dying could have been prevented.

Deaths tend to become less "newsworthy" as the numbers mount and shock gives way to tacit media acceptance. A new lethal reality is built on dominant structures that keep serving the financial priorities of the powerful. Emphasis is often less about saving lives and more about saving the stock market. The storyline becomes more about "opening," less about dying, even though opening is sure to cause more dying.

Patterns of economic injustice are so basic to U.S. society that they amount to deep cracks in its foundation. Under the weight of catastrophe, whether hurricane or recession or pandemic, the cracks split wider and wider as more human beings — disproportionately poor and people of color — fall into the abyss.

Corporate media narratives routinely bypass such core truths about cause and effect. Heartbreaking stories have scant context. Victims without victimizers.

Fueled by ultra-greed, Trump's approach is a kind of scorched-earth nonstop campaign, an extreme version of the asymmetrical class warfare going on all the time.

"The world before COVID-19 was a deeply unequal place," the progressive publisher OR Books noted in an

email to supporters this week. "Now, in the pandemic, those inequalities are only more stark. Across America and around the globe are fabulous riches for a tiny few and deepening immiseration for everyone else."

A swiftly infamous Instagram post by David Geffen ("net worth" \$8.7 billion) in late March, showing his \$590 million yacht at sunset as the pandemic took deadly hold in the United States ("isolated in the Grenadines avoiding the virus ... I hope everybody is staying safe"), became a symbol transcending avowed politics. Geffen is no right-winger. He's a liberal. In the 2018 election cycle he gave \$1 million to Democratic Congressional super PACs. He went on to become a donor to Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign.

But the most pernicious and ultimately destructive actions of the super-wealthy are not so overtly gauche. The poisons are laced with soothing PR, while the rich movers and shakers play by the rules that capitalism has constructed for the voracious acquisition of wealth at the expense of everyone else. In that sense, the worst class-war crimes are the ones that adhere to the rules and don't get singled out for condemnation.

Consider the pathology of Jeff Bezos, reputedly the world's richest person, who commented that he couldn't think of much else to spend his money on besides programs for space travel, while back on planet Earth the extent of misery due to poverty is staggering. Said Bezos: "The only way that I can see to deploy this much financial resource is by converting my Amazon winnings into space travel. That is basically it."

For the likes of Bezos and other elite winners of riches, in the words of songwriter Tracy Chapman, a future awaits: "I won't die lonely / I'll have it all prearranged / A grave that's deep and wide enough / For me and all my mountains o' things."

Common Sense Advice about COVID-19

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home. If you are going to cough or sneeze, turn away from people, block it, and sanitize your hands immediately after.

4. **Use common sense. Dial down the anxiety.** If you are out taking a walk and someone walks past you, that brief (near) contact is so low risk that it doesn't make sense to get scared. Smile at them as they approach, turn your head away as they pass, move on. The smile will be more therapeutic than the passing is dangerous. Similarly, if someone bumps into you at the grocery store or reaches past you for a loaf of bread, don't stress - it is a very low risk encounter, also - as long as they didn't cough or sneeze in your face (one reason we wear cloth masks in public!).

5. **Use common sense, part II. Dial down the obsessiveness.** There really is no reason to go crazy sanitizing items that come into your house from outside, like groceries and packages. For it to be a risk, the delivery person would need to be infectious, cough or sneeze some droplets on your package, you touch the droplet, then touch your face, and then it invades your respiratory epithelium. There would need to be enough viral load and the virions would need to survive long enough for you to get infected. It could happen, but it's pretty unlikely. If you want to have a staging station for 1-2 days before you put things away, sure, no problem. You also

A few months into 2020, capitalism is running amuck in tandem with the coronavirus, like some headless horseman galloping over dead bodies. Meanwhile, for U.S. news media, accustomed to covering faraway disasters, a reflex has set in close to home — turning the page on deaths, increasingly presenting them as numbers. An anesthetized pall of acceptance is descending on us.

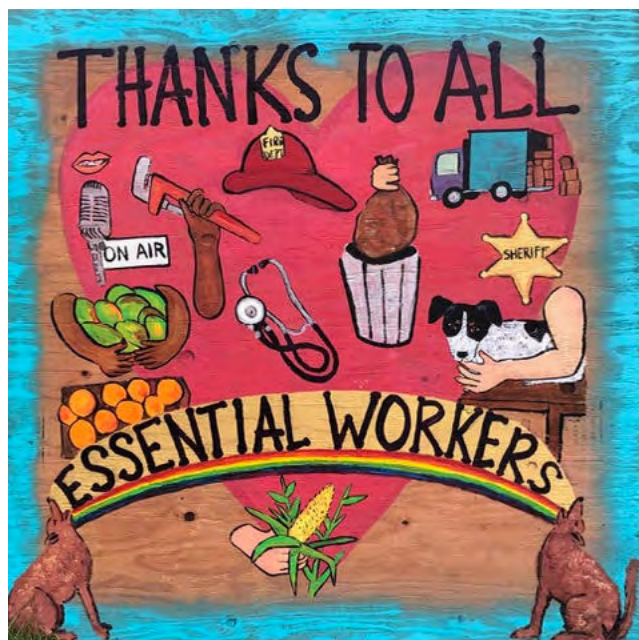
"For the person who dies there is an end, but this is not so for the person who grieves," psychoanalyst Stephen Grosz has pointed out. "The person who mourns goes on living and for as long as he [or she] lives there is always the possibility of feeling grief." In his book *"The Examined Life,"* Grosz wrote: "My experience is that closure is an extraordinarily compelling fantasy of mourning. It is the fiction that we can love, lose, suffer and then *do something* to permanently end our sorrow."

The corporate system is looking for its own forms of social "closure" in the midst of this pandemic's colossal deadly upheaval. Already, we're supposed to accept.

Maybe you don't want to call it class war. But whatever you call it, the system always makes a killing.

Norman Solomon is co-founder and national director of RootsAction.org. He was a Bernie Sanders delegate from California to the 2016 Democratic National Convention. Solomon is the author of a dozen books including "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death." He is executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy.

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Art by Vickisa, Point Reyes Station CA

can simply wipe things off before they come in to your house - that is fine is fine too. For an isolated family, it makes no sense to obsessively wipe down every surface every day (or several times a day). Door knobs, toilet handles, commonly trafficked light switches could get a wipe off each day, but it takes a lot of time and emotional energy to do all those things and they have marginal benefits. We don't need to create a sterile operating room-like living space. Compared to keeping your hands out of your mouth, good hand hygiene, and cleaning food before serving it, these behaviors might be more maladaptive than protective.

6. **There are few absolutes, so please get comfortable accepting some calculated risks, otherwise you might be isolating yourself for a really, really long time.** Figure out how you can be in public and interact with people without fear.

We are social creatures. We need each other. We will survive with and because of each other. Social distancing just means that we connect differently. Being afraid makes us contract and shut each other out. I hope we can fill that space created by fear and contraction with meaningful connections and learn to be less afraid of each other.



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

JUNE 2020

Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., Science Community Center, Rm. 115, MJC West Campus. Free; \$2 parking fee. MJC IS CLOSED.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science). Free, engaging community science programs. Fridays, 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. MJC IS CLOSED.

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

6 WED: VIGIL: NO VIGIL THIS MONTH McHenry & J St., 4:00-5:00 pm.

LOOKING AHEAD

June 7: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast, Modesto. CANCELLED.

June 26-28: Peace Camp CANCELLED.

REGULAR MEETINGS

CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.

SUNDAYS

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

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

MONDAYS

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

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

Walk with Me, a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email 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 various locations in Modesto. Information: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: stevencullen@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAYS

Teen Tuesdays every week from June-August, 2-5 pm., Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St. Peer Support, Games & movies. Safe space for teens to socialize, work together on projects, and learn about LGBTQ history. Each

week will be a little different as we want YOU (youths) to guide the direction this group will go!" Info: Maggie Strong, Political Activist Director/ GSA Liaison, mstrong@mopride.org, 209-284-0999.

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

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

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

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

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

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, or tgsupport@stanpride.org

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

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

THURSDAYS

CA10 Progressive Coalition Monthly Meeting, third Thursdays. Inclusive group of progressive activists to share resources, ideas, and information in order to support all the great organizing work happening in the Valley! Feel free to invite trusted allies. Meet-up and social hour: 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. Meeting: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Follow group on Facebook. Info: Tim Robertson, tim@nvlf.org

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

MEDIA: Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the “Voice of the Valley” also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING, FIRST Thursdays, 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.

SATURDAY

12-Step/Buddhist Meeting starts with a 30-minute meditation and then open discussion. Held monthly every second Saturday, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto at the UUFSC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

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

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

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

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

ONGOING

Great Valley Museum of Natural History: Classes for children. Museum exhibits and store open Tues. to Fri., 9 am to 4:30 pm. Info: 575-6196. Call for info about classes.

A.r.t.s. Educational Resource Center: All things recycled free arts materials for teachers, scout leaders, childcare, artists for their projects. Open M - F 8 to 4:30, 917 Oakdale Rd. Modesto, Media Center behind Ross Store. Volunteers needed. Info: 567-4516.

Central Valley Democratic Club. Monthly meetings: Modesto, Patterson, and Oakdale. For more information, call Neil Hudson, 847-0540.

Childrens Story Hours Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, WiggleWorms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Preschool StoryTime, Cuentos en espanol. Times vary. Info: http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtm

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. 630 Kearney Ave, Modesto. Mon-Sat., 9:00 AM - 6:00 pm. Closed Sunday. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org>

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.

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

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

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

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

Green Team educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. www.StanislausGreenTeam.com

Third Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday. <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

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>

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

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

FRIDAYS

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

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