



# stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO  
PEACE/LIFE  
CENTER  
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## On Not Repeating the Tried Ways that Haven't Worked

By PEGGY FAW GISH

**Ed. Note:** *The Modesto Peace/Life Center, committed to the nonviolent resolution of conflict, is concerned that the Obama Administration's resort to military force against ISIS is misguided and will be counter-productive. The following article reflects our concerns and offers nonviolent alternatives.*

For many Americans, President Obama, with his latest plan to expand U.S. Military intervention in Iraq, is finally "doing something." And people here in Iraqi Kurdistan (where I am, working with a peace team) are generally hopeful that this will stop the militant fighters called the Islamic State (IS, or for this article, ISIS). I keenly feel the pain of the people here and don't want any more persons brutalized, yet I believe Obama's plan will not diminish global terrorism. It will only expand and strengthen it.

It's helpful to remember that ISIS's ability to capture areas of Iraq was possible because of the U.S. had destroyed its society and supported the Shia government that excluded Sunni populations and subjected them to widespread loss of jobs, attacks, mass arrests, torture and extra-judicial killings.

While our team lived and worked in Baghdad, the U.S. and Iraqi forces bombed and destroyed whole neighborhoods and cities in the name of anti-terrorism, generating more anger toward America. The U.S. failed to support the progressive, mostly nonviolent, uprisings, around the country, against government abuse and corruption. Throughout the years of occupation, it was clear to us that U.S. Military actions in Iraq were not really directed at protecting the Iraqi people, but for protecting American personnel and U.S. economic and military interests in Iraq and the Middle East. Then, in early August of

this year, U.S. Military strikes were, once again, less for protecting religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq than protecting U.S. diplomats and the large oil companies developing oil fields in the Kurdish region.

Obama used Somalia and Yemen as examples of successful partnering against terrorism, but in reality, they point to the failure of our counter-terrorism strategy. Bombing, drone strikes, and covert actions by Special Forces in Somalia have not diminished al Shabaab, or al-Qaeda in Yemen, but helped their recruitment. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, after thirteen years of the "Global War on Terror," the Taliban remains strong and violence against civilians, high.

Much of the power of ISIS is in its ability to generate horrific fear. The beheadings seem to be staged to provoke the U.S. and its allies to a military response, and to behave as jihadist groups have made out the West to be—monsters bent on global domination, exploiting and oppressing Muslims. Perpetuating this image maintains the jihadist group's support among the local populations and brings in new recruits. The U.S. is still falling into this trap....

It helps to remember that:

1. ISIS poses no immediate threat to the U.S., according to Matthew Olson, the outgoing head of the National Counterterrorism Center.
2. The U.S. has also caused massive destruction and brutal deaths in its military actions, in which bombing and drone strikes have torn apart or burned civilians to death.
3. Extremism or any ideology cannot be defeated by military force. There is no military action that can make ISIS disappear—no military solutions to this crisis.

Each time the U.S. puts forth an alarmist scenario, and tells us there is no other way but military action to stop an evil force, intelligent people—who know that our wars have been robbing our society of money for human needs and have been obscenely pouring that money into inflated coffers of corporations profiting from war—are once again seduced by fear. They are not given a fair debate on the political and social alternatives to a constant war to maintain military and economic

dominance around the world.

So, what are some strong non-military measures the U.S. can take to weaken ISIS in Iraq and Syria and start to reverse the spread of the global terrorist movement?

1. Stop the airstrikes, since they serve to strengthen the extremist movements.
2. Deal with the underlying problems that fuel extremism and global terrorism.

**TRIED WAYS . . . . . cont. p8**

*The Modesto Peace Life Center invites you to*

### *A Harvest Gathering*

*A benefit for the Peace Essay Contest*

*Friday, November 7, 2014, 5:30-8:00 p.m.  
at the home of*

*John Frailing & Maria Arevalo  
1125 Edgebrook Drive, Modesto*

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*Suggested Donation: \$20 per person  
Casual attire*

*Help us continue our outreach to our community's youth  
by supporting the Peace Essay Contest*

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# Every year 12,000 young people turn 18...

From BHC Merced

Every single day in America, young people are making a fundamental difference in changing our world. Historically, young people have used their power and influence to help shape the conversation and move people to the ballot box. With voter turnout expected to be the lowest in the last 10 election cycles, 2Young2Vote is an effort to galvanize our young people to make their voices heard and to use their stories as a way to push Californians to action in 2014.

Through compelling and personal stories, 2Young2Vote provides an online platform for our youth to submit images and video content about why it's important to vote on November 4th. By expressing our passion and harnessing the power of social media and technology, we believe 2Young2Vote will create a long-term campaign consisting of powerful youth content that can serve as a challenge to those who are of voting age to show up and vote on Election Day. #2Young2Vote drives home the message that voting is vital to the health and well-being of our democracy.



I hope you will join us in this campaign to empower the next generation of California's change makers.

Visit 2Young2Vote at <http://www.2young2votenow.org>

Watch a video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyALicjvTi0&feature=youtu.be>

Visit BHC Merced at <http://www.bhcmerced.org>. Email BHC Merced at [Mark@unitedwaymerced.org](mailto:Mark@unitedwaymerced.org)

## Proposition Voter Guide

	Prop 1	Prop 2	Prop 45	Prop 46	Prop 47	Prop 48
CLF	Y	-	-	-	Y	Y
CNA	-	-	Y	-	-	-
CTA	-	-	-	N	Y	-
LWVC	-	Y	-	-	Y	-
CLCV	Y	-	-	-	-	-
ACLU	-	-	-	-	Y	-
FCL	N	Y	-	Y	Y	Y
CANOW	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Dems	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Repubs	Y	Y	N	N	N	-
CA CC	Y	Y	N	N	N	-
CC	-	N	Y	-	Y	-
ACCE	-	N	Y	-	Y	-
AFSCME	N	-	Y	N	Y	Y
CREDO	N	N	Y	-	Y	N

## Meet Colombia's Marcha Patriotica and Lazos de Dignidad, November 10 - 25

The Alliance for Global Justice announces a tour of the United States by representatives of Colombia's *Marcha Patriotica* (Patriotic March) and *Lazos de Dignidad* (Links of Dignity).

The Patriotic March is Colombia's largest Left movement for a just peace and popular participation in dialogue to end the country's 50 year civil war. It has been a target of heavy repression, with 70 of its leaders assassinated in just two years. *Lazos de Dignidad* provides legal representation and human rights training for Colombian political prisoners, agricultural workers unions, and is active in grassroots mobilizations for peace and human and labor rights.

July Henriquez Sampayo and Gustavo Gallardo Morales, will speak on:

- **Rising Repression, International Solidarity and Colombia's Peace Process**
- **Prison Imperialism and the Colombian Peace Process**

Human rights lawyer, Gustavo Gallardo Morales, is the Co-Coordinator for the International Commission of Colombia's *Marcha Patriotica* and President of *Lazos de Dignidad*. July Henriquez Sampayo, organizer and lawyer for *Lazos de Dignidad*, is an expert on "prison imperialism" and how the United States, with Colombian participation, is spreading a model of mass incarceration and repression of political dissent around the world.

### TOUR DATES AND PLACES:

- November 10, 6pm, LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, 2130 James W. Wood Blvd.
- November 11, 7pm, SAN FRANCISCO: 2969 Mission St.
- November 12, 6pm, SACRAMENTO, CA (Tentative): Address TBA.

For more information and dates of other out of state venues, email [James@Afgj.Org](mailto:James@Afgj.Org). To Join the Afgj Colombia Email List, send a blank email to [colombia-afgj-subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:colombia-afgj-subscribe@googlegroups.com)

## Propositions

- 1 Water Bond. Funding for Water Quality, Supply, Treatment, and Storage Projects.
- 2 State Budget. Budget Stabilization Account. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.
- 45 Healthcare Insurance. Rate Changes. Initiative Statute.
- 46 Drug and Alcohol Testing Of Doctors. Medical Negligence Lawsuits. Initiative Statute.
- 47 Criminal Sentences. Misdemeanor Penalties. Initiative Statute.
- 48 Indian Gaming Compacts. Referendum.

### Organizations

CLF- California Labor Federation  
CAN- California Nurses' Association  
CTA- California Teachers' Association  
LWVC- League of Women Voters California  
CLCV- California League of Conservation Voters  
ACLU- American Civil Liberties Union Northern California  
FCL- Friends Committee on Legislation California  
CANOW- California National Organization for Women  
Dems- California Democratic Party  
Repubs - California Republican Party  
CA CC- California Chamber of Commerce  
CC - Courage Campaign  
ACCE Action  
AFSCME 57  
CREDO



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## 2015 Peace Essay Contest



**INTRODUCTION:** 2014 marks the 100th Anniversary of an unusual occurrence that took place during the violence of World War I. On Christmas Day, soldiers on both sides spontaneously put aside their weapons and met in No-Man's Land between the lines of battle. There they sang Christmas carols, shared holiday treats and family photos, played soccer and wished each other well. This welcome "breather" from the intensity of fighting became known as "the Christmas Truce." After a time, both sides went back to fighting at their commanders' orders, but the soldiers' world-view had changed in their meeting of the "enemy." This wartime experience has been told, written about and immortalized in the Christmas In the Trenches song and children's book by singer-songwriter John McCutcheon.

While this example is the exception during a time of war, the fact that it did happen reminds us that, even in the midst of disagreement and strife, people can choose to lay aside their differences, get to know one another, work and play together. Learning to get along with those who are different from one's self is a valuable life lesson that can be applied both on the playground and in war-torn areas of our world, as well as in the rest of daily life experiences. Discovering and affirming that people are more alike than different could allow us to work through our differences in a humane and non-violent way, which is better for all of us and for the planet.

### DIVISIONS I (grades 11 & 12) and II (grades 9 & 10)

Listen to the *Christmas in the Trenches* song (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJi41RWaTCs>) and think about what allowed those soldiers to temporarily lay aside their differences. Research other real life situations in which people or groups who were in conflict or considered themselves to be adversaries, made a decision to lay aside their differences and focus on common ground or work toward a common goal. Choose an example to write about.

In your essay of 500-1000 words, be sure to include:

- Descriptions of the two sides and what caused them to think they were adversaries;
- What happened that helped them to shift their thinking and allowed them to get along if only for a time or for a particular purpose;
- How their experience of finding common ground could inspire others to do the same;
- How learning about this experience may give you the courage to reach toward common ground in situations you may face in the future, and thus help to build a more just and peaceful world.

### DIVISIONS III (grades 7 & 8) and IV (grades 5 & 6)

Listen to the *Christmas in the Trenches* song (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJi41RWaTCs>) and consider what allowed those soldiers to temporarily lay aside their differences. Think of how your own opinions or what you have been taught about differences (for example things such as race, religion, culture, economic status or ability) have affected how you interact with others. Envision a situation where you could reach out across those differences to befriend or work together with someone who is different than yourself. (You may share an actual experience, if you want).

In your essay of 250-500 words, describe the situation that could (or did) happen & be sure to include:

- The thing(s) that made you feel so different from the other person that you might normally keep your distance;
- The reason you chose to reach out and how it could or did work out;
- How the experience of choosing to get along with someone who is different than yourself might help you contribute to creating a more just and peaceful world for everyone.

**"We all  
do better  
when we  
work  
together.  
Our  
differences  
do matter,  
but our  
common  
humanity  
matters  
more."**

**-Bill Clinton  
42nd President  
of the  
United States**

**Deadline for entries:**

**December 5, 2014**

**Notification of winners:**

**Late February, 2015**

**Awards**

	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Honorable Mention
Division I	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division II	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division III	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25
Division IV	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25

View, download/print the flyers & entry form at [www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest)

Email your questions to [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com) View/print this flyer at [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org)

## Film Night, Nov. 19: Howard Zinn

By **DAN ONORATO**

Don't miss the next Peace/Life Center's Film Night, Wednesday, November 19, at 6:30 p.m. 720 13<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto. We'll be showing an inspiring documentary about a powerful voice for justice and peace, perhaps best known for his book, *A People's History of the United States*. By any standards, **Howard Zinn** has led a remarkable life as teacher, writer, and social activist. The film, *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, a title taken from his advice to students about his take on American history and current events, is a powerful testament to that life.

As Ron Hogan writes in an Amazon.com review of the film, it begins with his 1956 acceptance of a teaching post at Atlanta's Spelman College, a school for black women that would soon be caught up in the civil rights movement. Zinn, who had already been radicalized on the streets of Brooklyn as a teenager, got caught up along with his students (who included the future head of the Children's Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman, and author Alice Walker), and was kicked out in 1963 for "insubordination." He moved to Boston University, where he became an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War, and would prove a constant thorn in the side of university president John Silber throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Hogan continues: Zinn writes in plain language that brooks no nonsense when it speaks of moral urgency, but he isn't above a sense of humor. Noting that the FBI was watching him constantly during the war era, he wryly observes that, "I have grown to depend on them for accurate reports on my speeches." Individual scenes leap out at the reader: Zinn's horror when he realized, years after WWII, that he had dropped napalm bombs on German troops; a meeting in a college classroom with the sister and parents of one of the victims of the Kent State massacre; Selma, Alabama, police beating blacks attempting to register to vote while federal agents stand by and do nothing. Through it all, Zinn writes, "I see this as the central issue of our time: how to find a substitute for war in human ingenuity, imagination, courage, sacrifice, patience."

In what he wrote and what he did, Zinn gives us reason to hope that by learning from history and engaging politically, we can make a difference in the world.

To tease you to show up for the film, here are a few Howard Zinn quotes from the documentary:

"The power of a bold idea uttered publicly in defiance of dominant opinion cannot be easily measured. Those special people who speak out in such a way as to shake up not only the self-assurance of their enemies, but the complacency of their friends, are precious catalysts for change."

"... human beings are not machines, and however powerful the pressure to conform, they sometimes are so moved by what they see as injustice that they dare to declare their independence. In that historical possibility lies hope."

"Civil disobedience . . . was not the problem, despite the warnings of some that it threatened social stability, that



# Walking the Blues (& Stuff) Away

By JENIFER WEST

I recently decided to walk to work as often as possible. This decision was spurred by several things: An aging vehicle, an accumulation of a few more inches than I really need, and, most importantly, the realization that it really is silly, burning fossil fuel to move myself from point A to point B – which happens to be less than 10 blocks. The reaction from folks around me has been interesting – mostly ‘you walk that far?!’, (we truly have become a sedentary society!), but also a little thinly-veiled envy.

Interesting, how just making the change from driving to walking to work can impact a person. I’ve experienced my neighborhood in a whole new way, and have been enjoying things I would otherwise have missed: Unusual plants in folks’ yards, cats luxuriating in the sun, lovely wind chimes, a playful puppy.

The walk to work in the morning is the best. The air is fresh and cool; dew sparkles in the grass. Lunchtime is nice too, if a little warm at the moment. And it only leaves about 20 minutes for the frivolous endeavor of consuming sustenance. The walk home after work, on the other hand, is relaxing – the concerns of the day seem to melt away with each block.

When I first began to walk, I wanted to get into a little better shape, and spend some time outdoors. But the mental health benefits really surprised me. I arrive at work in a better frame of mind, ready to focus on whatever the day brings. And I’m not embarrassed to share the fact that, despite there not really being any real cause for it, I still deal with a bit of depression, and more often than I’d like. It just seems to be hard-wired into some of us in my family. But walking, added to the medicine prescribed by my doctor, has helped put me in a better place.

Curiously, the first week I started walking to work seriously, there was an article online about the benefits of it. Besides reducing your carbon footprint (if you are able to substitute it for some of the trips in your regular routine), walking can do a lot of other good things for you:

- Serotonin and endorphin release (both improve mood)
- Improves heart health and function, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, sleep
- Boosts brain power, thinking skills, memory
- Weight loss, prevention of weight gain
- Reduces risk of cancer, osteoporosis, stroke
- Helps fibromyalgia pain

And it has the lowest dropout rate of all forms of exercise. Out walking our dogs once, we saw what appeared to be an older brother, probably a track star, out ‘teaching’ his little brother to run. Unfortunately, it was obvious even to the two of us that, because he himself was in good shape, he

assumed that little brother should be able to keep up – and was running his legs off. If that was his only experience with it, it’s doubtful that the little guy will become a runner like his brother. Walking, on the other hand, is a gentle form of exercise, so long as one avoids indulging in some extreme form or attempting more distance than s/he is ready to handle. So most folks find it a much easier way to exercise, and therefore, tend to stick with it.

And if you’re comfortable with walking and want to change your routine a bit, try walking backward. (Of course,

you’ll want to make sure you’re able to do this safely – take a buddy, and/or choose a place where you’re unlikely to encounter obstacles like cars, curbs, mailboxes...). There are some great benefits to walking backwards:

- Better workout – works muscles regular walking doesn’t
- Gentler on knees, etc., so it’s less painful
- Works different muscles (professional and semi-professional athletes are often encouraged to add it to their

WALKING . . . . . cont. p11



## Peace Essay Contest 2015

### Rules & Submission Directions

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of Stanislaus County or attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
2. Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced, using one side of white paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly. **YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
3. Give your essay a title. Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. **DO NOT** use a separate title or cover page.
4. Print & complete the Entry Form and attach to the front of your essay (may be found at: [www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest) OR [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org) OR request a copy via email at: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com))
5. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
6. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
7. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries may be delivered to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2pm-5pm Dec. 3-5, 2014. You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than December 5, 2014 to:

2015 Peace Essay Contest  
Modesto Peace/Life Center  
P.O. Box 134  
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

### Judging

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays.

Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

#### I. Content:

- A. Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
- B. How well-developed are the ideas?
- C. Does it address the given topic?

#### II. Style:

- A. Is the essay original and interesting?
- B. Is it written with conviction?
- C. Does the personality of the writer come through?

#### III. Clarity of expression:

- A. Are the ideas clearly stated?
- B. Is the essay well-organized?
- C. Does it have an effective beginning and ending?

#### IV. Mechanics:

- A. Is grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
- B. Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
- C. Does the essay stay within the word limit?

First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded in each of the four divisions which have at least 15 entries. In the event that fewer than 15 entries are entered in any one division, all prizes may or may not be awarded in that division at the discretion of the judging panel. Up to three Honorable Mentions may be awarded in each division. Group entries (more than one author) are welcome however a student may only enter one essay.

The writer of the best essay in a division from a school which has ten or more entries in that division will be honored as the school winner. All participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

### Notification of Winners

In mid-February 2015, winners will be notified through the student’s teacher. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

**2015 Peace Essay Committee:** Peggy Castaneda, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner and David Tucker

This 28th Annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by: Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

## Waterford Unveils Solar and Energy Efficiency Projects That Will Save Taxpayers \$2.3 Million

The City of Waterford unveiled its comprehensive solar power and energy efficiency program during a community celebration at Waterford City Hall.

The event attracted local elected officials and business and education leaders, all coming together to commemorate the bold steps that have been taken to reduce the City's energy usage and generate the \$2.3 million in savings taxpayers can expect to realize over the 25-year lifespan of the program.

"With this single, comprehensive program, we have moved the City of Waterford forward in a number of ways and accomplished many long held goals that will benefit our taxpayers and our local economy," said Waterford's Mayor Charlie Goeken. "Not only have we established to the broader business community that Waterford is a city that supports economic development through innovation and creative public-private partnerships, but we have also demonstrated our commitment to our local taxpayers that we are working hard to protect their hard earned dollars."

City leaders highlighted the various program elements, which include solar installations at the City's civic and community centers and the modernization of the City's wastewater treatment facility to reduce energy usage. The program also includes the retrofitting of the City's 381 streetlights to energy-efficient LED lighting technology that will not only lessen the City's utility costs, but will also beautify Waterford's downtown business district by providing higher quality lighting for enhanced safety and visibility.

Representatives from OpTerra Energy Services (OpTerra), which designed, managed and delivered the comprehensive energy program, presented Waterford's Mayor and City

Council a plaque to commemorate the bold steps they have taken towards reducing citywide energy costs in order to save taxpayers' dollars.

"As a leader in solar and energy efficiency projects for municipalities and local governments across the United States, we are proud to have partnered with the City of Waterford on this important endeavor," said OpTerra CEO John Mahoney. "We congratulate the City for its leadership in developing an energy sustainability model for other Central Valley cities interested in creative solutions to lowering energy consumption while saving their local taxpayers million of dollars in the process. This program is really an example of how partnership and innovation can deliver a brighter future to all Californians."

As part of its public-private partnership, OpTerra also participated in the City of Waterford's Heritage Fair, creating an educational game space to demonstrate the fundamental technologies behind solar photovoltaic and LED lighting and encourage local youth to lead the next generation of energy innovation.

For more information about the City of Waterford, visit [www.cityofwaterford.org](http://www.cityofwaterford.org)

**About OpTerra Energy Services:** OpTerra is one of the nation's largest independent and privately held energy efficiency and renewable energy companies that, for more than the past 40 years, has partnered with numerous public and private sector customers to improve the performance, reliability and energy efficiency of their facilities. For more information about OpTerra, visit [www.opterraenergy.com](http://www.opterraenergy.com)

## Citizens Climate Lobby to speak at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

By KATHY CONROTTO

Lee Balance and Mary Selkirk of Citizens Climate Lobby, Alameda, will be speaking at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, Wednesday November 5, 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. on the importance of convincing Congress to pass legislation implementing a national revenue-neutral carbon tax.

Most economists agree that the most effective way of reducing greenhouse gas pollution is by taxing carbon and returning all revenues to American households. This proposal is supported by a number of national leaders, including Henry Paulson, and Tom Tryor. Currently, CCL has active chapters in over 400 Congressional Districts nationwide. Their goal is to establish chapters in all districts and to gain non-partisan support for their proposal. Their research shows that this legislation would grow the economy, adding 2.9 million jobs over 20 years, and would reduce carbon emissions by 50%, thereby preventing over 260,000 deaths.



**ACTION:** Please attend this important meeting to find out how you can make this happen in our community! Call Kathy Conrotto, 523-5907, for information.

**SPEAKERS:** **Lee Ballance, M.D.**, retired after 25t years with Kaiser Permanente, practicing emergency and musculoskeletal medicine. **Mary Selkirk**, retired from Sacramento State University in 2013 as a public policy mediator for the Center of Collaborative Policy. She helped facilitate the first citizens' Utility Rate Commission in Fresno, California. In addition, she was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the East Bay Municipal Utility District, serving over 1.2 million residents.

## MJC Fall 2014 Film And Lecture Series

The Film and Lecture Series provides students and the community with films of relevance and social interest. Films followed by discussion.

**WHEN:** THURSDAY EVENINGS at 7 PM to 9 PM


**COST:** FREE - and open to the public.

**WHERE:** Forum Building Room 110 (MJC East Campus)

**The House I Live In - November 6:** In *The House I Live In*, writer and director Eugene Jarecki contends that racial, political, and economic motives have shaped America's drug policies and that the War on Drugs is a misguided battle that hurts our communities more than helps them.

**The Crash Reel - November 20:** This film follows U.S. champion snowboarder Kevin Pearce during an unforgettable chapter in his life. A tragic accident occurs, and the film becomes focused on a critical issue in today's sports: traumatic brain injury.

<http://www.mjc.edu/president/cep/filmandlecture.php>



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meetings, our programs, and  
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Modesto Chapter  
Parents, Families, and  
Friends of Lesbians  
and Gays

## stanislaus CONNECTIONS

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209-529-5750.



# More money, days to Burn Cleaner this winter



## CHECK BEFORE YOU BURN

Changes to the Valley Air District's Check Before You Burn residential wood-burning rule will provide more days to use lower-emission wood-burning devices this winter. Additionally, the District's Governing Board has made more money available for residents to change out their older, more polluting wood-burning units with newer, cleaner models.

Each winter from November through February, Check Before You Burn minimizes dangerous fine-particle pollution (PM2.5) by determining, by day and by county, when air quality can tolerate residential wood burning.

The accompanying Burn Cleaner fireplace and wood stove change-out grant program encourages people to change out their older, more polluting wood-burning devices with new devices that vastly decrease dangerous emissions.

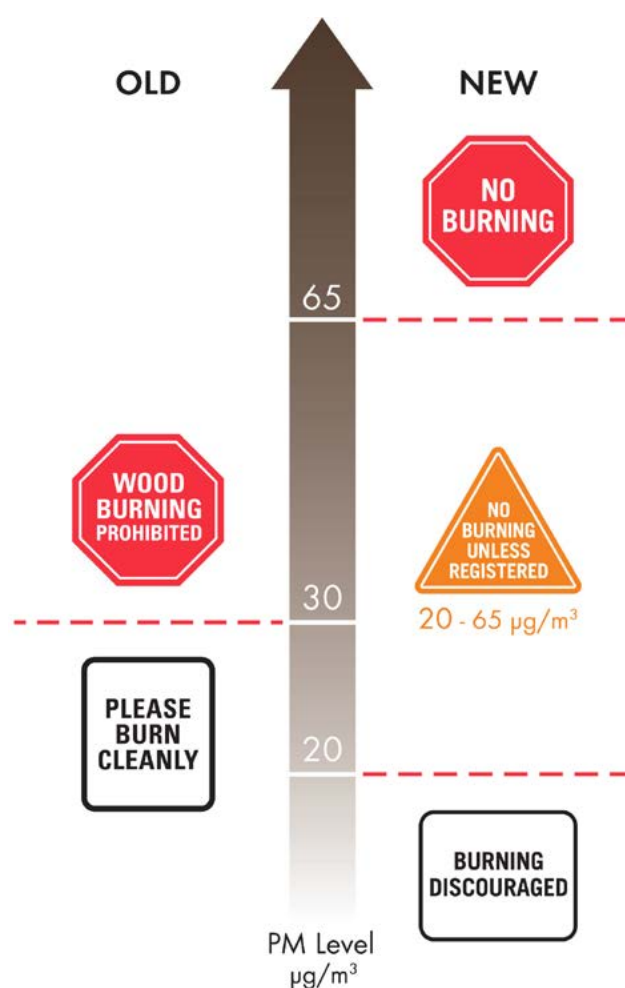
### New forecast levels

In previous winters, Check Before You Burn forecasts were one of two levels: Please Burn Cleanly or Wood-Burning Prohibited. When wood burning was prohibited, no one in that county – whether they burned wood in an open-hearth fireplace, wood stove, pellet stove or other wood-burning unit, regardless of how clean or polluting – was allowed to burn unless they met one of two exemptions. These exemptions remain 1) If wood burning is the sole source of heat in a residence or 2) If the residence has no access to plumbed-in natural gas, even if propane is used.

During prohibited episodes, people with the cleanest wood-burning units available were frustrated because of their inability to use what is a significant investment. These EPA Phase II-certified units also meet very stringent federal emission standards, reducing particulate pollution enormously over older units or open-hearth fireplaces.

To acknowledge this critical difference, Check Before You Burn now entails three burning status levels: 1) Burning Discouraged 2) No Burning Unless Registered 3) No Burning. And of course, gas devices can always be used.

**Burning Discouraged:** While there are no restrictions



to burning in any device, the Air District urges people to reconsider lighting an ambient fire. If a fire must be lit, and it is appropriate for that unit, the District encourages the use of cleaner fuel, such as seasoned, dry wood or manufactured fire logs.

**No Burning Unless Registered:** At this level, only residences with registered clean-burning devices will be able to burn. Registration is a simple process that can be done at the Air District's website ([www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration](http://www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration)). This winter, registration is free. Beginning Nov. 1, 2015, registrations will be valid for three seasons and a nominal fee of \$12.50 will be assessed to offset administration costs.

**No Burning (Level 2 Curtailment):** At this forecast level, no wood burning will be allowed, even by users of registered devices.

The Air District expects that users of registered, clean-burning devices will be able to use them two to three times more this winter than in previous winters. By the same token, use of older, more polluting devices or open-hearth fireplaces will be curtailed more often than previously.

Wood-burning forecasts are issued daily in late afternoon and can be found at [www.valleyair.org/CBYB](http://www.valleyair.org/CBYB), by calling 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463), through most local TV and newspaper weather reports, and through the Air District's free iPhone app, Valley Air.

Find more information about Check Before You Burn at [www.valleyair.org/CBYB](http://www.valleyair.org/CBYB).

### More money through Burn Cleaner

The Burn Cleaner program now has more money available to go toward the purchase of a new, cleaner wood-burning device! The basic incentive amount has increased from \$500 to \$1,500 and people eligible for the low-income component can now receive \$2,500 (up from \$1,500). And anyone can receive an additional \$500 for gas installation if their new unit uses gas!



Burn Cleaner has also been streamlined and made even easier to apply. You can find all the information and application forms at [www.valleyair.org/burncleaner](http://www.valleyair.org/burncleaner)

### Continued improvements in winter air quality

Over the past 10 years, Check Before You Burn has made dramatic improvement in the Valley's wintertime air quality. The Air District is encouraged by the level of support and understanding throughout the Valley of the importance of this regulation, and pleased to offer even more significant financial incentives to burning cleaner. Please contact the District with any questions about these important, health-protective programs!

Central region (Madera, Fresno and Kings counties): 559-230-6000

Southern region (Tulare and Kern counties): 661-392-5500

Northern region (San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties): 209-557-6400



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# Documents Reveal Billions of Gallons of Oil Industry Wastewater Illegally Injected Into Central California Aquifers

## Tests Find Elevated Arsenic, Thallium Levels in Nearby Water Wells

By Hollin Kretzmann

The Center for Biological Diversity

SAN FRANCISCO— Almost 3 billion gallons of oil industry wastewater have been illegally dumped into central California aquifers that supply drinking water and farming irrigation, according to state documents obtained by the Center for Biological Diversity. The wastewater entered the aquifers through at least nine injection disposal wells used by the oil industry to dispose of waste contaminated with fracking fluids and other pollutants. [http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/california\\_fracking/pdfs/20140915\\_State\\_Board\\_UIC\\_well\\_list\\_Category\\_1a.pdf](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/california_fracking/pdfs/20140915_State_Board_UIC_well_list_Category_1a.pdf)

The documents also reveal that Central Valley Water Board testing found high levels of arsenic, thallium and nitrates — contaminants sometimes found in oil industry wastewater — in water-supply wells near these waste-disposal operations.

“Clean water is one of California’s most crucial resources, and these documents make it clear that state regulators have utterly failed to protect our water from oil industry pollution,” said Hollin Kretzmann, a Center attorney. “Much more testing is needed to gauge the full extent of water pollution and the threat to public health. But Governor Brown should move quickly to halt fracking to ward off a surge in oil industry wastewater that California simply isn’t prepared to dispose of safely.”

The state’s Water Board confirmed beyond doubt that at least nine wastewater disposal wells have been injecting

waste into aquifers that contain high-quality water that is supposed to be protected under federal and state law. [http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/california\\_fracking/pdfs/20140915\\_Bishop\\_letter\\_to\\_Blumenfeld\\_Responding\\_to\\_July\\_17\\_2014\\_UIC\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/california_fracking/pdfs/20140915_Bishop_letter_to_Blumenfeld_Responding_to_July_17_2014_UIC_Letter.pdf)

Thallium is an extremely toxic chemical commonly used in rat poison. Arsenic is a toxic chemical that can cause cancer. Some studies show that even low-level exposure to arsenic in drinking water can compromise the immune system’s ability to fight illness. “Arsenic and thallium are extremely dangerous chemicals,” said Timothy Krantz, a professor of environmental studies at the University of Redlands. “The fact that high concentrations are showing up in multiple water wells close to wastewater injection sites raises major concerns about the health and safety of nearby residents.”

The Center obtained a letter from the State Water Resources Control Board to the Environmental Protection Agency. The letter says that the Central Valley Regional Water Board has confirmed that injection wells have been dumping oil industry waste into aquifers that are legally protected under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The state Water Board also concedes that another 19 wells may also have contaminated protected aquifers, and dozens more have been injecting waste into aquifers of unknown quality.

The Central Valley Water Board tested eight water-supply wells out of more than 100 in the vicinity of these injection wells. Arsenic, nitrate and thallium exceeded the maximum contaminant level in half the water samples.

While the current extent of contamination is cause for grave concern, the long-term threat posed by the unlawful wastewater disposal may be even more devastating. Benzene, toluene and other harmful chemicals used in fracking fluid

are routinely found in flowback water coming out of oil wells in California, often at levels hundreds of times higher than what is considered safe, and this flowback fluid is sent to wastewater disposal wells. Underground migration of chemicals like benzene can take years.

In July the state’s Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources shut down 11 Kern County oil field injection wells and began scrutinizing almost 100 others that were potentially contaminating protected groundwater. The Environmental Protection Agency, which has ultimate legal authority over underground injection, ordered state officials to provide an assessment of the water-contamination risk within 60 days, and the letter from the state Water Board confirms that illegal contamination has occurred at multiple sites.

California’s oil and gas fields produce billions of gallons of contaminated wastewater each year, and much of this contaminated fluid is injected underground. California has an estimated 2,583 wastewater injection wells, of which 1,552 are currently active. Wastewater injection wells are located throughout the state, from the Chico area in Northern California to Los Angeles in the south, and even include offshore wells near Santa Barbara.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 775,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Contact: Hollin Kretzmann, (415) 436-9683 x 333 or [hkretzmann@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:hkretzmann@biologicaldiversity.org)

<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press-releases/2014/fracking-10-06-2014.html>

## 9th Annual Distribution of Holiday Gift Packets for Chowchilla Women’s Facility

By DAVID HETLAND

The Inmate Family Council at the Central California Women’s Facility in Chowchilla is once again asking for community support for its 9<sup>th</sup> annual distribution of holiday gift packets for inmates. More than 80,000 items are needed to fill the one-gallon Ziploc bags. You can help by collecting **travel/sample sizes** of the following:

- soap, shampoo, conditioner
- skin/body lotion
- toothpaste
- tissue
- adult size toothbrushes (individually wrapped)
- unused greeting cards with envelopes.

Contributions of cash are also needed in order to purchase perishables, e.g., candy, cocoa, drink sticks, etc. All donations

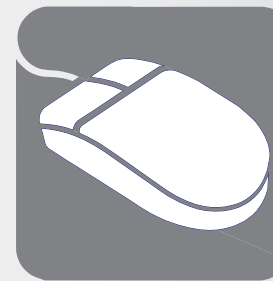
may be brought to the Modesto Peace/Life Center office (call ahead to make sure the office is open). For more information, contact Shelly(521-6304) or Dave (388-1608).

A recipient of last year’s gift bag wrote the following:

*“There are times when we feel forgotten and cast off, but then little things like the holiday gift bags remind us that people do care. Thank you so much!”*

**Be informed!**

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



Look for  
**CONNECTIONS**  
online at:  
<http://stanislausconnections.org/>





# Virtual exchanges connect continents to fight Islamophobia and anti-Western sentiment

By RAFAEL TYSZBLAT

Cairo - From the Boston Marathon bombing, to the Boko Haram kidnappings of schoolgirls, and now the "Islamic State" organization (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [ISIL]), horrible crimes are being committed by people claiming to act in the name of Islam. With frequent headlines focused on these events, it is not surprising to witness a rise of Islamophobia in the West. This sentiment has spread as well on social media between youth from the so-called West and youth from Muslim majority countries, whose conversations often end up calling the other a fascist.

However, there are some individuals who are trying something different, harnessing the potential of our increased interconnectedness to promote an alternative to the confrontations taking place online. This alternative, which is based on direct, constructive dialogue among diverse youth on hot topics, is essential if we want to empower young people to talk about issues that concern them without systematically clashing.

One initiative worth highlighting is Soliya, a nonprofit organization that uses online exchanges to improve inter-cultural understanding between youth in Western countries and predominantly Muslim countries (<http://soliya.net/?q=home>). Soliya's Connect Program encourages tolerance and respect between societies in order to fight anti-Western sentiment as well as Islamophobia. Every semester, 500 students engage online to learn about one another.

Sophie, an online participant from France, was convinced that women who wear the veil are oppressed and intolerant. Maryam from Tunisia was happy to take the opportunity to

However, there are some individuals who are trying something different, harnessing the potential of our increased interconnectedness to promote an alternative to the confrontations taking place online.

tell her story about how wearing the veil was her own choice to respect the value of humility, even against her family's wishes, and that she respects the traditions and beliefs of others' religions. After the discussion, Sophie felt that she knew more about Maryam and better understood her religion. Both women are still in touch, discussing a variety of topics to better clarify each other's religion and traditions so they can help prevent inflammatory comments on social media and so the new generation won't connect Islam to terrorism.

Aya is another young participant from Egypt in the Connect Program. She is a devout Muslim, proud of her identity, and not afraid to criticize what she called "Western arrogance." These were all things that Jason, an American participant, found quite frustrating. In his mind, there was nothing to be proud of in Islam, a religion that, according to him, advocates for violence against non-Muslims. It took weeks of facilitated dialogue for them to explore why they held those views about each other's values. Jason explained the focus of mainstream

media he watches: terrorism, anti-Christian acts in the Middle East, and anti-West discourse from some Muslim leaders. In a conversation on media literacy later in the program, they both understood how the mainstream media tends to show only a part of reality. Yes, terrorism and intolerance exist in some parts of the Muslim world, as in many other societies in the Western world. However, these extreme ideologies are certainly not representative of a religion of 1.5 billion souls. Jason's preconceived ideas were completely shattered when Aya told the group how she was part of a movement that struggled to prevent intimidation against the Coptic minority in Egypt. Their dialogue also allowed Jason to talk about his country, removing Aya's focus on US foreign policy and calling her attention to the long history of the American peace movement. Exploring the origins of perception and telling a personal story enabled these two individuals to realize that they were not so different after all.

Young people have a lot to say, and yet few people do listen and engage them respectfully. It is easy to believe that it is impossible to talk constructively and respectfully about sensitive topics, such as the consequences of immigration on Western societies or the impact of Islamophobic statements on Muslims. Yet offering a space for constructive online dialogue is a must. Promoting and providing youth with non-violent means of engaging with people with whom they disagree is not just a feel-good project. It is critical if we want the next generation to stop amplifying conflicts and start acting for peace.

\*Rafael Tyszblat is a senior officer for Program Design and facilitator at Soliya.

Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), 6 October 2014,

[www.commongroundnews.org](http://www.commongroundnews.org)

## On Not Repeating the Tried Ways

from page 1

Support governments in providing its people with better living conditions and fair distribution of their resources.

Support local nonviolent movements for change.

3. Develop political solutions to the crises. In Iraq, put pressure on the Iraqi government to reverse years of anti-Sunni sectarianism. For Syria, push the UN to restart real negotiations to end the civil war, bringing everyone involved to the table—nonviolent activists, women, refugees, armed rebels, and regional and global players.

4. Develop a coalition of countries working on political and diplomatic, non-military actions to weaken ISIS. Use financial pressures and stop the flow of money and weapons into the region. Broaden the talks with Iran to develop a new partnership on these issues. Collaborate with Kurdish rebel groups already protecting minority groups from ISIS in northern Iraq—the YPG (Peoples' protection Unit) and the PKK, (Kurdish workers party). Take them off the terrorist list. Work to reduce tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

5. Reverse decades-long policies and actions of the U.S. government around the world for domination and exploitation. Recreate world monetary systems such as the World Bank and IMF to be non-exploitive. Allow the UN to be

really representative of the global community and to address injustice. Change US policies with Israel.

6. Address the enormous humanitarian crisis the US helped create. Give non-military aid.

There are no simple, quick fix solutions, but we will not reduce the suffering from war and build peaceful and stable societies if we keep repeating the strategies that have only fueled strife. For the U.S. and other countries, this means finding the will to make a major change in how it relates globally—laying down the old politics of seeking dominance for one's own gain. I don't know a better time to start than now.

Peggy Faw Gish is currently working in Iraqi Kurdistan with the Christian Peacemaker Teams, and has worked in Iraq over the past 12 years. Her recent book is *Walking Through Fire: Iraqis' Struggle for Justice and Reconciliation* (Cascade Books, 2013)

This article was slightly edited. For the complete article go to <http://plottingpeace.wordpress.com/2014/09/15/on-not-repeating-the-tried-ways-that-havent-worked/>

Lear more about the author at <http://plottingpeace.wordpress.com/about/>

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## Indigo Moor is a poet, playwright, author

Indigo Moor, poet, playwright, and author, resides in Sacramento, CA. His second book of poetry, *Through the Stonecutter's Window*, won Northwestern University Press's Cave Canem prize. His first book, *Tap-Root*, was published as part of Main Street Rag's Editor's Select Poetry Series.

Three of his short plays, *Harvest*, *Shuffling*, and *The Red and Yellow Quartet* debuted at the 60 *Million Plus Theatre's* Spring Playwright's festival. His full-length stage play, *Live! at the Excelsior*, was a finalist for the *Images Theatre Playwright Award* and is being made into a full length film.

A graduate of the Stonecoast MFA Program—where he studied poetry, fiction, and scriptwriting—Indigo is also a graduate member of the Artist's Residency Institute for Teaching Artists and former Vice President of the Sacramento Poetry Center. Winner of the 2005 *Vesle Fenstermaker Prize for Emerging Writers* and the 2008 Jack Kerouac Poetry contest, a few of Indigo's other honors include: 2009 Pushcart Prize nominee and finalist finishes for the T.S. Eliot Prize, Crab Orchard First Book Prize, Saturnalia First Book Award, Naomi Long Madgett Book Award, and WordWorks Prize.

Indigo's works have appeared in *Missouri Review*, *Arkansas Review*, *Xavier Review*, *LA Review*, *Mochila Review*, Boston University's *The Comment*, the Pushcart Prize nominated *Out of the Blue Artists Unite*, *Poetry Now*, *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African-American Nature Poetry*, and many others.

Indigo teaches workshops in the Bay area and the Sacramento Valley region.

### The (Un)doing

First, the Mississippi  
went dark pitch&acid,  
so we rolled  
back its name.

Miss—I ssi—ppi

The sky hung  
scorched  
cloudless: last  
blade of grass  
stunted  
as the sun; last  
tree charcoaled  
twisted.

We now knew  
the truth of extinction:  
seeing  
we mistook  
for knowing. Having  
named the world,  
we thought it immortal.

We unwalked the roads,  
fled underground  
bringing  
everything not dead.

Hunched in caves  
we set about  
untaking it all.

Our skin turned  
sickly glow.

We erased the shine  
with sackcloth  
then undid  
the name: saek

We unwrote dictionaries.  
Unspined encyclopedias,  
words ashing in bonfires.

Unspun a gyroscope  
into a chunk  
of metal craving  
attention.

Yesterday, we unlearned  
our own names,  
breaking pacts  
with language  
until all was new again.

Next, went to work  
on flesh. Plucked  
hair, peeled

back tongues  
unhinged limbs until  
we were torsos  
dark in bloom  
dumbstruck  
saving our last breath  
to unlight candles.

Devoid of hands,  
we gutted the last  
clocks  
with our teeth.

### Casting Aside Eden

Buried above my ancestors,  
I kept their stories; they  
dreamed my future,

necromanced life through  
my veins, into my two hands,  
cupped around a crescent of soil.

That was before I traded  
the horizon for the perfect shingles  
of this new neighborhood: carved  
from the wild; a bird shape  
pulled from a block of wood.

Corn and wheat were sown to concrete.  
Plowshares stagnated to flowerbeds.  
Horses sold to memory.

I set my family's feet North.  
Unhinged the moon, drug it  
behind our caravan.

I hung it crooked in the sky  
above my prefab roof, believing  
I would hold its meaning as I  
would all my ancestral stories.

Falling upon opiate grasses,  
I was locust, sated— noticing  
neither the moon nor my history  
as they faded like the shrinking  
calluses on my hands.

### One Summer

I could only hold  
my children in poems.  
I thought  
us cursed, a witch  
tormenting our name.

Scoliosis

rioted  
along my youngest  
daughter's spine. I slept  
for a week beneath  
grey walls and ceilings,  
seven sunsets  
spiraling  
over the horizon. While

in another room  
my oldest daughter, son  
sliced from her,  
shuffled gingerly

as if over coals  
and broken glass  
from bed to bathroom

holding her belly  
both our hearts  
in such small hands.

Shrunk into a corner,  
my son— he  
and his guitar strapped  
to a long-sung tonality

trying to ratchet  
down a single note  
for loneliness.

In my worst dreams  
we are Icarus, winging  
across a rusted desert.

Next scene, they  
are gut-shot—  
one, two, three  
black wings flailing

against broken air,  
composite  
scream vibrating  
through my bones.

I turn, not looking  
and leap, hoping  
to be Father-God-Savior

but I carry two  
cursed hands  
that can't possibly hold  
the explosions  
blossoming in my chest.

In my best dreams  
our fingernails  
actually touch  
before we all fall.

# Green Tips for a Green Planet: Vote Green with Green

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

The focus for November is voting and Thanksgiving. One of the best ways to vote all year 'round is with green dollars to show thankfulness for businesses and public institutions which actively support environmental sustainability.

Both the Modesto Chamber of Commerce through the Stanislaus Green Team and the City of Modesto through the City of Modesto Business Recycling Program provide incentives, services and resources to assist local businesses in their efforts to be "environmentally and economically smart."

The Green Team website ([www.StanislausGreenTeam.com](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)) includes environmental and economic resources, news and tips. Businesses can learn more at Green Team educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month from 10 to 11 am at Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Ste 102.

The Green REACON (Recycling Energy Air Conservation) Team meets twice monthly at various "Stanislaus County businesses and provides free walk through assessments by industry experts every other Tuesday to provide businesses with an environmental perspective on how to save money through conservation. The current REACON investors are American Recycling, Borrego Solar, ITSolutions/Currie, NorCal NECA/IBEW684, and Schneider Electric.

Businesses are recognized as green certified by the Modesto Chamber of Commerce and Stanislaus Green Team with a certification plaque and green ribbon cutting celebration after successfully completing a 7 page checklist based upon California state mandated regulation standards for businesses in the areas of recycling and solid waste, water conservation, pollution, energy and transportation.

The following list includes some of the companies and organizations that have participated in the Stanislaus Green Team Program over the last 19 months. The ones with an asterisk have been green certified:

American Lumber; American Recycling, LLC; APG Solar; Beckwith Veterinary Hospital; Bertolotti Disposal; Borrego Solar; Borton Petrini, LLP; Boyett Petroleum; \*Boyd Corporation; Cal-Green Recycling; Casey Moving Systems; Cartridge World Modesto Center for Human Services; Central Valley Automotive; City of Modesto Commute Connection; Collins Electric; Covanta Stanislaus, Inc.; \*Crystal Creamery; Dale Commons Assisted Living; DeHart Plumbing Heating & Air, Inc.; Del Monte Foods; Dittos; Eco Fleet Training; F&M Bank; Farmers Insurance, Mark Buckley; Fire2Wire; Flowers Foods; \*Frito-Lay Inc.; \*Gianelli & Associates; Gilton Solid Waste Management Green Hart; Grimbleby Coleman CPA's Inc.; Holiday Inn Express; Home Town Buffet; Huff Construction Co. Inc.; Int'l. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local 684); International Paper; "Inperspective" Photography; IT Solutions | Currie; JKB Energy Manufactures Council of the Central Valley; McCoy's Industrial Tires; MedAmerica Billing Services, Inc.; Mo-Cal Office Solutions; Modesto Irrigation District; Modesto Junk Company; Modesto Nuts Professional Baseball; Mitchell's Harley Davidson; Modesto Gospel Mission; Musco Family Olive Company; \*Nestle' USA, Modesto; Never Boring; Pacific Records Management; Pepsi Bottling Group; Plastipak Packaging; Principal Financial Group; Pacific Gas & Electric; Prime Shine Car Wash; ProClean Supply; Rabbobank; RACOR, Division of Parker Hannifin Corp.; San Joaquin Valley Air District; San Joaquin Council of Governments; Service Master; Seneca Foods; Solid Networks; Stanislaus Business Alliance; Surtech System; Taxi's Hamburgers; US Bank; United Cerebral Palsy of Stanislaus Co.; Universal Service Recycling; Valley Can; Valley First Credit Union; Verve Networks.

This year, the City of Modesto gave Business Recycling Awards local businesses and organizations in recognition of

their waste reduction efforts, innovations in recycling and ongoing endeavors to incorporate green and sustainable practices "to become greener, conserve resources and reduce their carbon footprint."

Together, says Vicki Rice, City of Modesto Recycling Coordinator, the winners reduced energy through innovation, repurposed items for resale and donation, recycled materials for future use, and created jobs, thus broadening community awareness about collective and personal responsible for making and keeping our communities green and sustainable for present and future generations.

Those businesses and groups honored were:

**Small Businesses (under 200 employees):** Archway Commons; Community Business College; FTG, Inc.; Once Upon A Child

**Medium Businesses (21 to 100 employees):** Almond Board of California; Boyd Corporation; Community Hospice – Hope Chest Thrift Stores; Modesto Junk, Inc.; United Cerebral Palsy of Stanislaus County

**Large Businesses (over 100 employees):** Boyett Petroleum; Center for Human Services; Crystal Creamery; Doubletree by Hilton Modesto

**ACTION:** To learn more about The Green Team or City of Modesto green services or apply for green business certifications and awards contact: Rikki Keenan, Modesto Chamber of Commerce, Membership Services, Digital Marketing Manager: 209.577.5757 Ext. 103; Fax: 209.577.2673; [www.StanislausGreenTeam.com](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com); [www.ModChamber.org](http://www.ModChamber.org)

Vicki Rice, City of Modesto Solid Waste Division, (209) 577-5495; [vrice@modestogov.com](mailto:vrice@modestogov.com); [www.modestogov.com](http://www.modestogov.com);

## Bring a children's book to the Peace Center's Holiday Potluck Song Fest, December 13

By DAN ONORATO

**Question:** What do you get when you put Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanza in the same month?

**Answer:** The Peace/Life Center's annual gathering to enjoy scrumptious food and spirit-lifting singing on Saturday, December 13 at the home of Dan and Alice Onorato, 1532 Vernon Ave., Modesto, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Yes, another year has raced to its December finale so it's time to get together and partee! Which is to say, enjoy the favorite dishes and beverages people bring, and then wiggle the vocal chords into wintry tune for some lively, frolicking singing.

Once again, by popular demand, Maestro John Poat, lead singer of the local band Wooden Nickel, will strum and tickle his guitar and rouse us into singing a wide variety of songs, from holiday and folk favorites to peace, labor, and rhythm and blues favorites, and, of course, everyone's triple star

Beatles delights.

This year, we will continue the tradition that *everyone or every family bring with them a new, unwrapped book for a child (K-1 to K-6)*. Jana Chiavetta will distribute them to children in need at Wilson Elementary where she teaches. Eighty-nine percent of the kids at Wilson qualify for free or reduced meals at school.

So join us at the party. Prepare your culinary magic and seasonally inspired beverage to share, and come primed to sing in wanton glee.



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

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# US Empire and Nationalist Illusions

By LAWRENCE WITTNER

After thousands of years of bloody wars among contending tribes, regions, and nations, is it finally possible to dispense with the chauvinist ideas of the past?

To judge by President Barack Obama's televised address on the evening of September 10, it is not. Discussing his plan to "take out" ISIS, the extremist group that has seized control of portions of Syria and Iraq, the president slathered on the high-flying, nationalist rhetoric. "America is better positioned today to seize the future than any other nation on Earth," he proclaimed. "Our technology companies and universities are unmatched; our manufacturing and auto industries are thriving. Energy independence is closer than it's been in decades. . . . Our businesses are in the longest uninterrupted stretch of job creation in our history. . . . I see the grit and determination and common goodness of the American people every single day — and that makes me more confident than ever about our country's future." <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/remarks-president-barack-obama-address-nation>

This rhetoric, of course, is the lead-in to yet another American-led war in the Middle East. "American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world," he stated. "It is America that has the capacity and the will to mobilize the world against terrorists. It is America that has rallied the world against Russian aggression. . . . It is America that helped remove and destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons so they cannot pose a threat to the Syrian people—or the world—again. And it is America that is helping Muslim communities around the world not just in the fight against terrorism, but in the fight for opportunity, tolerance, and a more hopeful future."

America's greatness, he added, carries "an enduring burden. But as Americans, we welcome our responsibility to lead. From Europe to Asia—from the far reaches of Africa to war-torn capitals of the Middle East—we stand for freedom, for justice, for dignity. These are values that have guided our nation since its founding. Tonight, I ask for your support in carrying that leadership forward. I do so as a Commander-in-Chief who could not be prouder of our men and women in uniform."

Can anyone acquainted with American history really take this nationalist drivel seriously? When contemplating the "freedom," "justice," and "dignity" that "have guided our nation since its founding," is there no recollection of slavery, the seizure of a continent from its native people, lynching, child labor, the flouting of civil liberties, the exploitation of workers, legalized racial discrimination, and the war crimes committed by U.S. troops, most recently in Iraq?

Furthermore, all of this forgotten history is topped off with the ritualized "May God bless our troops, and may God bless the United States of America." God, apparently, is supposed to ride shotgun for the U.S. military. Or is it really that the U.S. military and the nation are the emissaries of God?

In fairness to the president, it could be argued that he doesn't actually believe this claptrap, but—like so many of his predecessors—simply dons a star-spangled uniform to

sell his foreign policy to the American public.

But, in fact, the policy outlined in Obama's speech is almost as nationalist as the rhetoric. Although the president promised that the United States would participate in a "broad coalition to roll back" ISIS, this would be a coalition that "America will lead." Yes, there would be "partners" in American efforts "to address broader challenges to international order," but not all the time—only "wherever possible." In short, Americans should get ready for another Coalition of the Willing, led by the United States and, sometimes, limited to it alone.

Ironically, American "leadership" of military operations in the Islamic world has not only done much to spark the creation of ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other extremist groups, but has destabilized and inflamed the entire region. American-led wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya—coupled with U.S. military meddling in Syria, confrontations with Iran, arming of Israel, and drone strikes in many nations—have left the region awash with anti-Americanism, religious strife, and weapons (many now directed against the United States).

Against this backdrop, the U.S. government would be well-advised to adopt a very low profile in the Middle East—and certainly not "lead" yet another war, particularly one against Muslims. This restraint would mesh nicely with the U.S. government's signature on the UN charter, which prohibits the use of force by any nation except in self-defense.

The current situation provides a particularly appropriate time for the U.S. government to back off from yet another military crusade in the region. After all, ISIS is heartily disliked by a large number of nations. At the moment, it seems likely that the governments of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Russia, and other lands would welcome the demise of ISIS and support UN action against it. Furthermore, this action need not be military. The United Nations could play an important role in halting the flow of financing and weapons to this terrorist group. The United Nations could restrict the movement of militias and foreign fighters across borders. The United Nations could resume negotiations to end the civil war in Syria. And, particularly in light of the hostility toward the United States that has developed in recent years among many Muslims, the United Nations could demand the disarmament and dismantling of ISIS with far greater effect than would similar action by the U.S. government.

But can a nation shed its belief that it is uniquely qualified to "lead" the world? It can, if its citizens are ready to cast aside their nationalist illusions and recognize their interdependence with the people of other nations.

Lawrence S. Wittner is professor of history emeritus at SUNY/Albany. His latest book is a satirical novel about the corporatization of higher education, *What Going On at UAardvark?*

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<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/09/15/us-empire-and-nationalist-illusions>

## Walking

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workout routines)

- Sharpens thinking skills

I read a book, years ago, about how to stay mentally sharp, and even improve one's memory, as one ages. If I recall correctly, the theory was that our brains tend to sort of 'sleepwalk' through routine tasks. Breaking up the routine, in any number of ways, wakes up the brain. This, in turn, causes the brain to build new synapses, which is where memory is stored. The suggestions in the book included walking backwards (even up & down stairs, while holding on to the handrail of course), leaving the lights off while moving through a dark room, and even cooking and/or eating foods with different herbs and spices. Something as mundane as driving a different way to work or school, or shopping at a different market can help — anything that's different from what we usually do will work. (Howard Hughes, aware of the powerfully positive affect on the brain that 'cross-body' movement like walking has, is said to have crawled around 'on all fours' — even in his office.)

The benefits of walking — forward or backward — are many, compared to the amount of effort expended.

Isn't there some way you can fit in this wonderfully gentle, yet very effective exercise today?

## Zinn Movie

from page 3

it led to anarchy. The greatest danger, I argued, was civil obedience, the submission of individual conscience to governmental authority. Such obedience led to the horrors we saw in totalitarian states, and in liberal states it led to the public's acceptance of war whenever the so-called democratic government decided on it...

In such a world, the rule of law maintains things as they are. Therefore, to begin the process of change, to stop a war, to establish justice, it may be necessary to break the law, to commit acts of civil disobedience, as Southern blacks did, as antiwar protesters did."

"Human beings, whatever their backgrounds, are more open than we think, so that their behavior cannot be confidently predicted from their past; we are all creatures vulnerable to new thoughts, new attitudes.

And while such vulnerability creates all sorts of possibilities, both good and bad, its very existence is exciting. It means that no human being should be written off, no change in thinking deemed impossible."

"Pessimism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; it reproduces itself by crippling our willingness to act."

"There is a power that can be created out of pent-up indignation, courage, and the inspiration of a common cause, and that if enough people put their minds and bodies into that cause, they can win. It is a phenomenon recorded again and again in the history of popular movements against injustice all over the world."

"I had always insisted that a good education was a synthesis of book learning and involvement in social action, that each enriched the other. I wanted my students to know that the accumulation of knowledge, while fascinating in itself, is not sufficient as long as so many people in the world have no opportunity to experience that fascination."



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

## ACTIONS FOR PEACE Sonora - Stockton

**SONORA:** Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

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

# NOVEMBER

**Ongoing: MJC Science Colloquium**, Science Community Center, Rm. 115, Wednesdays, West Campus, 3-4 p.m. Contact: Richard Anderson (209) 529-5182 andersonr@mjc.edu Oct. 29: Mike Zweifel, MID Major Account Executive, "MID's Energy Present and Future."

**4 TUES: VOTE!**

**7 FRI: Harvest Gathering.** Fundraiser for Peace Essay Contest. Details, see front page.

**15 SAT: CareMore Senior Film Series** presents Singin' in the Rain, 10:30 am. State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/303>

**16 SUN: Modesto Film Society** presents *Oliver*, 2 pm. State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/325>

**19 WED: MPLC November Film Night:** *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*. Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. 6:30 pm. FREE. Discussion after.

**23 SUN: Modesto Film Society** presents *Network*, 2 pm. State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/326>

## LOOKING AHEAD

**December 13: Peace Center's Annual Holiday Potluck Song Fest.** See article, this issue.

**January 15, 2015: John McCutcheon** in Concert.

**January 2015: Sonora's MLK Birthday Celebration:** Speaker Clayborne Carson. Date: TBA.

**February 7, 2015: Annual MLK Commemoration;** Keynote speaker: Julian Bond.

**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. For up to date information, visit [www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm](http://www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm)

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

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

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

### MONDAYS

**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. Email [WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com](mailto:WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com) or call 209.577.1604.

**Occupy Modesto:** General Assembly meets every other Monday, 5:00 - 6:30 pm at Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St. All interested members of the 99% welcome. Meetings: Info: Nancy, 545-1375.

### TUESDAYS

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

**LifeRing Secular Recovery:** Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 526-4854  
**Ukulele class/play-a-long** led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. [www.funstrummers.com](http://www.funstrummers.com)

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

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

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

**PFLAG Sonora/Mother Lode**, third Tuesdays of January, April, July, and October, 6:30 to 8 pm,

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS:** held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), (NOTE TIME), 5:00-6:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

**MEDIA:** Listen to local Valley Community Radio KQRP 104.9 FM, <http://www.kqrp.com>

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

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

**CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS:** Info: 537-7818, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

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

Tuolumne County Library Community Room, 480 Greenley Rd., Sonora, Info: 533-1665. Info@pflagsonora.org, [www.pflagsonora.org](http://www.pflagsonora.org)

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

### WEDNESDAYS

**LifeRing Secular Recovery:** Wednesdays 6:30 pm, Center for Human Services Building, 1700 McHenry Ave., Room 12, Modesto

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

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

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

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: Stan, 549-7770, [stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com](mailto:stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com), or Anne, 521-6977.

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

### THURSDAYS

**Green Team** educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. [www.StanislausGreenTeam.com](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)

**Refuge Recovery:** A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction Insight Meditation Central Valley, in the Sarana Kuti (in back), Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Thursdays 6:30-8 pm. FREE (donations accepted). Info: email [RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com](mailto:RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com)

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

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

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

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

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

**Third Thursday Art Walk**, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

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

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

### FRIDAYS

**Funstrummer Ukulele Band** every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 505-3216; [www.funstrummers.com](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. 7-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

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

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

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

### SATURDAY

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

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