



# stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

A MODESTO  
PEACE/LIFE  
CENTER  
PUBLICATION

MAY, 2020  
VOLUME XXVIII, NO. 8

## Three in Four Californians are worried about family illness, personal finances during COVID-19 pandemic

*Optimism about State's Economic Outlook at Lowest Level since Great Recession*

Note: The findings below are from PPIC's latest statewide survey which can be found on the [PPIC Statewide Survey page](#).

As the number of known COVID-19 cases statewide continues to grow, overwhelming majorities of Californians are worried about a family member getting sick or about their personal finances worsening due to the coronavirus.

Asked how worried they are—if at all—about themselves or someone in their family getting sick from the coronavirus, more than three in four Californians say they are either very (41%) or somewhat (37%) worried. Latinos (60%) and Asian Americans (41%) are more likely than whites (28%) and African Americans (22%) to be very worried.

"Most Californians are worried about a family member getting sick from the coronavirus, while Latinos and Asian Americans are especially likely to say they are very worried," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

At the same time, three in four Californians say they are either very (41%) or somewhat (34%) worried about the pandemic having a negative impact on their own or their family's finances. Half (50%) of Californians with annual incomes below \$40,000 are very worried, compared with 42 percent of those earning \$40,000 to \$79,000 and 32 percent of those with incomes of \$80,000 or above. Californians



PPIC

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with children at home are much more likely to be very worried (55%) than those without (35%).

"Most Californians are worried about the negative financial impact of the pandemic, while half of those with lower incomes and those with children at home say they are very worried," Baldassare said.

Asked whether worry or stress related to the coronavirus has affected their mental health, 27 percent of Californians say it has had a major negative impact and another 23 percent report a minor negative impact. Adults ages 18 to 34 and ages 35 to 54 are more likely to say it has had a major negative impact (31% of both age groups) than are those age 55 and over (18%). Renters (34%) are more likely than homeowners (21%) to report a major negative impact on mental health.

"Half of Californians say that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health," Baldassare said. "Younger adults and renters are especially likely to report feeling worry and stress having a major impact."

PPIC's survey highlights a steep drop in optimism about California's economic outlook. Only 19 percent expect good times financially in the state during the next 12 months. This is down from 49 percent in January 2020

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## Stanislaus Mayors! STOP: It is too soon to open up!

By JAMES COSTELLO, P.A.

As of April 25, Modesto is opening parks and golf courses under specific guidelines. Bathrooms will be cleaned twice a week. Playground equipment cleansing is up to parents. If you feel reassured, you should not be.

The recent Stanislaus County [mayors' letter](#) to Governor Gavin Newsom calling for an, "aggressive strategy for reopening our County for business," in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic is short-sighted. Why? Most people in our area have not been sick with COVID-19, which means they are at risk for acquiring the virus if exposed. This means that YOU are at risk for serious illness if you or others violate social distancing guidelines, especially if you have serious pre-existing medical conditions.

There seems to be a misunderstanding by the mayors and others about the slow rise in cases of viral infection in our county. That the curve has been kept down reflects a control of viral spread, but that does not mean the virus is going away and that it is safe to relax social distancing measures. In fact, the curve is still rising.

While the letter ostensibly advises adherence to the standard social distancing guidelines, it actually advocates relaxing some of them. Opening parks and other areas where maintaining separation is possible may be feasible, but are you going to touch anything in the restroom? Are your children? Are you going to trust the playground equipment your children will use?

As any mother knows, youngsters routinely touch their hands to their faces and mouths without washing hands first. One Oakdale mother was not worried. Her children could wash their hands when they get home. That is too late to



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### COVID-19 Screening Tool

This tool can help you understand what to do next about COVID-19.

Let's all look out for each other by knowing your status, trying not to infect others, and reserving care for those in need.

[START SCREENING \(Click\)](#)

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## Green Tips for a Green Planet

### COVID-19: A good time to consider farm fresh produce delivery

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Our family has considered farm fresh produce delivery for quite some time. Now with COVID-19 I am guessing we are among many who have looked into grocery delivery to aid in physical distancing and help stop the spread of this global wake-up call virus.

In researching options for local farm produce delivery, I have discovered many choices for farm fresh food delivery that go beyond doing our part to help flatten the curve, including local food markets, national food delivery companies, and regional farms.

We have chosen a Central Valley organic farm, and in the choosing have learned about many benefits other than convenience and safety. A quote from our farm's home page explains, "The best and most sustainable farms" and farm systems...are the ones "that focus on the right blend of economic and environmental sustainability" - ones "that will nurture the unborn generations from whom we are aThe environmental picture focuses on "eliminating the use of fossil fuels, not transporting products extreme distances, minimizing soil tillage, not adding any external fertilizers, using only heirloom seed varieties and watering crops just enough to keep them alive."

The farm we chose uses **7 core components** to sustain their food system, several of which are not required for organic certification:

**1. Local fertilizers** - cover crops, green waste compost, chicken or steer manure, feather meal, fish and seaweed products.

**2. Irrigation and Water Management** - drip, micro-sprinklers, hand-move sprinklers used on an irrigation schedule that matches plant need requirements, and factors like weather and development stage of the crop.

**3. Year-Round Employees** - this farm considers farm workers, often hired seasonally for poor wages, a backbone of the farming and provides year-round work with a sustainable wage for most of their employees.

**4. Crop Rotation** - the most sustainable method for disease prevention, while promoting biodiversity and year-round employment.

**5. Local First and Customer Partnerships** - their produce delivered through customer and other farm partnerships to insure the best seasonal selections of produce available.

**6. Customer Satisfaction** - educating consumers about what to expect from organic produce and the seasonality and challenges of growing it.

**7. Biodiversity** - stewardship of both the land and the natural resources that go with it to promote a balanced ecosystem in which healthy crops, flora and fauna can exist and flourish using systems and operating procedures customized to meet rigorous third-party Food Safety standards, while protecting the habitat that so many creatures depend upon.

**ACTION:** Google "farm fresh produce delivery" to find what options are a fit for your household.

**Be informed!**

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

## 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Camp: June 26-28, 2020

By MARIAN McBRIDE-LUMAN

**Note: this event may be cancelled.**

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Camp in the Sierras will take place on June 26-28, 2020 at Camp Peaceful Pines. We'll enjoy a weekend of workshops, good food, singing, drum circle, 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 Power** will present the Saturday workshop "Joy: The Secret Sauce of Self-Renewal and Community Transformation." "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution." - Emma Goldman, Russian Feminist Activist.

Leng will explore the work of social movements that use centered-joy and lightheartedness as a subversive and effective strategy to create collective resiliency. Participants will learn practical ways in which joy can be incorporated into their lives as a critical component towards building a resistance to fear and despair. This workshop will incorporate movement of body and breathing exercises.

Camp Peaceful Pines, on Clark Fork Road off Hwy. 108 is the venue for Peace Camp. In 2018, the Donnell Fire burned much of the surrounding area but the Camp itself remains

intact and is still a place of beauty and tranquility.

Camp Peaceful Pines features a kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a special needs cabin. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work.

The camp fee covers the program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$75 before May 1st, \$85 before June 4 and \$95 after June 4. Young people, 18 and under, are \$55 before May 1st, \$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 also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated. The camp opens with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes after the morning gathering 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 mail. The online registration payment option can be done by searching for Peace Camp 2020 at [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com). There will be a wait list if registration becomes full.

**Information:** Marian McBride-Luman, 209-765-0640, [mmcbrideluman@gmail.com](mailto:mmcbrideluman@gmail.com)

## Stop!: Too Soon to Open

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prevent possible exposure and transmission of COVID-19!

Research published by the Cleveland Clinic has shown that the virus can live on surfaces at varying degrees of time:

Glass – 5 days.

Wood – 4 days.

Plastic & stainless-steel – 3 days.

Cardboard – 24 hours.

Copper surfaces – 4 hours.

It is important to note that the virus ultimately dies on such surfaces and that infectivity declines. Read a good discussion [here](#).

The mayors assume that we, in our rural county, are different than a major urban area like Los Angeles, and that control of viral exposure and spread is somehow different here. Their assumption is magical thinking. The virus spreads in the same ways no matter where you live. Admittedly, city crowding enhances viral spread to more people more quickly, but infections will potentially increase here with more exposures under relaxed social behavior or in crowded conditions.

For example, restricting group gatherings to 50 people, as the letter suggests, assumes that each person in that group will religiously adhere to the appropriate protective practices. Good luck with that. As we now know, *it can only take one or two asymptomatic, infected people who don't follow the rules to spread the infection to others who themselves are not following the rules.*

To provide a vivid example of rapid, *asymptomatic* viral infection *before* social distancing was firmly in place:

In Washington state, Mount Vernon, a town of almost 38,000 people, the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church held a choir practice on March 10 before state-wide social distancing was in place. *There were no known cases in the area.* To its credit, the local health department warned locals to stay at home avoiding any large gatherings. The church did not get the message. This is what happened next:

*"Within a few days, at least six members had a fever or reported symptoms. On 16 March, 24 people reported illness, including some members who attended the 10 March rehearsal. One member tested positive for the virus. More cases were confirmed in the following days.*

*The group gave a roster to the county's health department and contacted everyone in the group, regardless whether they attended the practice. Weeks later, health officials believe the rehearsal may have been a "super-spreading" event, with 45 people experiencing Covid-19 symptoms, including 28 confirmed cases. Two members, both in their eighties, have died."*

To complicate matters, at least four states are ignoring federal guidelines and are opening up their states. And we now have groups of people who feel their First Amendment Constitutional rights are being trampled upon. By God, no government is going to tell them what to do, nor is it going to force them get a vaccination they don't want, the public health (and their own and their families' health) be damned!

Looking to the past, a study of the SARS pandemic of 2003 showed that the virus (also a corona virus) was spread from one infected person to 16 others on one hotel floor in Hong Kong.

From there, "Those guests carried the disease to Toronto, Singapore, and Hanoi, or they entered hospitals in Hong Kong."

The race to halt the disease was on. Yet, this disease was controlled over a 4-month period. Why? Because the World Health Organization (WHO) led an international, well-coordinated effort between nations to control it. This is the same organization that our president wants to defund.

According to WHO,

"By July 2003, 29 countries had reported a total of 8,437 probable cases, including 813 deaths from November 1,

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# California Workers with Less Education, People of Color, and Immigrants are Shouldering the Economic Burden of COVID-19

*Federal and state policymakers must address the needs of workers and families most at financial risk and challenge the racial and economic disparities that hurt Californians before the crisis hit*

April 16, 2020 By the California Budget & Policy Center  
SACRAMENTO – Millions of Californian workers are shouldering the burden of the COVID-19 economic slowdown, but workers with less education, people of color, and immigrants face the greatest financial risk, according to two new reports from the California Budget & Policy Center.

The loss of jobs – evidenced by the record number of Californians who have recently filed for unemployment insurance – and cuts to work hours hit some households especially hard, and struggling to pay for food and rent during the pandemic is exacerbated by the economic, educational, and racial inequities many California workers already faced.

The Budget Center's two new reports – California Workers With Less Education, People of Color, and Immigrants are at Greatest Financial Risk Due to COVID-19 and California's Undocumented Workers and Mixed Status Families Are Locked Out of Safety Net and Federal COVID-19 Support – look at the demographic makeup of workers and their families in industries that are directly and immediately affected by the business slowdown and closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Among the key findings in the new reports:

Nearly a quarter of all California workers (23.8%) are employed in one of these highly affected industries.

More than 1 in 4 workers (26.2%) in California in these immediately affected industries are parents.

Nearly 1 in 3 California workers (5%) with less than a

high school education work in an industry immediately affected by the COVID-19 business slowdown, while only 1 in 7 workers with a bachelor's degree (14.3%) work in one of these highly affected industries.

Among workers at high risk of losing jobs or hours, nearly 2 in 3 (65.5%) are people of color, including more than 4 in 10 (43.8%) who are Latinx, more than 1 in 8 (13.2%) who are Asian, and about 1 in 20 (4.7%) who are Black.

Latinx children are especially likely to face economic harm from the COVID-19 slowdown, with more than 1 in 3 living in a household that includes a worker in a highly affected industry.

About 1 in 3 (34%) undocumented workers in California is employed in an industry that was immediately affected by the COVID-19 economic shutdown – such as food service, child care, building services (like janitorial services) or landscaping.

Of these undocumented workers in the most immediately affected industries, an estimated 40% are parents, and an estimated 90% of these parents live with children who are US citizens.

Also highlighted in the reports, California's great paradox: while the state is home to an estimated 2 to 3 million individuals who are undocumented immigrants – 6% of the state population – they are locked out of most federal and state public supports, including unemployment insurance, available to help workers and their families to weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

These findings come just as new unemployment insurance claim figures were released Thursday with 2.9 million Californians filing initial unemployment insurance claims since mid-March – three times the population of San Jose. The most recent weekly claim figures included 660,966 people for the week ending April 11, and 918,814 people for the week ending April 4.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the highest weekly claim figure on record in California was more than a decade ago – 115,462 people filed the week ending January 16, 2010.

While federal and state leaders have taken steps to help Californians hit by the health and economic crisis, more support is needed to help people in the months to come.

The additional support at the state level needed includes but is not limited to: emergency aid distributed either through local community based organizations or county social service agencies; providing a state tax credit, or rebate, through the CalEITC and Young Child Tax Credit for individuals who file taxes with Individual Tax Identification Numbers; a state-provided unemployment, or wage replacement to those who do not qualify for unemployment insurance; comprehensive health coverage for all undocumented adults; and additional work-protected leave for individuals who are unable to work due to the closure of child care, adult care, and schools.

**Learn more** about the Budget Center's findings and policy recommendations on economics, health, and COVID-19: <https://calbudgetcenter.org/issues/economics-health-covid19/>



## Social Distancing

*From the CDC, Centers for Disease Control*

### What is social distancing?

Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing:

Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people

Do not gather in groups

Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

In addition to [everyday steps to prevent COVID-19](#), keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread locally and across the country and world.

When COVID-19 is spreading in your area, everyone should limit close contact with individuals outside your household in indoor and outdoor spaces. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you have no symptoms. Social distancing is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).

### Why practice social distancing?

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sun light and humidity.

Social distancing helps limit contact with infected people and contaminated surfaces.

### Tips for social distancing

Follow guidance from authorities where you live.

If you need to shop for food or medicine at the grocery store or pharmacy, stay at least 6 feet away from others.

Use mail-order for medications, if possible.

Consider a grocery delivery service.

Cover your mouth and nose with a [cloth face cover](#) when around others, including when you have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store.

Stay at least 6 feet between yourself and others, even when you wear a face covering.

Avoid large and small gatherings in private places and public spaces, such as a friend's house, parks, restaurants, shops, or any other place. This advice applies to people of any age, including teens and younger adults. Children should not have in-person playdates while school is out. To help maintain social connections while social distancing, learn [tips to keep children healthy while school's out](#).

Work from home when possible.

If possible, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.

If you are a student or parent, talk to your school about options for digital/distance learning.

Stay connected while staying away. It is very important to stay in touch with friends and family that don't live in your home.

Call, video chat, or stay connected using social media. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations and having to socially distance yourself from someone you love can be difficult. [Read tips for stress and coping](#).

Dr. Sanjay Gupta shows you how to make a mask [HERE](#)



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## Division II - 1st Place 2020 Peace Essay Contest

### Marielle Franco: Brazil's Voice in a Country Choked by Oppression



**Rana Banankhah,  
Independent Study**

As hordes of tourists and excited fans flooded the terminals of Rio de Janeiro's international airport during the summer of 2016, they poured out of the exits to behold the breathtaking city. Modern infrastructure, picturesque views, and extensive security impressed travelers as they prepared to head toward the stadium where the Olympics were being held. As they drove through the highway, where a road barrier displaying vibrant, colorful art lined the road, they may have noticed the glossy new skyscrapers adorning the coastline. Rio de Janeiro appeared to perfectly coalesce with the standards of the idyllic city. But all of those delightful expectations were nothing more than a lie. Only a few yards away from that very highway, intentionally hidden by the recently developed road barriers, were the favelas, or Brazilian slums. Drug lords and gang members were, and still are, the only authorities present in these parts of the city. The area is practically patrolled by gang members freely strolling around with machine guns slung across their backs. In the Maré favela, one of the deadliest parts of the city, Marielle Franco, a young mother attending university, advanced through the chaos.

As an LGBT woman of color living in the favelas, Marielle Franco was born and raised in a world of discrimination and desperation. She began working at the ripe age of eleven (Maliutchenko) to pay for her college education and bore her first child at the age of 18 (Viola). Unfortunately, tragedy rattled her life in 2000 when she experienced the loss of a close friend to gun violence (Maliutchenko). As she struggled to cope with the pain of her loss, Marielle transformed her anguish into action, as she immersed herself into the world of human rights activism. She promptly pursued a degree in social sciences and joined the state legislature's Commission for Human Rights Defense. After years of garnering political experience, in 2016, Marielle decided to run for a position as a city councillor of Rio de Janeiro. In a world where only 11% of elected councillor positions in Brazil are held by women (Corral), the odds were stacked against her; especially considering that she was also a woman of color and part of the LGBT community, with both groups being heavily discriminated against in Brazil. Nonetheless, she won the election by a landslide and received the fifth highest vote total out of more than 1,500 candidates (Giangrande). As one of the only politicians with her unique background and demographic, she accumulated massive support and attention. For Brazil's

corrupt, oppressive government, she represented an anomaly.

Throughout her career, Marielle worked to provide justice to the underrepresented populations of the favelas and created peace in a community driven by gangs and violence. As a city councillor, Marielle stressed issues relating to corruption and the favelas in many of her bills. On December 9, 2018, she passed a bill into law, which campaigned against the harassment of women, especially at schools. The bill utilized widespread advertisement through the public transit system, which explained and denounced sexual harassment, and vouched for the use of public transit video surveillance cameras as a method of identifying violators (Assédio). She later authored Espaço Coruja, or Owl Space, a bill which currently provides night-time nurseries for the children of working families to accommodate for night shifts (Espaço). Furthermore, she accommodated Brazil's youth by passing a bill which promotes the social reintegration of juvenile offenders through various governmental-services and socioeconomic measures. These programs were imperative in developing responsibility and initiative in these young adults, while also encouraging the, "reinsertion of adolescents in the educational system," (Establishment). However, despite the many life-changing bills which she authored and passed, arguably the most notable impact she had throughout her life was empowering the common people of Brazil to realize that they had the power and strength to rise up and transform their oppressive socio-political landscape into one of justice and equality. Sadly, these democratic views came with a price. They are the reason she was targeted on the night of March 14, 2018. While driving home, she was assassinated by two men who appeared to be professional killers having connections to Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's president. Her death sent a shockwave across the favelas. Her life and devotion to service, despite the tremendous risk she willingly faced, has inspired armies of courageous Brazilians to line the streets and carry on her legacy. More than ever before, they have utilized their power in numbers to demand justice.

When I discovered Marielle's story, I was astonished by her exemplary bravery and persistence. Despite being well aware of the deep-rooted corruption embedded into Brazil's government and their infamous hatred of activists, she still chose to stand up for all of the hard-working mothers, unfortunate victims of assault, homeless children, and all other underrepresented groups in Brazil. She stood for those without a voice - those who couldn't stand for themselves. She inspires me to work harder to ensure a more peaceful and just world because even in one of the world's most repressed



Photo: [Mídia Ninja](#)

political climates, she still managed to create tangible and fundamental change to the institutions that oppressed her people. As a citizen of the United States, a country where we are entitled to the freedom of speech and our natural rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, I ought to combat the injustices that I and other Americans endure on a daily basis. If there's one lesson Marielle's life has taught me, it is to take advantage of the well-fostered spirit of democracy that has already been instilled into our country.

Marielle Franco paid the ultimate sacrifice in order to defend the most vulnerable citizens of Brazil. She willingly risked her life for what she believed was the greater good. She was a hero. Despite her tremendous impact on the activist culture in Brazil, many only remember her for conspiracies clouding her death, rather than her efforts to consolidate peace. Nevertheless, her life's impact can still be vibrantly heard through the marching of Brazilian protesters and their calls to transform Brazil into the remarkable country tourists once believed it to be during the summer of 2016.

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stanislaus  
CONNECTIONS

is published monthly except in August  
by the Modesto Peace/Life Center  
720 13<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto, CA 95354.

Open by appointment.  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 134,  
Modesto, CA 95353  
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# Live from Planet Television, Donald Trump – Every Night!

*Deprived of rallies to inflate his ego, the president muscles in on sickness and death.*

By **MICHAEL WINSHIP**

As we all know, Donald J. Trump sees the entire world as one big television show — about him. Everything is weighed against the success of his former NBC reality show “The Apprentice,” and frankly, as far as Trump’s concerned, the world just isn’t measuring up.

Nearly 2.5 million afflicted globally, and 170,000 deaths? Nearly 750,000 sick in the United States and more than 42,000 dead? Faulty lines of supply and insufficient testing? No, no, no. Ignore or deny them. This is not the scenario—or the numbers—Trump had in mind.

Avoiding the tragic truth, shifting blame and lying, he instead brags about the ratings for the daily press briefings of his coronavirus task force. He refuses to believe or understand that the Nielsen points are not so much for him as they are because viewers are desperate for information about the pandemic. They want to know what to do and when it will end and they want to hear from the top medical experts who too often are ridiculously forced to stand silently on the dais behind Trump as he bloviates for most of the sessions, each usually more than two hours long.

During this crisis, those doctors could be doing better and more helpful things with their time and so could we. I’ve actually stopped watching in real time these campaign rallies posing as news conferences, and you should, too. There came a point a few weeks ago when they made me so outraged and angry, my head and stomach ached. Healthier to see excerpts later on if you must and to read the Twitter recaps from *CNN’s Daniel Dale* than to have my head come to a point even sharper and more painful than it already is.

Dale believes Trump [sees these daily exercises](#) “as a vehicle for self-congratulation, self-defense, and deception.” And so they are, as Trump mangles the facts, wallows in self-

praise, harangues the press and the nation’s governors, mocks those he sees as enemies and treats the White House like a sandbox where he’s Bully #1. And all the while, people die.

Remember that [back in late 2017](#), *The New York Times* reported, “Before taking office, Mr. Trump told top aides to think of each presidential day as an [episode in a television show](#) in which he vanquishes rivals. People close to him estimate that Mr. Trump spends at least four hours a day, and sometimes as much as twice that, in front of a television, sometimes with the volume muted, marinating in the no-holds-barred wars of cable news and eager to fire back.”

For Trump, as the *Times* headlined in [a separate 2017 story](#), “the reality show has never ended.” And so, with nauseating regularity, Trump makes appointments to government jobs based not on expertise but on how he thinks someone will appear on TV. And he makes major decisions that ignore policy recommendations from experts but embrace the latest dumbass thing he heard on Fox News.

(Note, as John Oliver did Sunday on his HBO show “Last Week Tonight,” how both “the cure is worse than the disease” trope that has fueled the rush to reopen America despite the pandemic, and Trump’s embrace of the lupus medication hydroxychloroquine as a miracle cure came fresh off the Fox airwaves.)

“This has exceeded what would have been allowed on ‘The Apprentice,’” Laurie Ouellette, a University of Minnesota communications professor, [told the Times](#). “It’s almost a magnification. It’s like reality TV unleashed. Yes, he was good at it, but I always felt like he had to be reined in in order not to mess up the formula. Here, he doesn’t have that same sort of constraint.”

She said that two-and-a-half years ago and it’s only gotten worse. Much worse.

An aside: In late 2018, in *The New Yorker*, [Patrick Radden Keefe wrote](#) that while “The Apprentice” was still in production, “Sometimes a candidate distinguished herself during the contest only to get fired, on a whim, by Trump.” Video editors “were often obliged to ‘reverse engineer’ the episode, scouring hundreds of hours of footage to emphasize the few moments when the exemplary candidate might have slipped up, in an attempt to assemble an artificial version of history in which Trump’s shoot-from-the-hip decision made sense.”

One of those editors, Jonathon Braun, said, “I find it strangely validating to hear that they’re doing the same thing in the White House.”

In fact, the *Washington Post* [reported on April 11](#) that in Trump’s pushing America back into business as usual, “One senior administration official worried that some in the White House are trying to reverse-engineer their desired outcome. ‘They already know what they want to do and they’re looking for ways to do it,’ this person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to share candid insights. ‘They think it’s time to reopen because some thought it was never time to close, and they’ve made that up in their minds.’”

You don’t think some of those same geniuses aren’t involved in stirring up the current spate of angry demonstrations in state capitals around the country? The ones demanding a reopening of bars and beauty salons, science and health be damned? Sure, there is genuine rage and distress—the economy’s shot and [22 million people](#) are out of work—but the numbers of these defiant protesters are small compared to the majority of Americans—Republicans and Democrats—who believe we must not rush back to our lives as they were

before. More will sicken and die.

Much of the demonstrators’ ire has been roiled and ginned up by the extreme right, including militias, anti-vaxxers, Proud Boys, Alex Jones and other conspiracy theorists, gun groups, GOP politicians and assorted Astroturf efforts masquerading as grassroots. That [includes three brothers](#)—Ben, Christopher and Aaron Dorr—described as pro-gun “provocateurs” who are behind a number of bogus Facebook groups encouraging the protests. Together these groups have more than 200,000 members.

Reality TV isn’t real and a large amount of these protests aren’t real either. The guilty are leading the gullible. On April 17, [The Washington Post noted](#), “[T]he right-wing media has amplified the protests and conservative groups have formed plans to jointly press for a reopening of the economy. The groups include several veterans of the tea party era, activism that was powered by a network of right-wing and [corporate financiers](#) interested in reducing taxes and regulations on industry.” [These include](#) at least one group linked to the family of Trump’s Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, funds tied to the Koch Brothers and the Castle Rock foundation, initially funded by the Coors brewing family.

Add to this toxic mix overmagnification by a media eager for pictures, the disinformation of Russian troll farms plus the president’s own tweets and public remarks. He told his addled base to “liberate” Democratic states and egged on the demonstrators – even though their protests violate the very guidelines ordered by the White House under Trump’s name—social distancing, staying at home, avoiding gatherings of more than ten people, and on and on.

These ill-considered protests could trigger a second wave of illness and death that would make the economy even worse than it already is. “Unless we get the virus under control, the real recovery economically is not going to happen,” [Anthony Fauci said](#) on “Good Morning America.” “So what you do if you jump the gun and go into a situation where you have a big spike, you’re going to set yourself back.” And by the way, demonstrators, although the symptoms vary, if you know anyone who has been slammed by it, the virus is devastating, painful and debilitating beyond expectation. It could happen to you.

COVID-19 is Trump’s 9/11. And his Katrina. And his Charlottesville. Again. Because he has repeated the same thoughtless recklessness he displayed in 2017 in the wake of those racially charged and deadly demonstrations in Virginia. The “bigotry and violence,” he said, “was on many sides” as neo-Nazis attacked. There were “very fine people on both sides,” he declared as bigots marched and shouted, “Jews will not replace us!”

This year’s version—as Trump watches the marchers recreate TV’s “The Walking Dead” — “I’ve seen the people, I’ve seen the interviews of people. These are great people,” he said. “Look they want to get – they call cabin fever, you’ve heard the term – they’ve got cabin fever...” “I think these people are – I’ve never seen so many American flags.” But there were Nazi and Confederate flags, too, although Trump says he didn’t see them, and the tea party’s “Don’t Tread on Me.” And guns, although so far, the rallies have remained peaceful.

We’ve all been watching a lot of television during these housebound days—[more than usual](#) even for Teevee Trump,

continued page 10

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# How to Think About Homelessness

By ERIC CAINE, [The Valley Citizen](#)

Few people would argue that releasing mentally ill people from institutions of care into the streets would have good consequences. That policy—closing mental institutions—is usually attributed to Ronald Reagan when he was governor of California, but it began in the 1960s, well before the Reagan administration. Today, the consequences are all around us; the best estimates show 25% of homeless people are seriously mentally ill, and up to 45% have some lesser degree of mental illness.

After only a little reflection, most people would also agree that drug use among mentally ill people who are homeless isn't necessarily the cause of their homelessness. By definition, mentally ill people have diminished capacities prior to and absent from drug use. That's why our courts of law determine some people are incompetent to stand trial; they're deemed incapable of defending themselves. So in the case of mentally ill homeless people, we can say drug use may be associated with homelessness, but it is not the primary cause of homelessness, especially in those cases where people are too disturbed to work.

We might also find wide agreement that people on disability with fixed incomes could become homeless in the event of steeply rising costs, especially housing costs. In states like California, housing costs in booming economies like the Bay Area have pushed even people with good incomes into so-called "bedroom communities," where they have long commutes to and from work.

In Modesto, notorious as a Bay Area bedroom community, average rents are over \$1,000 a month. In the same region, homeless people on disability generally receive around \$1000 a month in total disability payments. Some homeless people pay as much as \$600 a month for a shared room; others pay that or more for an unheated garage. Others are on the streets. Again, if a disabled homeless person also happens to use drugs, we couldn't claim homelessness in that case was caused by drugs; the prime factors were a fixed income and rising housing costs.

Rising rents are just one consequence of a volatile and transformational economy; another is a huge disparity in incomes and wealth. This disparity drives factors like housing costs once regional differences are considered.

For example, median annual incomes in Alameda County are almost \$90,000. In Santa Clara County, median annual incomes are well over \$100,000. But even with almost forty percent of Stanislaus County wage earners commuting to the Bay Area, the county's median annual wage is still just over \$50,000. That means that people who live and work in Stanislaus County on average have far less wealth and income than people who live in Stanislaus County and work elsewhere.

Many will argue that homelessness is due to a decline in the work ethic. They claim homeless people are lazy. But according to a study by the Stanislaus Community Foundation, of the top 100 jobs in Stanislaus County, only 25 pay a living wage, with a living wage defined as \$11.97 an hour for one adult with no children, or \$32.58 an hour for one adult with two children. It's not that people aren't working, it's that working doesn't pay enough.

There are well-documented studies that show economic stress, especially poverty, contributes to a rise in drug use. Homelessness is the most severe form of economic stress, at least in industrialized nations. It is thus not surprising that many homeless people use drugs.

The United Way's Real Cost Measure estimates the income

needed to meet basic needs. In 2017, 40% of the residents of Stanislaus County had incomes below an amount needed to meet their basic needs. The total number of households was 53,663. Among this total, many households are one major expense away from losing their housing. Given the likelihood of a large medical expense, loss of transportation or insurance, or some other calamity, it's easy to imagine a percentage of these people becoming homeless in the near future.

California is often cited as having the largest homeless population in the United States, over 150,000 individuals. But that number is widely misinterpreted to mean California has the most widespread poverty. Actually, California isn't even in the top 15 poorest states in the nation. The major factor driving homelessness in California, as in states like New York, Oregon and Washington, is housing costs.

And California is also not the leader in the rate of homelessness (homelessness per capita). The leader in the rate of homelessness is Washington DC, followed by New York and Hawaii. California is tied for fourth with Oregon.

Again, the forces driving homelessness do not seem to be related to drug use or even employment. The major factor seems to be rising costs of living, especially housing costs, with especially dire consequences for people with fixed incomes.

Recent economic reports stress robust stock markets and low unemployment rates, but those figures can be deceiving. In February of 2019, Mississippi's unemployment rate of 4.8% was near a historic low. Nonetheless, by most metrics, Mississippi was consistently rated the poorest state in the nation. Again, it's not that people aren't working, it's that more and more often, work doesn't pay.

Along with drugs and a decline in the work ethic, politics and party policies are often cited as causal factors in homelessness. Liberals blame conservatives, and conservatives blame liberals. But a closer look at politics, poverty, and homelessness shows that neither political party has even begun to address poverty, and homelessness is merely extreme poverty made visible.

Again, the poorest states, including Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky are predominately Republican/conservative. Yet the states with highest rates of homelessness, New York, California, Hawaii and others, are predominately Democrat/liberal. Washington DC, though not a state, has the highest rate of homelessness of all, and it's the epicenter of politics in the United States, providing yet more evidence that neither party has been able to address homelessness and poverty with any degree of success anywhere.

It's often said that homelessness is the result of poor choices, but people don't choose to be disabled or mentally ill. They also don't choose their parents, but in many cases, the economic status of their parents does "choose" their success in life.

Many studies have shown that wealth is a better predictor for economic success than ability, including intelligence and hard work. While there are always exceptions, the likelihood children born to poor parents will remain poor is greater in America than in many other countries, especially European and Scandinavian countries.

When authorities in Stanislaus County permitted homeless people to camp in Modesto's Beard Brook Park, two of the earliest entrants were young men in their thirties. In a poignant reminder of the generational effects of homelessness and poverty, the two brothers asked to pitch their tent, "in the same place our mother had hers." Having spent most



of their childhoods homeless or very poor, they endured the same conditions as adults.

Escaping poverty is difficult for multiple reasons, but no one should underestimate the negative effects of extreme poverty on the brain. Robert Sapolsky, the MacArthur "Genius" Award winner and Professor of Neurology and Neurological Sciences at Stanford, claims solid research shows a strong correlation between low socioeconomic status and reduced brain function:

*"By age five, the lower a child's socioeconomic status, on the average...the poorer the frontal function concerning working memory, emotion regulation, impulse control, and executive decision making...foolishly pick a poor family to be born into, and by kindergarten, the odds of your succeeding at life's marshmallow tests are already stacked against you."* (Behave 195-96)

Sapolsky's work is especially important in establishing averages—metrics from which we can develop expectations and predict outcomes. But many people think about homelessness only in terms of exceptions. We thus hear stories about people who overcame tremendous odds against success and are then held up as models rather than outliers.

Such stories are especially misleading when they're mistaken for norms. Yes, once in while a single mother with two kids rises from poverty to executive success, but, far more often, mother and kids suffer punishing hardship. In theory, averages and average people are the prime components of a strong middle class. In fact, the American middle class has been losing political and purchasing power for decades.

Again, numbers can be misleading. For example, the median household income across the United States in 2018 was \$63,179; the average wage was \$48,251. These numbers sound fairly impressive, especially for those regions where rents have remained relatively stable over the years.

But once these data are disaggregated, a more sobering picture emerges. In 2018, membership in the top half, or middle class, included people who earned between \$25,000 and \$249,999 a year. That's a wide range, and especially revealing when measured against the 46.5% of the population who earn less than \$30,000 per year.

In states like New York, California, Washington and

continued next page

# Homelessness

continued

Oregon, with a tiny few regional exceptions, \$30,000 a year means extreme poverty. The poverty guideline for a family of four in Alaska is \$25,100 per year; in Hawaii, it's \$28,870. Again, employment doesn't necessarily mean economic security or freedom from the hardships of poverty.

Popular explanations for the causes of homelessness and poverty don't bear up against thoughtful analysis, but they persist in the public mind because they offer easy answers to complex problems. One of the most persistent explanations for homelessness is, "It's the drugs and alcohol," but this explanation falls apart with thoughtful reflection.

Anyone who lived in or visited large cities in the past will remember the "wino," the alcoholic who frequented the streets of run-down neighborhoods during the day. Despite his dependence on alcohol (winos were invariably male), the wino wasn't homeless. He wasn't homeless because every big city had hotels with cheap rooms. Most places also had rooming houses with inexpensive rooms. Known as "flophouses," the cheap hotels and rooming houses provided housing for alcoholics and drug users. Those cheap sources of housing are gone from many big cities, especially cities that have thrived in the new economy.

Outside the bigger cities, cheap motels often offered long-term rates. They too became sources of housing for people with very low incomes. Today, cheap motels, even in inland regions like the San Joaquin Valley, can cost \$60 a night; weekly or "bargain" rates approach \$400. The simple fact is that wages, disability, and social security incomes haven't kept up with housing costs.

Thinking about things like homelessness and poverty can be difficult, and that's why many prefer simple explanations. While most everyone will admit that we've had huge increases in wealth inequality over the last forty years, few acknowledge such differences result over the long term in greater stress on the poorest members of society.

Nonetheless, most anyone would admit upon reflection that homelessness and extreme poverty are highly stressful. Financial anxiety from week-to-week and month-to-month is stressful enough, but just imagine walking into a homeless camp at night, alone and unarmed; few people could manage such a thing without severe stress, but severe stress is the rule for the homeless and extremely poor among us.

Again, Robert Sapolsky offers a wealth of information about the effects on human health under severe stress:

*"When social capital decreases (thanks to inequality), up goes psychological stress. A mammoth amount of literature explores how such stress—lack of control, predictability, outlets for frustration, and social support—chronically activates the stress response, which as we saw in chapter 4, corrodes health in numerous ways." (Behave 394)*

With our hospitals and emergency rooms full of homeless people, most of us don't need to be reminded of the burden extreme poverty has placed on our health care system. We may need to be reminded, however, that causes for the extreme poverty and homelessness that create that burden are more complicated than we've been led to believe by popular but unreasonable explanations.

And just as we could have predicted the results when we released mentally ill people into our streets, we should be able to predict the consequences if our only strategy for homelessness and poverty is to continue chasing people around town when they have nowhere else to go. Unless we change our thinking about homelessness and our strategies for addressing it, we can expect even more homelessness and extreme poverty in the very near future. It's a virtual certainty.

# Capitalism does not work for everyone

By JOAQUIN ZALDIVAR

Homelessness is a red flag that our system of capitalism is not working for everyone. It is a symptom of an economic system that emphasizes capital accumulation over the well-being of people, resulting in a vast disparity of income distribution. I don't remember seeing homelessness when I was growing up in the 1950s. Mothers stayed at home while the fathers went to work and were able to support families, own homes and purchase cars. There were institutions to house the mentally challenged and those who could not cope, many of whom suffered from both physical and mental ailments. In 1980, Ronald Reagan became president of the United States and continued policies that he had begun earlier while he was governor of California, policies that cut the funding for many social programs and thus put many of such people on the street.

"Capitalism" is a term coined by the novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray, in 1854 in his novel The Newcomes to describe the economic system that evolved from feudalism during the Protestant Reformation. It was a time of tremendous class distinctions. Property owners were lords of the manor and common folk were but a source of labor to make them wealthier. The Protestant Reformation introduced the idea that, although greed had been considered one of the seven deadly sins, accumulated wealth was a blessing, proof of virtue and God's favor. Thus, from about 1500 to 1750 the mercantile capitalists profited greatly. The new nationalism of the Protestant monarchies supported these so-called trading companies and their stockholders in their avaricious accumulation of our earth's resources at the expense of indigenous peoples all over the world. The period was marked by economic crises, wars and the exploitation of labor.

Bolstered by Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, the economic policies of the 19th century focused on what they called free trade, balanced budgets with little help for the poor (very similar to the Republican platform of today.) It wasn't until the 1930s and FDR's social legislation programs that corporations began to be taxed more heavily. Smith's laissez-faire policies were challenged due to the severity of the Depression. Corporations were taxed at more than 50%. The term "welfare capitalism" was first used because, for the first time in history, the large multinational corporations with their millions of stockholders and employees were being asked to do their share to promote the well-being of society. In Europe they were taxed at a higher rate.

In our country the word "socialism" has a terrible connotation. It is often misconstrued with the Marxist transition from Communism to Capitalism with state ownership of much private property. People shuddered when Bernie Sanders even mentioned the word. However, as the word implies, it is a focus on our society and its needs. Education, medicine, housing, libraries, child care and job training programs are all

examples of social welfare programs designed to help people improve their standard of living. When there is an economic emergency, such as in the 1930s, we quite often have to turn to a bit of socialism to bail out some of the negative effects of the excesses of capitalism.

Today there is a new kind of emergency. Fear and a tiny virus have stopped what has never been able to be stopped previously, namely capitalism's incessant march towards more, much as in the Dr. Seuss' children's story, The Lorax. We have seen how vulnerable we really are, how inadequate our Big Pharma/Corporate medical system is and how close to the edge most of our population is while the rich get richer. At the same time, COVID-19 has accelerated the passage of social programs once considered anathema. It has brought an acceptance to the idea of Democratic presidential candidate Yang to give each citizen a \$1,000 monthly stipend. The government is now giving out \$1,200 to many of our citizens. In the 2016 election, not one candidate even mentioned the problem of homelessness. Now, with our health emergency, funds are being provided to house and to feed the more than half a million homeless citizens. It goes to show that we only really depend on socialism during emergencies to help those in need. The rest of the time our socialism under capitalism is only for those on top.

The military/industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned us about has taken over. The military's record budget was passed without a word. The corporate tax rate has dropped to about 35% and Trump has provided more loop holes and tax breaks for the very wealthy. Recent bail-outs of General Motors, big banks, airlines and other businesses who pay outrageous salaries to people bringing these companies to the brink of bankruptcy are examples of the need to distribute wealth more equitably, if we are ever to eliminate the problem of homelessness.

*The pen is mightier than the sword.*

The author holds a B.A. from Syracuse University and an M.B.A. from American University. He has worked in international banking, was a member of the Peace Corps and finished his career as an elementary school teacher and coach.

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## Community Profile: Stella Beratlis

By TOM PORTWOOD

When Modesto Poet Laureate and MJC librarian Stella Beratlis heard that her first book of poetry (*Alkali Sink*, Sixteen Rivers Press, 2015) had been nominated for that year's Northern California Book Awards, she admitted recently that she was "totally floored - because in my wildest dreams where I allowed myself to imagine how my book was received, a Northern California Book nomination was the pinnacle. So it was surreal when I heard the news."

The prestigious nomination confirmed the high regard that her colleagues have long held for Ms. Beratlis and her superb poetry. While she had been writing poems since childhood, it took a little nudging from her best friend, Gillian Wegener, for her to take the craft more seriously, more than a dozen years before the publication of *Alkali Sink*.

"About the time my daughter Demi was born, I got involved with a poetry group, the Licensed Fools, at the urging of my best friend, Gillian," Ms. Beratlis recalled. "I had shown her some poems and she said 'Oh, my God, these are so good! You're a great writer - you have to join our group!' Gillian was already so accomplished by then, and I was amazed that she thought my writing was worthwhile. By then, I was in my mid-thirties. I started reading poetry, and thinking about it, and paying more attention to my writing. I've been writing ever since on a pretty regular basis."

In a life that saw Stella Beratlis move several times early on to different parts of the country, the Central Valley has been at the center of that life far more than she would have anticipated when she was younger. "I grew up in the East Bay, in Pleasanton, in a Greek-American family," Ms. Beratlis recounted. "My mom had come from Greece to marry my dad and she didn't speak English so I grew up bilingual, speaking both Greek and English in the household. Later on, my mom and dad got divorced and I went with my mom and step dad and we moved to Modesto. We came to the Central Valley in the late 1970s. Of course, it was so different then than it is now. I graduated from Beyer High School. I went to college for three years, got involved with the college radio station, but didn't really know what I was doing, except enjoying the radio station and being a DJ. I ended up dropping out of UC Davis and went to work for Tower Records in San Francisco. Following job assignments with Tower that took her to New Orleans, then Boston, "I realized I wanted to finish my college education because I didn't really see myself working in retail management for the rest of my life. Something compelled me to move back to the Central Valley and Modesto and I finished my degree at California State University - Stanislaus in Turlock."

In recent years, Ms. Beratlis has served as a public librarian with the San Joaquin Public Library in Tracy and now as an academic librarian with Modesto Junior College, a position she took in 2017. And she views poetry as one of the portals through which the MJC library can reach out to the wider community.

"I really love my work," Ms. Beratlis remarked. "I'm inspired by supporting people in their quest to have information that helps them make informed decisions and helps them be engaged civically in our country and community. I really believe that making available a large quantity and quality of diverse information undergirds our work at the library.



Photo: Marty Johnson

Poetry readings are a way of bringing people together for a unified purpose, and we've held two readings here so far. Poetry is definitely a form of information creation - whether it's poetry about the world, or current events. So my vision is to highlight the connections of poetry with activism and civic engagement. Just this past February the library partnered with the Black Student Union and had a reading called **Words Worth Speaking**, which featured a couple of spoken word artists. It was a really wonderful reading that brought people together. We shared information about how to support diversity on campus. Of course, with the pandemic, we are now fully remote as a campus, so I've been trying to figure out how to do poetry readings online without it being another Zoom meeting. I am a firm believer that a library is a place that belongs to the public and that it should be used as a place to showcase the arts and many other things of value. The readings are just another type discourse, a conversation reflecting conversations that are happening at different levels in academia, in our community, in the greater mainstream culture."

"The Covid-19 pandemic is just such an overwhelming situation," she continued. "I feel like I can't wrap my head around what's going on. The grief and loss are happening to everyone at the same time, and that's horrifying."

"I am a big believer in civic engagement. I've been involved with the League of Women Voters for a long time, and I've been a member of the Friends of the Modesto Library and I helped open up a retail store in the library. I'm a library advocate. Back in the 1990s there was a campaign to get a sales tax passed to fund the library. I worked on that. The League is a great group to belong to - I couldn't ask for a better group of women and men with which to do this work. Right now, I'm the web master. I love the candidate forums that they present, the pros and cons that we do for the community."

With a second volume of her poetry due to be published by Sixteen Rivers Press in April 2021, Ms. Beratlis is hard at work on that new manuscript. "I'm still tinkering with the manuscript..." she noted, "...revising some of the poems and

messing around with the order of the poems, figuring out what sequence they should be in. I'm using as a muse Hazel Houser, who was a singer-songwriter in Central Valley bands and her family came over during the Dust Bowl years. I've written three poems about her, and I'm currently revising other poems because her voice is peeking out around the edges of some of them so I want to make it more obvious that she's there."

Reflecting on what the Central Valley means to her, Ms. Beratlis concluded by saying: "When I was younger, the idea of settling in the Central Valley and making my life here seemed like such a compromise. But I finally realized how misguided that notion is. There is definitely a beauty here, a feeling that I don't get anywhere else. And my family is here, my mom and sister, and my daughter, dad, and grandparents, and of course, my amazing friends. It's the most supportive community ever grounding us. That's what makes a life. Even when I younger, when I was driving into Modesto and was coming off the Altamont down into the Valley and through orchards, I realized there is nothing like this. This place always calls to me, even when I'm gone. We have a lot of opportunities to do good here. I'm going to do things that make this a place where I want to live."

Stella Beratlis is Modesto's poet laureate. Her work has appeared in *Harbor Review*, *In Posse Review*, *California Quarterly*, *Song of the San Joaquin*, *Quercus Review Press*, and in the anthology *The Place That Inhabits Us: Poems of the San Francisco Bay Watershed*. Her collection *Alkali Sink* was a 2016 Northern California Book Award nominee. Her second book-length collection of poems is forthcoming from Sixteen Rivers Press in 2021. Stella works as a librarian at Modesto Junior College.

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## POET: Nancy Haskett

An educator for over 30 years, Nancy Haskett retired from Modesto City Schools in 2011 and is an active member of the poetry community in Modesto, CA. She is a member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, a member of MoSt (Modesto Stanislaus Poetry Center), the current vice-president of Modesto's branch of National League of American Penwomen, and a member of other local writing groups.

Nancy has presented her poetry at the Carnegie Arts Center in Turlock; the Barkin' Dog Second Tuesday Readings; the Modesto City Council chambers, and other places. She has been published in many places, including the anthology *More than Soil, More than Sky*; *Stanislaus Connections*; *Penumbra*; *Homestead Review*; *Iodine Press*; *Song of the San Joaquin*; *The Pen Woman*; *Miller's Pond*; *two Outrider Press anthologies*; *the Poeming Pigeon*, and more. In her spare time, Nancy enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with her family.

Nancy expects to have a volume of published poetry out sometime later this year. If you would be interested or would like to contact her, feel free to email her at: [nancy\\_shops@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nancy_shops@sbcglobal.net)



## Fabrication

With the dexterity of Arachne,  
politicians possess an uncanny ability  
to take one thin thread of truth,  
unspool all of it,  
pick up a sharp needle,  
sew a quilt of knots and lies,  
with no logic or pattern,  
the facts now reversed, torn, entangled,  
hidden from view.

Once the fabrication is complete,  
it's impossible to find  
where the thread began;  
even more alarming,  
the end is nowhere in sight,  
nothing to yank on,  
to unravel it all  
at the seams.

## Handle With Care

Earth is losing patience,  
becoming imbalanced.  
Once even tempered,  
she is now subject to extreme mood swings,  
prolonged spells of fiery passion,  
floods of despair,  
weeks of depression and disappointment.

Her mind is muddled, confused;  
her eyes stare at a clock only she can see,  
her compass no longer points true.  
Feeling ignored,  
she is raising her voice,  
her once gentle whispers intensified to gale-force winds,  
all with the same message:  
*Pay attention to what I am saying!*  
*Listen to your mother!*

## On "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus"

Charleston, Aurora, Columbine,  
Newtown, Virginia Tech,  
Paris, San Bernardino, Las Vegas –  
places that roll off our tongues too easily,  
a litany of violence become commonplace;  
shock worn off, once riveted to news broadcasts,  
we pay less attention now  
or don't look at all,  
like the plowman and shepherd in the painting,  
absorbed in the routine of their daily lives,  
too preoccupied to notice the tragedy,  
even as Icarus falls from the sky  
in the blue-green waters

## Berkeley, 1969

We had come to Oakland  
for the first time,  
my fiancé and I,  
to spend Thanksgiving weekend  
with a friend in art college.  
She took us to the UC campus,  
one of the dormitories rising four or five stories  
above the trees,  
huge, hand-lettered signs in four descending windows:  
END  
THE  
WAR  
NOW.

We walked along University Avenue,  
watched Hare Krishnas in their saffron robes,  
girls in long skirts of multi-colored squares,  
ankle bracelets that chimed as they moved barefoot  
down the sidewalk, through haze of pot smoke, incense,  
*Abbey Road* songs played everywhere from tinny transistor  
radios;  
we wore seed bead necklaces around our necks,  
watched *Easy Rider* in a crowded theater after our turkey  
dinner.

On a bus back to the airport,  
the only other passengers were a few soldiers  
dressed in Army fatigues,  
each one in a seat alone,  
rows apart in the darkness –  
our final destination, Long Beach,  
theirs probably Saigon;  
an almost empty bus  
crowded with emotion,  
our reflections ghost-like  
in darkened windows

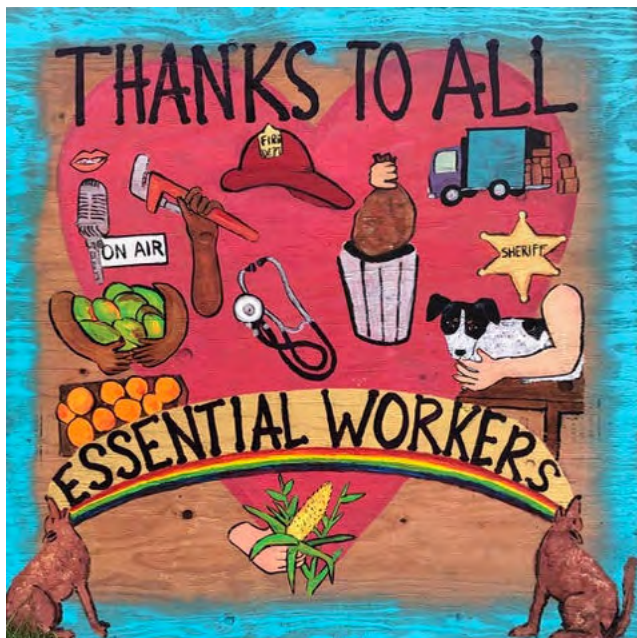
## War Is Not Healthy for Children

From the nearby recruiting office  
they run through our neighborhood,  
these boys who want to be men,  
shirts off, baggy gym shorts flapping,  
feet hitting pavement in rhythmic strides,  
cadence regulated by chanting  
one two left right  
horns honk, people wave.

I want to stop them

ask them to think about  
this commitment,  
remind them that there's more to being  
a sailor, soldier, or marine  
than simply boot camp,  
being physically fit –  
that running from insurgents in Kunar province

always mindful of IEDs  
is different than a run down a quiet street  
on this spring afternoon  
dodging nothing  
but  
bicyclists



## Live from Planet Television

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who is said to seethe as he views those like New York Governor Andrew Cuomo he believes unfairly are getting more favorable coverage than he.

One thing I just watched for the umpteenth time: The classic “Network,” written by the amazing Paddy Chayefsky. First released in 1976, it was on Turner Classic Movies the other night and remains stunningly prescient about what television would become.

Toward the end, I was struck by a speech William Holden’s character makes to Faye Dunaway, who plays a conniving and heartless TV executive. Holden – and Chayefsky – could have been talking about you-know-who.

“You are television incarnate,” Holden says, “... indifferent to suffering, insensitive to joy. All of life is reduced to the common rubble of banality. War, murder, death are all the same to you as bottles of beer. The daily business of life is a corrupt comedy. You even shatter the sensations of time and space into split-seconds and instant replays. You are madness... virulent madness, and everything you touch

dies with you.”

We have descended into chaos because there is madness and incoherence at the top. This president makes an endless series of contradictory declarations because if you believe in nothing, you’ll say anything. If there is such a thing as a victory in this pandemic, it will have been achieved by the kindness and intelligence of most of our people, not the so-called commander-in-chief.

All that he touches, dies. Tune in tomorrow, as thanks to him, America continues its fade to black. Please don’t let him succeed.

**Michael Winship** is the Schumann Senior Writing Fellow for [Common Dreams](#). Previously, he was the Emmy Award-winning senior writer for *Moyers & Company* and BillMoyers.com, a past senior writing fellow at the policy and advocacy group Demos, and former president of the Writers Guild of America East. Follow him on Twitter: [@MichaelWinship](#)

## Listen to Local Programming at KCBP 95.5 FM

**Arts of the San Joaquin Valley** - Mondays, 8:00pm; Tuesdays 9:00 am & Wednesdays 8:00 pm. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp> and on Spotify

**Women of the Valley** - 8:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays 9:00am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

**The Peril and the Promise** - Wednesdays 9:30 pm; Saturdays 2:30 pm

**Modesto Sound** - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) Season 1 - Wednesdays 11:30am, & Sundays 11:00am & 5:30pm

**Modesto Area Music Show** - Mondays 5:00pm Fridays 9:00pm & Saturdays 6:00pm

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

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

**Weekdays (Monday - Friday)**

*Letters to Washington* - 1:00am

*Democracy Now!* - 7:00pm

*Flashpoint Magazine* - 10:00pm

**Children’s Programming**

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

*The Children’s Hour* - Sunday’s 3:00pm

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

What programming do you like or would like to hear? Contact us at [programming@kcbpradio.org](mailto:programming@kcbpradio.org) or call (209) 353-3066. Help put community into community radio! Interested in being part of our Community Advisory Board? Contact [operations@kcbpradio.org](mailto:operations@kcbpradio.org) or call (209) 353-3066.

We can’t do it without you. Please support us! Donate at <https://kcbpradio.networkforgood.com/>



## Worries about illness, finances

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and is lower than at any point since the Great Recession.

“The recent decline in consumer confidence as measured in expectations of good economic times is unprecedented in the history of the PPIC survey, dating back to the late 1990s,” Baldassare said.

About a half of Californians (48%) say their lives have been disrupted a lot by the coronavirus outbreak, with another 36 percent reporting some disruption and 12 percent just a little. Across regions, 53 percent in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area say their lives have been disrupted a lot, compared with 49 percent in the Inland Empire, 45 percent in Orange/San Diego, and 36 percent in the Central Valley.

“Nearly all Californians say their lives have been disrupted, while majorities of Los Angeles and Bay Area residents say that things have changed a lot for them as a result of the pandemic,” Baldassare said.

### About the Survey

The Californians and Education survey is supported with funding from the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation, the Sobrato Family Foundation, and the Stuart Foundation.

The findings presented above are based on responses from 1,633 California adult residents. The sampling error is  $\pm 3.3$  percent for the total unweighted sample. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from April 1–9, 2020. For the full methodology, see this [Crosstabs, Time Trends, and Methodology document](#).

Mark Baldassare is president

and CEO of PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998.

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CORONAVIRUS  
(COVID-19)

Stanislaus  
County  
HEALTH  
SERVICES  
AGENCY

## Public Health Order - Effective 4/24

### What's new?

- Drive in church services
- Automated and self-wash car washes
- Allowed recreational activities and settings now include:
  - Public parks, playgrounds, and dog parks
  - Golf/disc golf
  - Public sporting courts (tennis, basketball, etc.)
  - Boating and watercraft
  - Archery and shooting

### What's the same?

- Stay home (except to engage in essential activities and essential work)
- Social distancing (6 feet of separation)
- Restaurant delivery and curbside pickup

\* Do Not share equipments (playgrounds, balls, etc.) at Parks and Recreational Areas with members of other household



# From Emergency to Emergence

By **DAVID KORTEN**

April 23, 2020

The COVID-19 emergency has exposed our societies' failure to address the needs of billions of people. Simultaneously, we are witnessing a fundamental truth about human nature: There are those among us eager to exploit the suffering of others for personal gain. We can be reassured, however, by how few of them there are. Their actions contrast starkly with the far greater numbers at all levels of society demonstrating their willingness, even eagerness, to cooperate, share, and sacrifice for the well-being of all.

The pandemic has also exposed extreme vulnerabilities in the global market economy, including its long and highly specialized linear supply chains, corporate monopolies shielded from market forces, privatized technologies, and ruthless competition without regard for its impact on people and the Earth.

This is an unprecedented opportunity to rethink how our beliefs, values, and institutions shape our relationships. We can create a world that works for everyone or face a future that no longer works for anyone.

Discussions now underway in many community, national, and global forums suggest a significant widening of what is known as the Overton Window: the range of public policies that the mainstream population is prepared to consider at a given time.

*This is an unprecedented opportunity to rethink how our beliefs, values, and institutions shape our relationships.*

While there is an almost universal desire to move rapidly beyond the COVID emergency, the spectrum of what we want post-pandemic is broadening. Many are articulating that they do not want to simply return to business as usual. In the United States, for example, we see the need for:

- A system of health care accessible to everyone regardless of income or documentation;
- Just compensation and job security for those who do our most essential but often least-rewarded work; and
- A guarantee that if your job evaporates, you won't starve.

At a deeper level, this emergency is reminding us that we are living with another emergency—climate change. The combination of the two emergencies is helping us awaken to the profound implications of the simple truth that we are living beings born of and nurtured by a living Earth. Our well-being depends on Earth's well-being. Life is the goal, community is essential, and money is only a tool.

To avoid a climate catastrophe, we must use this opportunity to join in creating an economy that:

- Meets our basic needs while simultaneously healing and securing the health of the human community and Earth's living systems; and
- Prepares us to respond rapidly and appropriately to the array of significant future emergencies likely to arise with alarming frequency.

From these insights, many additional imperatives follow, including the need to:

- Shift power from profit-maximizing corporations to self-organizing, self-reliant, life-serving communities;
- Achieve an equitable distribution of power and resources

among and within these communities; and

- Limit the human use of resources to those applications (such as recycling and regenerative agriculture) that increase the well-being of people and nature while eliminating those (such as war and financial speculation) that consume massive resources to no beneficial end.

The expanding Overton Window may allow us to consider vast new possibilities. Here are two:

1. We may see growing recognition of the distinctive social benefits of shopping in locally owned stores, operated by neighbors who pay local taxes and are in business to make a decent, but modest, living serving their neighbors. This contrasts starkly with the experience of impersonal corporate chains such as Amazon.com and Walmart that are in business solely to maximize the extraction of money from our local communities while leaving as little as possible behind.

2. For those of us able to work at home and meet remotely via the web, the many benefits of doing so may make this form of working and meeting the new norm. We reduce the time devoted to long commutes in heavy traffic or sitting in crowded airports and planes. This change in our behavior carries the potential for a dramatic reduction in the need for cars and airplanes and the pollution that their production and operation create, while increasing opportunities to get to know our family and our neighbors. Better for the health of people, family, community, and Earth.

But would such changes mean lost jobs? Actually, a vast amount of work must be done. Among the needs that will become more important in a post-COVID world are:

- Converting to wind and solar energy.
- Growing nutritious food locally in ways that restore the health of the soil.
- Eliminating waste by recycling everything.
- Assuring access to affordable high-speed internet.
- Caring for and educating our children.
- Preparing for the inevitable emergencies ahead.
- Providing care and housing for the homeless while helping those who can transition back to community life.
- Providing health care for everyone.

The COVID-19 crisis has imposed immense hardship on billions of people. But that hardship is dwarfed by what lies ahead if we continue on our current path. Now we must step up to prevent the collapse of the regenerative systems by which Earth creates and maintains the conditions we need to exist.

This current emergency provides the possibility for a new emergence—the birthing of a truly civil civilization dedicated to the well-being of all people and the living Earth.

David Korten is co-founder of YES! Media, president of the [Living Economies Forum](#), a member of the Club of Rome, and the author of influential books, including “[When Corporations Rule the World](#)” and “[Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth](#).” His work builds on lessons from the 21 years he and his wife, Fran, lived and worked in Africa, Asia, and Latin America on a quest to end global poverty.

From [YES Magazine](#)

## Stop!: Too Soon to Open

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2002. In the final reports...there were 18 areas in 6 countries that experienced local transmission of SARS, with the first reported chain transmission starting on November 16, 2002, in Guangdong Province, China.”

Compare this to now, where in the western world many countries were not ready, especially the U.S. and Europe (Germany was an exception). As of April 26, there were 2,973,073 cases and 203,545 deaths worldwide. In the U.S. there have been 936,616 cases and 53,934 deaths. What should have been an immediate, coordinated effort led by our federal government has been bungled and foisted upon the states and continues to be so, mired at the federal level by gross incompetence on the part of some of our political leaders.

Wearing an N95 mask, I recently visited a big box, home and garden store in our county. Signs were dutifully posted urging customers to stay six feet away from each other. Floors were marked at the checkout registers with tape indicating the appropriate distance. Announcements were frequently made about social distancing. Quite a few people were wearing masks and distancing but many were not masked. Surprisingly, many of the employees were not wearing masks. Some were closely conversing with each other and laughing. Obviously, they were not worried.

These measures will help bring this serious disease under control:

Extensive, reliable testing

Isolation of people testing positive, with intensive medical care available if needed (including ventilators, dialysis machines, adequate Personal Protective Equipment: PPE for first responders and medical personnel)

Contact tracing and isolation of the exposed but asymptomatic

Valid immune response measurement of those people who have recovered

An effective vaccine.

Have you noticed that most of these measures are not effectively in place depending upon where you live?

Note: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) just issued a new list of COVID-19 symptoms. These may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus:**

Fever

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Chills

Repeated shaking with chills

Muscle pain

Headache

Sore throat

New loss of taste or smell

Find excellent information and advice at the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Find local advisories from the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency [here](#).

*Ceres resident James Costello is a Pediatric Physicians Assistant with over 40 years' experience caring for children. His emphasis is on vaccines and vaccinations.*



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

## MAY 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.

**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** at Camp Peaceful Pines on the Sierra. For all. Leng Power will be a presenter. See article, this issue. MAY BE 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](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 various locations in Modesto. Information: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: [stevencullen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevencullen@sbcglobal.net)

#### TUESDAYS

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

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

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

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

**Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice** Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/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: [merced-board@gaycentralvalley.org](mailto:merced-board@gaycentralvalley.org) – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. [www.mercedlgbtcenter.org](http://www.mercedlgbtcenter.org)

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

**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

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

## 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](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 [kathyhaynesESG@gmail.com](mailto: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](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>

## 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)

### 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.