

# stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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## Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference

By MIKE CHIAVETTA

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. — Margaret Mead*

As Margaret Mead noted that one should never underestimate what a small group of committed citizens can accomplish, so should we take note when a group of informed, motivated and committed young people gather to act! This is the motivation behind the first Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference that is being sponsored by the Modesto Peace Life Center.

The conference is on Saturday, September 26, 2009 at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Deadline to register is September 13. The purpose of this conference is to connect, motivate, and educate area youth in the areas of sustainability, civil rights, peace and justice issues. The conference is an offshoot of the highly successful "Project Ecuador" endeavor by students and faculty at Modesto High School during the last school year.

In Project Ecuador, numerous students, faculty and local citizens contributed to the raising of \$10,000 to build a school in rural Ecuador. Many of the individuals involved in Project Ecuador believe that there are equally interested, like-minded students in the area that would like to be part of a larger group committed to social justice issues. One of the goals of the conference would be to facilitate the cooperation of numerous students from area high schools in common endeavors. This conference could be a springboard for a burgeoning youth social justice movement in the Modesto area.

## The State steps up to hi-def digital

By SUSAN RICHARDSON

*For moviegoers, that means seeing better films and more of them.*

In its 75 years, Modesto's State Theatre has stood witness to a city of more than 205,000 springing up around it, the demise and demolition of its fellow movie palaces, and also its own metamorphosis from a movie theater to a performing arts and community center. And then there have been the remodels, changing owners, various governing boards, a stint as Cine Mexico, and perhaps most notable and remarkable -- its complete renovation five years ago under new ownership. With its new facade, marquee and lobby, The State

The conference will be part party, with food and entertainment, and part educational. The morning will include food, prepared by the renowned local chef, Deborah Roberts, and also musical entertainment.

The highlight of the morning portion of the conference will be the keynote speaker, Bonnie Kay. Bonnie is the West Coast coordinator for Free the Children (Free the Children,

CONFERENCE . . . . .continued p. 2

## The Auction of Your Dreams!



Bring Food and  
Beverage to Share

Saturday, September 12  
4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Along the Tuolumne River at the home of  
Tom and Alfa Broderick  
13918 Yosemite Blvd., (Hwy 132)  
East of Waterford

We need auction items and services!  
Call Dan 526-5436, or Jim, 537-7818  
\$25.00 donation/family  
(or whatever you can afford)

THE STATE . . . . .continued p. 8

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## Conference

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in cooperation with Oprah Winfrey's OAmbassador program is the organization that is physically building the school in Ecuador). Lunch will be provided. In the afternoon, each student will participate in four workshops which are to give the students the "tools" to take back to their high schools and get things going! The workshops cover local action, global action, organization, and "How to be a Peace Ambassador." Another key goal of the conference is to establish a "social justice network" for like-minded students.

The conference is targeted to high school students. The organizers are planning for 60 participants. The hope is that every area high school is represented.

**ACTION:** It is going to take a big commitment by the community to accomplish this conference and this is how you can help. Are you interested in being a sponsor? The projected budget is \$2000 and we need organizations, groups and individuals to donate. The budget is based on estimates of the cost for supplies, food, facility and speaker. Would your organization like to have a table and be included in the workshops? If you are a high school teacher and would like to become a contact person to facilitate information to your students or a student interested in attending the conference or being on the coordinating committee, contact Michael Chiavetta at 204-7137 or mike.chiavetta@gmail.com.

## Join the new State Cinema Club

By RANDY SIEFKIN

Beginning Tuesday, October 13 and continuing the **second Tuesday** of each month through June 2010, the **State Cinema Club** will present classic films from the Janus "Essential Art House" library such as JULES AND JIM, SEVEN SAMURAI and LA STRADA, as well as current independent and foreign films that won't be shown at any other time at The State Theatre. Each film will be followed by thought-provoking discussions led by local experts and guest speakers who have taught film classes and/or have worked in the film industry.

**Cinema Club** benefits include passes to all nine of the films in the series, a complimentary coffee or small soft drink, small popcorn, a scintillating discussion with true cinephiles, and advance notification of films and special events.

**Cinema Club** memberships are **\$50 for adults (or \$80 for two), seniors \$40 (or \$60 for two) and students \$25** for the nine-film series, a considerable savings over the regular ticket price of \$7 for each film. And there are those great benefits!

**Cinema Club** members will be notified of the title for the coming month several weeks in advance, although a few titles may be obtained at the last minute. Members will be notified of any changes, and their preferences will be solicited in designing the program.

As seating allows, **Cinema Club** events are available to the public (non Cinema Club members) at the box office for the regular admission price of \$7.

To join, call or email The State Theatre, 527-4697, or [www.thestate.org](http://www.thestate.org), pick up a membership brochure from the State Theatre or mail a check for the appropriate amount payable to:

**State Theatre Cinema Club**  
**The State Theatre**  
**P.O. Box 1492,**  
**Modesto, CA 95353**

## High school students inspire peace campers

By MYRTLE OSNER

Five high school students told this year's Peace campers about their success in motivating students at Modesto High School.

Inspired by Greg Mortenson's book, *Three Cups of Tea*, and by Gandhi's famous saying, "Be the change you want to see in the world," they formed a "Green Team" to raise \$10,000 to build a school for Project Ecuador.

To raise money for the project, the Green Team went to work to create a groundswell of support at Modesto High School. One of their main components was recycling. There was an Earth Day booth. Among the projects to raise money were a rummage sale, a "chalk art" on the sidewalk, books collected and sold at Yesterday's Books, and collections of items to give to Goodwill. They met their goal of \$10,000, a remarkable feat.

It is also noteworthy that Modesto High is the seat of the International Baccalaureate Program (IB). We are proud of these young people, the cream of the crop!

Thank you from all of us at the Peace Life Center.



Peace Camp kids having fun. Photo: Ken Schroeder.

## L'Chaim-Sunday Afternoons at CBS: 18 years of classics to world beat

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Sunday Afternoons at CBS begins its 18th season of eclectic Modesto area community concerts this fall, from jazz and acoustic to classics and world beat at Congregation Beth Shalom, 1705 Sherwood Ave. in Modesto. The 2009-10 concert selections include:

**LUCA CIARLA . . . OCT. 18, 2009**

Luca Ciarla, Italian violinist, pianist, and composer, plays a passionate blend of classical, jazz, and international folk music with "magical interpretation." He has been described as a music globetrotter, having performed around the world. "Ciarla's own compositions are technically challenging, and should intrigue partisans of either the classical or jazz camp" and genres in between. [<http://www.lucaciarla.com>]

**STEVAN PASERO & RICHARD PATTERSON . . . NOV. 8, 2009**

These two multi-talented guitarists perform a dynamic, inspiring repertoire, bridging genres including classical, jazz, flamenco, and world music. Stevan Paserio, one of the music world's "best kept secrets," is recognized worldwide as one of the most influential and versatile guitarists. Richard Patterson, a collaborative artist, "displays a prodigious technique" and "plays with style, taste and elegance." He is the founder of Festival of Four. [<http://www.stevanpaserio.com>]

**THE MATT EAKLE BAND . . . JAN. 10, 2010**

Matt Eakle, best known as the flutist in the David Grisman Quintet, appeared at Sunday Afternoons at CBS with the late Donelle Page and Harpquest several years ago. "If you've never heard Matt play before, you've never heard a flute dig this deep into the groove." Matt says, "I always wanted to play in a rhythm-driven groove band, so I called the guys I know who groove the hardest!" Those "guys" are Alex Baum (bass), Joey Edelman (keys), and Jack Dorsey (drums). [<http://www.matteakle.com>]

[//www.matteakle.com](http://www.matteakle.com)]

**GRACE LIEBERMAN and FRIENDS . . . FEB. 14, 2010**

Each year is more fun and entertaining with Grace Lieberman and her very talented Friends. Folks take home the love and joy long past concert day. You'll want to be in on the fun, so mark your calendars for this popular Valentine concert on Valentine's Day! [<http://www.artsway.org>]

**THE JOE CRAVEN TRIO . . . MAR. 7, 2010**

Joe Craven, strings and found sound, John R. Burr (keyboards), and Kendrick Freeman (drums/percussion) serve a bouquet of jazz, blues, Latin and folk. Whether tweaking an old time fiddle tune or rendering original jazz, the sound is always innovative and captivates audiences nationwide. "Everything Joe touches turns to music," says David Grisman, who Joe played with for almost 17 years. No one who saw Joe wring a percussion concerto from his garbage-bag raincoat during a downpour at the Strawberry Music Festival could disagree. JCT will celebrate new work from their recent recording at our 18th season finale. [<http://www.joecraven.com>]

**ACTION:** All Sunday concerts begin at 3 p.m. and include "high tea" refreshments. The 5 concert season subscriptions are: \$60 for adults, \$50 for seniors and students, and \$5 each for children accompanied by a paid adult subscription holder. Individual concerts are \$20 adults, \$15 seniors and students, and \$7 children. Group discounts available for 10 or more. Purchase tickets at the CBS office by mail, 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto, CA 95350. Call (209) 571-6060 or visit [www.cbsmodesto.org](http://www.cbsmodesto.org) to learn more.



## Don't miss the Connections Potluck Auction, Sept. 12!

By DAN ONORATO

Connections reader, mark your calendar right now. The 19th Annual Stanislaus Connections Potluck Auction, on Saturday, September 12, awaits you.

Trumpets announce your arrival, drums roll in expectant greeting, late summer breezes draw heat away from the earth to welcome you. You enter the enchanting environment of Tom and Alfa Broderick's villa along the Tuolumne River at 13918 Yosemite Blvd, about a quarter of a mile beyond Waterford. You feast on culinary delights prepared with love by all who attend. You enjoy the camaraderie and lively conversation of like-minded seekers of a better world. You enjoy the antics and down-home good fun of our renowned duo of auctioneers, Sir John Frailing and Duke David Rockwell. They draw you in. Deep within your peace-loving nature your innate instinct to compete arises. You get caught up in the drama.

Hucksters for a good cause, with each new treasure John and David entice, cajole, wheedle, and charm. The tempo of their appeals modulates, at first adagio to loosen your thrift, but gradually, seductively, with the pulsing staccato of excited bidding, it quickens into a crescendo. You bid. He bids. She bids. You go higher. He ups the price. She raises. You counter. He. She. You. She. He stops. All eyes turn to you. She'll get it if you don't speak up. You want that unique Roman Loranc photographic poster; that relaxing weekend retreat in Twain Harte; that dinner for four prepared by legendary wizard of taste and presentazione, Dona Alicia; those Yoga lessons to limber body and soul; those six scrumptious Myrtle Osner home-made fruit pies to delight your family and guests throughout the year. John and David turn up their charm. You go higher. All turn to her. Going once, g-o-i-n-g twice, sold! You win!

You leave happy, enriched. You go home with your "treasure," but far more importantly you have shared an enjoyable evening under the stars with some good people. And you have helped support your local peace, justice, and environmental newspaper.

If this scenario attracts you—the delicious potluck surprises, the memorable company of friends new and old, the excitement of a fun-filled auction, the satisfaction of helping the Peace/Life Center continue publishing *Stanislaus Connections*—start planning your potluck specialty, and join us at the Broderick's We'll start around 4:00 p.m. The trumpets, drums, and breezes will greet you.

**ACTION:** We need auctions items. To donate, contact Dan Onorato, 526-5436, onorato@sbcglobal.net, or Jim Costello, 537-7818, jcostello@igc.org.

Directions from Modesto: Go out Yosemite Blvd. through Empire and Waterford. About a quarter of a mile outside of Waterford, after the housing development on the right, the road will rise. Near its top you'll turn right to go

down a long dirt driveway to the event.



2010

## Peace Essay Contest



Peace can only last where human rights are respected,  
where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

— The Dalai Lama



### INTRODUCTION:

The word "peace" has many meanings, from the absence of war and armed conflict to personal inner serenity. All around the world people yearn for the opportunity for their families to live, work and thrive in peace. They dream of a future where forces like injustice, poverty and racism no longer exist. The *2010 Peace Essay Contest* invites students to envision a more peaceful future that includes respect and equality for all.

### Division I (grades 11-12)

and

### Division II (grades 9-10)

Consider the problems in our world that prevent people from experiencing peace. Then narrow your focus to one area. Imagine that you suddenly have the power to put into action a non-violent plan to bring about a more peaceful future that includes respect and fairness for all.

In your essay of 500-1000 words,

- Describe the problem area you have chosen to address;
- Tell what led you to focus on this area;
- Explain your plan for bringing about change including how your solution would contribute to a more peaceful future;
- Consider and explain how your strategy would impact your family, your community or the whole world and thus lead to a more peaceful future.

### Division III (grades 7-8)

and

### Division IV (grades 5-6)

Consider the problems in our world that prevent people from experiencing peace. Then narrow your focus to one area. Imagine that you suddenly have the power to put into action a non-violent plan to bring about a more peaceful future that includes respect and fairness for all.

In your essay of 250-500 words,

- Describe the problem area you have chosen to address;
- Tell what led you to focus on this area;
- Explain your plan for bringing about change including how your solution would contribute to a more peaceful future.

### 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

Deadline for entries:

**December 4, 2009**

Notification of winners:

For more information, email: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)



## Peace Essay Contest 2010

### Rules

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. Use 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.
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. Attach a "3 x 5" index card with your name, school, grade, teacher's name and principal's name, on the index card. **YOUR NAME SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
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 mailed or delivered to the Modesto Peace/Life Center. Mail all entries, postmarked no later than December 4, 2009, to:

2010 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. Do the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
- C. Does the essay stay within the word limit?



Email: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)

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.

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 2010, winners will be notified. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

**2010 Peace Essay Committee:** Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Suzanne Meyer, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample and Shelly Scribner

The 24th 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

## Peace mouse pads offer alternative service options

By PEGGY CASTANEDA

*"These are my time. These are your times. We can be the voice of Jesus in these times."*

These words, written to music by folk singer, Bill Jolliff, inspired me to take action and become more vocal about my peace stance. I had the good fortune to attend the 13th annual Song & Story Fest hosted by On Earth Peace and Camp Peaceful Pines in July. It was a week-long celebration of music and stories, but mostly, it was a reminder that we need to continuously strive for peaceful resolution to conflicts.

But, how do I encourage that? I had been kicking an idea around ever since I had observed some "GO ARMY" mouse pads in the Beyer High School library. Why not replace some

of these military pads with pads that suggest alternative options for service to our country? I have a screen-printing business, so I investigated the possibility of printing my own mouse pads. I found and ordered mouse pads online to test my idea.



I sat down at my computer and designed a mouse pad that I thought would be eye catching, promote peace, and offer choices for young kids to serve others. Then I ran my idea by the board members at the Modesto Peace/Life Center. They thought it was a good way to promote peace and justice at the high school level and decided to fund the project. So I ordered a few dozen more.

Now, all seven high schools in Modesto have Peace Pads somewhere in their schools, and, hopefully, the message is getting out that the armed forces do not have the corner on patriotism and/or service. We can all promote peace and justice through service.

What are these times inspiring you to do?

The Peace Pads will also be available for a nominal donation at the Modesto Peace/Life Center for use at home or work. Call the Center, 529-5750, or contact Ken Schroeder, 526-2303.

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a suggested donation of \$25.00/yr.

# Rivers of Birds, Forests of Tules: Central Valley Nature & Culture in Season

By Lillian Vallee

## 58. Handless Maiden or Weaving Woman?

*He's trying not to be overwhelmed by love or pit  
Because he sees she has no hands.*

— Robert Hass, "Then Time"

In the sweltering days of July and August, books are the coolest companions, and three powerful stories linger in memory. The first is the story of her mother's life (*Not Becoming My Mother*) by food writer Ruth Reichl, editor of *Gourmet* magazine. Reichl's mother is (to her daughter) a stranger with a fondness for benign molds fed to the unsuspecting. The book's opening "Mim tale" of a chocolate pudding concoction served to a troop of Brownies is both hilariously funny and hair-raising. Reichl's mother Mimi wanted to become a doctor, but because of the thwarted aspirations of her own mother (Reichl's maternal grandmother), Mimi earns a doctorate in musicology instead and, when she can put it off no longer, marries, more out of a sense of duty and obligation than personal need. The irony is not lost on the reader: the woman who should have been healing people ends up poisoning them (though not fatally) with wild culinary improvisations. Reichl lovingly retraces the jagged trajectory of her mother's life, and reflects on the importance of valued work in the lives of women and the misery of a generation of women whose hands had been bargained away.

I thought of this book again when reading *The Fisher King & the Handless Maiden* by Robert A. Johnson, a Jungian psychoanalyst who examines what he calls, rather academically, the "wounded feeling function," to indicate the modern loss of life's "savor," its joy, worth and meaning. "Anything that is put back into the unconscious," writes Johnson, "...once it has been consciousness, turns dark and becomes a symptom in one's psychological structure." Johnson explores two medieval myths as auguries of the modern inability to *feel*, "The Fisher King" and "The Handless Maiden." The first addresses the wounded masculine (*animus*) and the second the wounded feminine (*anima*) in both men and women. The Reichl book reads like a contemporary version of the handless maiden myth.

While "a man suffers his wound mainly in his generative faculty..." writes Johnson, "this wound appears in a woman in her inability to *do*, and it is no surprise to find in our myth of the woman's wounding that it is her hands that are damaged."

Johnson retells the story of a miller who concludes a bargain with the devil (who mechanizes the mill with a water wheel) and pays the fee: his daughter's hands. Her agony leads her to leave her father's house for the stillness and solitude of the woods: "Feminine wounds are almost always cured by being still," writes Johnson. "Solitude is the feminine equivalent of masculine heroic action." The tears and the stillness are curative. "It is genius to store energy."

After wandering hungrily into the king's garden and eating his (counted and numbered) pears, she marries the monarch who makes her a pair of silver hands. The metal hands still do not allow her to touch and feel her newborn son, however, and the weeping resumes; even though she has a castle full of servants to do her bidding, she leaves once again "and takes her son to the solitude of the forest." "Whole kingdoms may thrive on the artificiality of silver hands, but no real woman will be content with this." The gift from the king, a symbol of a gilded life, cannot replace "ordinary earthy humanness."

Johnson continues: "As soon as the queen has bathed herself in the restorative salt bath of tears and gathered a reserve of energy, a most wonderful thing happens. The miracle begins as an emergency—as so many wonderful things do—when her baby falls into a stream and will drown if not rescued immediately." At first the queen calls for help from the servants ("she has been indoctrinated into her silver-hands mentality to this degree"), but none is there. In "a sublime moment of strength," available to her because of the energy stored while alone in the woods, "she plunges her useless silver hands into the stream to rescue her child. When she draws the child from the water, miracle!—the baby is safe and her hands are completely restored to flesh and blood."

The last story, "The Coyote-Spirit and the Weaving Woman," from Mary Austin's *The Basket Woman*, is a fitting antidote to the patriarchal and mechanical maiming in the Johnson book. The weaving woman character, based on a

real Paiute basket maker named Seyavi, also has an infirmity, this one of the eyes "which caused her to see everything with rainbow fringes, bigger and brighter and better than it was." People thought her fine baskets made life seem richer...than "the dull occasion they had found it."

Because of this visual infirmity, she "was not afraid of anything, she went farther and farther into the silent places until in the course of time she met the Coyote Spirit." The Coyote Spirit was a man gone bad, and he felt the weaving woman had trespassed onto his territory thereby deserving death. He intended to murder her, but because of her visual impairment (which he did not know about), she treated him with tremendous kindness and did not see the beast in him. When he confessed to her that he had lured her to dig roots in an isolated spot so that he could eat her, she laughed, "and the sound of her laughter was like water in a bubbling spring."

She refused to see him as anything but a man; she "contrived to throw the veil of her mind over the Coyote-Spirit," so that he could no longer be sure of his identity: "He ran for three days and nights, being afraid of himself, which is the worst possible fear," but "with her insisting upon it and his thinking about it, the beast began to go out of him and the man to come back."

The Coyote-Spirit, now a handsome man, marries the Goat Girl and is a little ashamed of his past, so he avoids the Weaving Woman. The last sentence reads: "But I have not heard whether the Weaving Woman noticed it." She is too busy, weaving and "wandering far into the desert in search of withes and barks and

dyes, where the wild things showed her many a wonder hid from those who have not rainbow fringes to their eyes."

**Sources:** Mary Austin, *The Basket Woman & The Land of Little Rain* (with introduction by Robert Hass); Robert Hass, *Time and Materials* (Poems 1997-2005); Robert A. Johnson *The Fisher King & the Handless Maiden*; and Ruth Reichl, *Not Becoming My Mother*.



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# Population, peace, and the environment

By LOUIS and MARGARET DEMOTT-FELDMAN

- If the **average production of greenhouse gases** begins to decline by an average of 1.0% per person per year, and, if the human population increases by only 1.1% per year, then the total production of greenhouse gases will be increasing every year.
- If the **average consumption of non-renewable resources** begins to decline by an average of 1.0% per person per year, and, if the population increases by only 1.1% per year, then the total consumption of non-renewable resources will be increasing every year.
- If the **average production of non-recyclable waste** begins to decline by an average of 1.0% per person per year, and, if the population increases by only 1.1% per year, then the total production of non-recyclable waste will be increasing every year.

These examples explain why there can be no lasting environmental victories without stabilization of the size of the human population.

In the late 1950's, a demographer expressed great concern about the rapid rate at which the size of the human population on Earth was increasing. If 1,000 years earlier there had been only 100 humans on Earth, and if the human population had continually increased at that same rapid rate, then, by that time, circa 1960, there would have been 100 people on Earth for every square foot of dry ground! Of course, having 100 people on one square foot of dry ground is impossible. Long before the population reaches this size, nature will step in and reduce the population size by famine and disease. This means that *population control is inevitable*. The only questions are who will do the controlling and how.

As the resources to support human life become scarcer, various groups of people may unwisely choose to fight with other groups for control of these resources making more wars almost inevitable. The need for more space for the German

people was one of the reasons given by Hitler for invading neighboring countries. The May issue of *Connections* also provides a discussion of the impending wars over water. In addition, a major, unspoken reason for the ongoing Palestinian/Israeli conflict is the fact that both sides anticipate growing populations on the same small piece of land.

Consequently, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that the need to control the size of the human population can be ignored until some time in the distant future. Overpopulation is already a fact of life. In spite of limiting its birth rate to one child per family, China is now buying land in third world countries to grow the additional food it needs to feed its people. South Korea is doing the same. Of course, these third world countries that are selling land to China and South Korea will soon have inadequate land for growing food to feed their own people. Other evidence of overpopulation includes the recent United Nations report that one sixth of the world's population is hungry. Finally, there are ongoing famines and genocides in the same parts of Africa.

The need to limit the size of the human population can no longer be ignored. To prevent the wars, famines, and diseases that often result from overpopulation, all nations and all peoples must begin to devise and implement humane population size stabilization programs.

The following actions can be taken to help stabilize the size of the human population and thereby help protect the environment and prevent future wars over scarce resources:

1. Contact your congressmen and senators and demand that the United States adopt and implement a population size stabilization program. Ask them to pressure the United Nations to adopt a worldwide population size stabilization policy.
2. Promote small families as a social norm.
3. Promote family planning both in the United States and worldwide.
4. Keep yourself aware of population issues and ways that you can help by putting yourself on the mailing lists of organizations whose objectives encompass population size stabilization. These organizations include:

Californians for Population Stabilization  
1129 State Street, Suite 3-D,  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
email: caps@capsweb.org  
website: www.capsweb.org

Carrying Capacity Network  
P.O. Box 18221  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
email: info@carryingcapacity.org  
website: www.carryingcapacity.org

Negative Population Growth (Population Connection)  
2861 Duke Street, Suite 36  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
email: npg@npg.org  
website: www.npg.org

Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
434 West 33rd Street  
New York, NY 10001  
website: www.plannedparenthood.org



## Population Connection president to visit Stanislaus County

By ELAINE GORMAN

Thanks to the efforts of Modesto Jr. College and California State University Stanislaus biology professors, John Seager will speak with students and the surrounding communities of both campuses on Tuesday September 22. The presentations, titled "Global Population: 6.8 Billion and Growing: Are We There Yet?" will focus on global human population growth, impacts on the environment and society, and how we can meet the challenges ahead.

Mr. Seager, President of Population Connection (formerly Zero Population Growth), will present at Modesto Jr. College from 2:20 p.m. - 3:10 p.m. in Science 213 as part of their weekly Science Colloquium Series. He will also present at CSU Stanislaus from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. in the Bernell and Flora Snider Music Recital Hall (free parking in Lot 3). This presentation is co-sponsored by the local Yokuts Sierra Club group. Both events are free.

Rapidly increasing population growth is often the overlooked "elephant in the room" when environmental problems are discussed. Virtually every environmental crisis has its roots in population and consumption of resources — water quality/shortages, climate change, erosion and soil fertility, degradation of wildlife habitat, etc.

During the Bush administration, positive developments in global population growth took a giant step backwards with the Global Gag Rule and major reductions in international family planning. The current administration has repealed the Global Gag Rule and restored/increased funds for family planning. According to the Global Health Council, each \$100 million spent on family planning results in 2.1 million unintended pregnancies avoided, 825,000 fewer abortions, and 70,000 infant deaths averted. Global human population stabilization addresses environmental and humanitarian concerns.

So meet the elephant, nose to trunk, on Tuesday, September 22. Learn how we can achieve population stabilization.

Note: Local Population Connection volunteer educator Elaine Gorman is available to speak to classes, organizations, clubs, and other groups. Contact her at goford@sbcglobal.net.



Is someone you  
love gay?

Parents, Families and Friends  
of Lesbians and Gays

**Modesto Chapter**

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Helpline: 527-0776  
www.pflagmodesto.org

Visit the **Oakdale** satellite  
Meetings on  
3rd Wednesdays from 7-9 pm  
"Golden Oaks" Conference Room  
Oak Valley Medical Building  
1425 West "H" St.  
pflagoakdale@dishmail.net



**MICHAEL R. BAUDLER, CPA**  
**DONNA E. FLANDERS, CPA**

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e-mail b\_f@modestocpas.com

1120 14th Street, Suite 2  
Modesto, CA 95350



# Holiday Gift Packets: THANK YOU NOTES – 2008

Thank you so much for thinking of us inmates at Christmas! We enjoy the gift you send and we're pretty sure you know that it's the only Christmas present most of us get! Thank you, thank you, thank you! We hope everyone...will have a happy and prosperous New Year! God Bless You,

— Julie

Have a happy prosperous New Year. Thank you for the gift. God bless you.

— Kendra

We want you to know that your prayers and gifts are not taken for granted. We truly do appreciate the time and effort that you put into making all of the Christmas gift bags for the inmate population. The compassion and humanity that you share for all of us cannot be measured on the gratitude meter. You make such a big difference. It is the gesture, more than the items in the bag, that means the most. God bless each and every one of you. Enjoy a safe and Happy New Year...

— Teresa and Barbara

Thank you for everything that you do for us. You've made a lot of us happy. It feels good to be thought of during the holidays.

— Tammy

Thank you for all you do for us. Some of us do not have family who care and support us. Your presents are the only presents most of us receive. Thank you.

— Cookie

I really appreciate the packages you gave to us. It really defines the true spirit of Christmas and of kindness to have such people in our lives.

— Sonya

Thank you very much. You brought a smile to my face on a sad day. Much love.

— Jill

This is just a quick note to let you all know that we here at CCWF appreciate your efforts so much. 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.

— Tasha

Thank you! Christmas really seemed like Christmas to get a gift from a stranger. The true gift of Christmas is love in people's hearts and I am grateful for yours.

— Barbara

I really appreciate the gift you gave us. It got me thru a really bad time. God bless you.

— M.M.

... Thank you soooo much for the Christmas baggies. That meant so much to me. A lot of the stuff in there made me feel girly and special again. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Always,

— Rachael

# A call to care for our women prisoners

By DAVID HETLAND

Did you know there are over 4,000 women in Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla? Many are very short on relatives and friends, or those relatives and friends are too far away to visit. There's loneliness, overcrowding and limitations on personal freedom that are very hard to bear.

The Golden Rule challenges us here as it does so many other places. It bids us to show we care.

Toward that end, a project has been organized by the prison's Inmate Family Council which will result in the delivery of one-gallon Ziploc bags containing tokens of love during the holidays of December. Inside the bags there will be an equitable assortment of such things as:

- Sample/travel sizes of soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, toothpaste, tissue
- Tooth Brushes (regular adult size) and pencils (wood, full-size, eraser top)
- Unused greeting cards with envelopes – holiday, birthday, anniversary, get-well, etc.

The bags will be filled at the United Methodist Church of Merced on December 6th and delivered to the prison before the holidays.

Right now, you are invited and encouraged to contribute

whatever you can of the items on the list. You are also welcome to make a financial contribution. Items may be brought to the Modesto Peace Life Center office (call 529-5750 to ensure the office is open). We want everything gathered by Thanksgiving.

Make checks payable to "Modesto Peace/Life Center" with the notation: "Chowchilla Prison Project" and send to:

The Modesto Peace/Life Center

P.O. Box 134

Modesto, CA 95353-0134

The rationale for this project is:

1. To give tangible evidence that people outside care.
2. To supply practical items which will be useful and appreciated.
3. To raise the awareness of people outside about the circumstances and needs of people inside.

Your help is needed and will be valued and appreciated. Thank you!

**ACTION:** Need more information? Contact Shelly Scribner, (521-6304), shellys833@aol.com, or Dave Hetland (388-1608), dhetland2003@yahoo.com

Come out, come out,  
wherever you are !

**MOFest!5**

**Saturday, October 10, 2009**

Fifth Annual PFLAG Modesto

**Film Festival**

at

**The State Theatre**

1307 "J" Street, Modesto

Doors open at 6 pm for reception

Films begin at 7 pm

Tickets - \$10 per person



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

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# The State steps up to hi-def digital

... from page 1

Theatre now rivals its more modern counterparts in luxury and modern conveniences. But step into the house -- the 550-seat auditorium -- and you quickly realize, there's no other place in Modesto like it. The Art Deco-era splendor, as designed by noted architect S. Charles Lee, still remains. The towering sconces, the larger-than-life, gold-leafed embellishments throughout, the hand-painted murals, are all decorative elements dating from 1934 when the theater was presented on Christmas Day to an appreciative, rural community drawn to the glamour, excitement -- and escape -- only Hollywood movies could provide.

## From 35mm to high-def digital

The State has undergone many changes and continues to do so as the non-profit organization behind it searches for ways to keep the theater relevant, its programming fresh and its films a dynamic reflection of the film industry's most thoughtful -- and thought-provoking -- work. The theater's most recent change took place in late July: The State, one of few remaining houses using 35mm projection equipment, made the leap to the high-definition, digital film presentation. The 35mm projectors remain for classic films and use by the Modesto Film Society, but a hard drive and a server have replaced the multiple reels that arrive in oversize canisters, and projectionists are no longer threading miles of film but work on a computer instead.

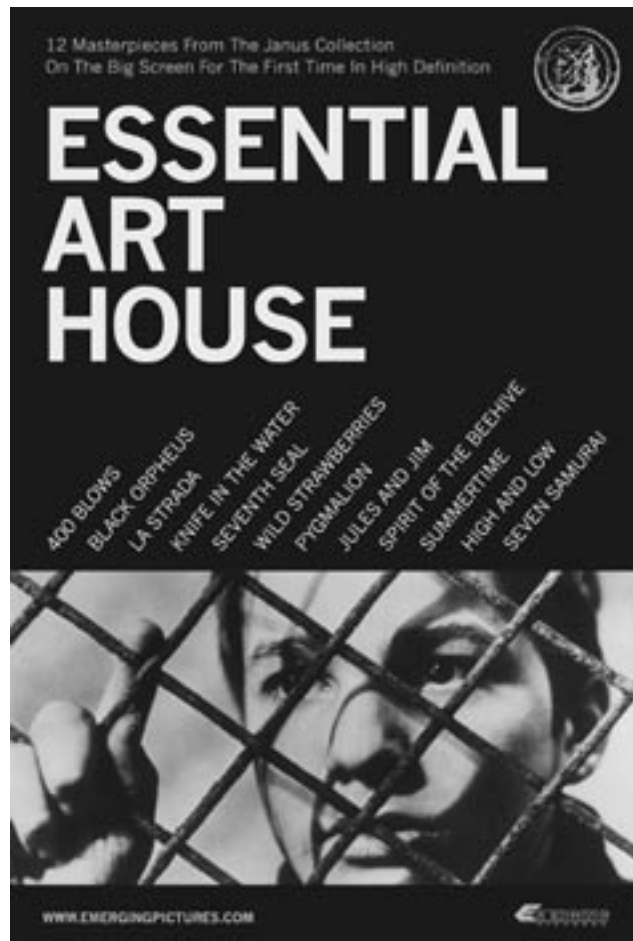
By becoming an affiliate of New York-based Emerging Pictures, The State's access to award-winning, first-run, independent and international films increased ten-fold. As one of about 60 Emerging affiliates nationwide, the theater is now part of a network with collective buying power, and the studios that once denied historic, one-screen theaters some of their better films, are now sitting up and taking notice. The affiliation means The State is getting better titles, getting them sooner (no more films shown weeks before they appear at the local video store) and also showing more of them. Emerging Pictures uses its data-delivery platform with high-speed data lines to deliver HD-quality films to high-definition projection systems.

"Our association with Emerging allowed us to go from showing one film every two weeks to showing four films each week, a sea change when it comes to our programming," says State Theatre Board President Kirstie Boyett. "If patrons weren't interested in our one title, we didn't see them for two weeks. Now, patrons have four different opportunities to see the best and most current art, independent and foreign films in any given week and at the same time they're appearing in major markets. We're not months behind the bigger markets in our programming anymore."

## More films and better titles

Boyett cites the showing in August of the controversial film *Food, Inc.*, as the sort of film studios normally send to a megaplex, not to a one-screen independent. Emerging obtained the title for its affiliates and The State was able to bring in the film for five showings to a full house. "We were thrilled to bring in a film no one else in the region had and we promoted it heavily, but we also moved on so the variety is there and the interest remains high," Boyett says.

State patrons will also notice greater diversity in films. Emerging titles have ranged from *Moon*, a sci-fi thriller starring Sam Rockwell, to the satiric comedy *Whatever*



*Works*, Woody Allen's latest film starring Larry David. And on Tuesdays, the theater is changing its format from current releases to popular classics, cult favorites and contemporary titles, such as *I Want Someone to Eat Cheese With*, that may not have been big at the box office but are still a good fit for film-goers looking for an enjoyable evening out that includes pizza sold by the slice, a glass of premium wine or a draught beer -- and often a drawing, special promotion or an appearance by someone dressed as a character from the film. In July, at one of The State's first Tuesday classic nights, 452 patrons flocked to see *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* and were greeted by Princess Leia, the 501st Stormtroopers and an imposing Darth Vader.

## New Cinema Club for Cinephiles

Starting in October, one Tuesday a month will be reserved for art house titles when The State's new Cinema Club meets for films and a discussion led by some of the area's leading experts in film production, analysis and presentation. The club is being headed up by Modesto Film Society President and State Theatre Board Vice President Randy Siefkin, a great proponent of 35mm film who admits the digital presentation through Emerging is so good, it has fooled nearly all of those who maintain that only 35mm can deliver high-quality cinema.

"Modesto Film Society will always seek out archival 35 mm prints," Siefkin says of the films his non-profit organization shows at The State one Sunday a month, nine months out of the year. "We're dedicated to preserving America's cinematic heritage and that means presenting in 35mm, but

we're purists and think 35 has a special cache that our 200 members enjoy." He adds, "But I am impressed by the high-definition, digital format and think most people would be hard pressed to tell the difference, and that includes people who are in a position to know."

The impetus for the Cinema Club was Emerging's collection of Janus films, or Arthouse Essentials, which consists of some of the most prestigious titles ever released. "The idea for the club has been germinating for a long time, but the titles available through Emerging made it possible," Siefkin says. *Seven Samurai*, *Knife In The Water*, *Wild Strawberries* and *Jules and Jim* are among the titles Cinema Club members can expect to see in coming months, along with more recent independent films that would never have come to the community before.

"Everyone is invited to attend monthly Cinema Club films, but members have the privilege of discounts on films and concessions, advance notice on special events, and they also participate in discussions at the end of a film, which is especially appealing to us Cinephiles who just can't get enough," Siefkin says.

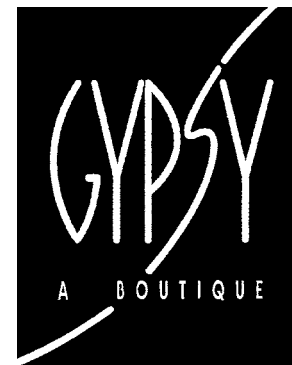
## Ballet, opera and more

Emerging Pictures, catering to ballet and opera buffs, offers high-definition rebroadcasts of live performances. Emerging has secured North American digital cinema distribution rights to the prestigious La Scala Operas, Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne Operas, and Bolshoi Ballet company performances. Presentations of pop music artists include Bruce Springsteen, The Who, and The Smashing Pumpkins. State patrons can expect to see at least one of the Emerging operas or ballets in coming months, along with the Bruce Springsteen concert and other unique programs previously unobtainable.

## Reducing the Carbon Foot Print

One of the greatest benefits of its affiliation with Emerging is The State's ability to reduce its carbon footprint, something no one thought about in 1934 when gasoline seemed to be plentiful and recycling wasn't top of mind. "By going digital, we eliminated carbon-consumed shipping of heavy 35mm film canisters," Kirstie Boyett says. "And digital allowed us to eliminate petroleum-based 35mm motion picture film. At the end of the day, we knew going digital would help us cut costs, but we also knew it was going to be better for the environment. Reducing our carbon foot print is always an issue and our board took the opportunity to do that very seriously."

Visit the State Theatre at <http://www.thestate.org>, (209) 527-4697.



DOWNTOWN  
920 13th STREET  
MODESTO, CA 95354  
(209) 577-1903

GEORGIA  
ANDERSON



## Nothing Lasts

I come from enchanted tippled music.  
I come from shivering apple-bellied God.  
Magenta stardust whispered me here.  
My 100 watt soul says, "breathe."

I lost Mozart's elbow music.  
Nothing lasts without words.  
I remember space food sticks.  
Nothing lasts.  
Love anyway.

— Pam Young

## Walk Around

Push through blue dragon smoke.  
Walk around smart dung.  
Don't push the native rivulet.  
Walk around the shifty crevice.

Wild indigo winds retreat  
Where naked chaos billows.  
Don't push the undercover mystic.  
Walk around the ass's shadow.

Ponder howling confusion.  
Once you catch fear, you have it.  
Walk around wild fear.

— Pam Young

I am dragon smoke.  
I want to be wild indigo wind.  
The moon says gather the love powder  
from the rivulet.  
I remember my contemplative heart.  
I feel like an undercover mystic.

I am a daughter.  
I want to be a Native howl.  
I come from under the surface chatter.  
I forget the hurrylike stream.  
I want to be a delinquent chief.

— Jennifer Kara



## Pam Young

Pam Young is a thankful full-time mom, and knows it would be impossible without the support of her husband, Andy, who teaches philosophy at California State University Stanislaus. All four of their children were schooled at home at least through 8th grade. Patrick earned an IB Diploma at Modesto High School and is now a junior at UCSC. Katie home schooled through High School and is now a sophomore at Mills College. Erin is a sophomore in the IB program at Modesto High and Kerry is the last full-time schooler at home.



# Home school mom teaches how to live a peace-filled, creative life

By PAM YOUNG

As the summer comes to an end I have the same hopes as most parents of school-age children. I hope my youngest daughter can find a nice balance between school work and free time, moves forward in her subjects, and finishes the year with her self-confidence intact. I hope she and her teacher like one another and can work together cooperatively and respectfully.

Oh wait! I am the teacher! I am the parent of 4 home-schooled children.

Over the years people unfamiliar with home schooling often ask about "socialization." I think they are really asking whether my children have many opportunities to interact with other children. The way the question is phrased leaves me with the impression they think being in a classroom with 30 age-mates has a positive influence on one's ability to follow the rules of society and live harmoniously with others. In my experience home-schoolers are not only at home with their peers but are also exposed to a more diverse population on a daily basis.

I recently asked a group of kids how being home schooled has taught them about peace and justice. They answered they felt more able to be themselves and to come to their own conclusions without feeling the pressure to conform to changing social dictates. "We aren't judged on a daily basis according to school standards around certain school-age concerns like acceptable clothing styles and body size."

"So what does that have to do with peace and justice?" I asked. Their answer: when



people feel at home with themselves and their abilities, they are truly able to be accepting of other people exactly as they are. Often in conflict situations it is not the other people who are the problem. It's our thoughts about those people.

As with most home schooling parents, I find the beginning of a school year both exciting and nerve-wracking. I show up for this trust-based style of educating my children with a Masters Degree in German and what I hope to be good parenting skills. When the kids were very young I learned to listen, identify the feelings behind their words and actions, and help them sort out what they would like to have happen next. It feels like the Bible story where 5 barley loaves and a few fish fed 5000. Some human had to show up with 5 loaves and some fish for that miracle to happen.

Setting the goals for the school year is fun.

The challenge and creativity come in the implementation. Because I find textbooks challenging to work with and learn from, I use them as a syllabus and select library books and excursions as alternatives. In the early grades most of the learning happens as a part of our everyday life and through reading together. The California Standards are looked to in our

home as clear and detailed sign posts for laying out the big plan. Where classroom teachers have lesson plans, I have a general idea of my goals for the week. The freedom to flow through the days without a bell to move us along is the best and the hardest thing about home schooling.

Since we don't have a set schedule to move us from one subject to the next, I am able to watch the children and see when a shift needs to happen. Sometimes we spend considerably less time than classroom schooled children on one activity, but usually it means more time. I wouldn't interrupt a child who is happily listing the differences between life for pioneer and modern children to insist on a recess break. That means the typical school subjects that are touched upon each day in a classroom setting get spaced out over several days, lop-

sided in favor of math sometimes and bingeing on great works of historical fiction on other days. It's a bit like the food pyramid. Does any family really eat all the servings of all the food groups in a day? Our diet is very healthy and balanced over time; so is our schooling.

Quite often we don't do much that looks like school. It is fun to see what you can learn about your children if you leave enough room in their schedules for them to follow their own interests. If they don't have "mind numbing" devices available to them, they will occupy themselves in ways that help them discover their personal passions. We don't have a TV or any gaming devices, so I never worry that long spans of time are being "wasted." I check on the kids and see elaborate plots being played out by children "too old" for imaginative play. (I back out quietly and don't ask them to come read Unit 2.2 of the social studies text.)

The following illustrates a typical home school mom's quandary:

One day Kerry, age 8, is on top of the grape arbor where she has been for over an hour. I know she's happy up there probably learning something. She looks really intent on whatever she's doing. I think, "Maybe I can make this 'count for' science. I start with, 'Whatcha doing?'"

She replies in a flood of words, "Just a minute, Mama, I need to finish this poem. I love writing poetry up here. I've written 4 already. I really need to learn to spell better. Sometimes even I can't tell what I wrote. Can you help



## Antibiotic resistance in animals a growing crisis

Most doctors commonly warn patients to never take antibiotics if they are not actually sick. Yet that is exactly what is happening on industrial (factory) farms.

According to the FDA, antibiotic resistance is a growing crisis, a result from overuse. The CDC estimates that 70% of antibiotics administered in the U.S. are given to farm animals in low doses everyday in their feed and water to speed growth and keep them alive in filthy and cruel conditions on today's factory farms. Antibiotic resistance linked to farm animals is on the rise. As a result, new deadly strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria develop in the animals and transfer to people through contact with the animals, eating and handling the meat, eating food grown in contaminated manure, or drinking water polluted by factory farm runoff. Once the bacteria are loose in the environment, they breed

even more resistance.

One deadly example, MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staph) is reportedly responsible for more deaths per year in the U.S. than AIDS. Moreover, the burden of antibiotic resistance is borne by the most vulnerable in our society: children, elderly, and those with weakened immune systems, such as people undergoing chemotherapy or person with HIV/AIDS. Factory farms have become perfect laboratories for the development of mutant superbugs costing U.S. taxpayers \$4 to \$5 billion per year in healthcare costs.

H.R. 1549/S. 619, The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act, has been introduced in Congress. Agribusiness is trying to kill this bill, again putting profits ahead of people and animals. The American Medical Association and many others support this bill. California Proposition 2 (Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act) is the first step in the right direction but we still have a long way to go. Factory farms should stop cramming animals into tiny spaces so that non-therapeutic use of antibiotics aren't needed to keep animals who suffer in extreme and cruel conditions alive for profit.

Please contact your Federal legislators (Rep. Cardoza, Sen. Feinstein and Boxer) and urge them to support this legislation.

Michelle Setaro  
Modesto, CA

## Home school mom

me spell better? I bet they have books for that? Do you know how the water gets to the grapes up here? These top vines must really have to suck hard. Can we juice these? They would make good jelly. My arms are sore. I did 8 pull ups."

She can stay focused and disappears regularly for long stretches, but her attention span gets very short if we are trying to keep the subjects distinct from one another. I find our best learning happens in context.

Our daughter, Erin, loves music, crafts, drama, and dance. She wants to do it all and works and plays in a funny combination of total immersion and little spurts. When she learned how to knit, she knit several projects back to back, taking breaks for things like practicing music, eating, and doing math. A couple of weeks later she was making beads and designing jewelry. This summer she wrote a screenplay and filmed and edited a 45-minute movie. Every day for three weeks was devoted to the filming/editing process.

Erin's tendency is to throw herself into one project after another, leaving us wondering what she'll really be committed to and passionate about? Having an individualized approach to learning and scheduling gives me a clue to where she brings the most discipline and what is most important to her. No matter what Erin is tackling at the moment, she manages to find time to work in ten-minute sessions to practice her guitar several times a day. Before performances or competitions she practices really hard and in the exhilaration following a performance says things like, "Do you know what I'm going to do to reward myself?" (I'm thinking Baskin Robbins or Cold Stone.) "I'm going to learn that Ponce Sonata."

You might notice that I haven't mentioned a strictly disciplined approach to the 3 Rs? In our family we are disciplined about daily music practice, and after 4th grade we agree to a certain amount of math per week. It takes a big leap of faith

. . . from previous page

to believe that a healthy, curious child will learn what is necessary in order to be successful in a program like Modesto High's International Baccalaureate program (if that is what he or she chooses) without the threat of tests, a set curriculum and a rigorous schedule. It takes faith in the child and faith in my abilities as a parent-teacher.

How do I know that I have what it takes to guide these children through High School if that is the path they choose? By the time my second child, Katie, became a home schooled High School student, she was already well beyond my math capabilities and a much better musician than I. It's a good thing I had learned long before that she is the student, and I am the resource. My job is first and foremost to be a parent. As a parent educator I also helped her to meet her goal of preparing for college and getting accepted to a college of at least the UC level through independent home study, classes at MJC and Merced College, on-line classes and studying for the SATs. She did all the work. I helped her and listened.

Through my son, Patrick, I learned that children can be trusted to know where to focus their learning. He tried to tell me how much he liked Shakespeare at age 7. I was still thinking of him as an emergent reader when I saw him sitting on the couch holding the Complete Works of Shakespeare "reading" *As You Like It*. I thought it was cute that he wanted to look big. Actually, he was telling me what he really liked. Now he is studying drama at University of California at Santa Cruz and acting with Shakespeare Santa Cruz. It turned out he knew what he was interested in, even at age 7.

Children are so wise. Over the years I have learned to trust that they usually know best what needs to happen. Trust in my kids and trust in me: it does feel like a miracle that it works so well.



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# COMMENTARY: Racism's ugly head in Modesto

By JAMES COSTELLO

A poster portraying President Barack Obama in clown face was found on Saturday, August 8 stapled to a tree bordering the McHenry Museum at the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and I Sts. in Modesto. Printed at the bottom of the poster was the word, "Socialism."

In this context, a Black man in painted face, no less the president of the United States, conjures up multiple stereotypes, referring not only to Batman's evil Joker, but to a more problematical history of Black minstrels who were made the butt of debasing white humor and sometimes racist violence.

Had this poster been on private property, the owner could proclaim free speech, as offensive as that would be. However, since this piece of scurrilous trash was on public property, this writer took the liberty to remove it in the best spirit of graffiti abatement.



## MLK Commemoration needs your help

By JAMES COSTELLO

Although Martin Luther King, Jr. died over 40 years ago, his vision still uplifts and transforms countless people throughout the world. To keep that vision fresh and provocative locally, for the last fifteen years a committee of community groups including the Modesto Peace Life Center, the City of Modesto, Modesto Junior College, and California State University, Stanislaus has offered our community an inspiring Martin Luther King Commemoration.

We invite you to co-sponsor our 16th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration on Friday, January 22, 2010 at Modesto Junior College's Main Auditorium-Performing and Media Arts Center on East Campus at 7:00 p.m. Your reward

will be a stimulating evening and VIP seating.

The dynamic Willie Brown has accepted our invitation to speak. Mr. Brown has had an illustrious career serving over thirty years in the California State Assembly, fifteen years as its Speaker and, afterward, as the only African-American mayor of San Francisco.

Over the years we have brought a stimulating array of powerful speakers to our community: ministers J. Alfred Smith of Oakland's Allen Temple Baptist Church and Joseph Lowery of the SCLC; actors Greg Alan Williams, Edward James Olmos, Danny Glover, and Mike Farrell; Dr. King's daughter, the late Yolanda King; astronaut Dr. Mae Jemison; philosopher Cornel West; Indian activist Russell Means; football coach Herman Boone; Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Arun Gandhi, and last year, civil rights pioneer, Dr. Bob Moses.

Our speakers bring Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence into our contemporary reality by reflecting on their experiences and social commitments. They connect the past with the present to inspire us to act for a more just and peaceful future.

**The event is free so as many people as possible can attend. But our costs are considerable.** We depend solely on donations of money or services from our initial co-sponsors and from caring groups, businesses, and individuals like you. *Will you help us bring Willie Brown to our community?*

We — and our entire community — will appreciate your support of this significant civic event.

**ACTION:** Make your tax-deductible check payable to "Modesto Peace Life Center-MLK," and send it to Jim Costello, 1849 Richard Way, Ceres, CA 95307-4504. The Peace Life Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Our tax ID # is 94-2800825. Information: jcostello@igc.org

## A process for avoiding deception

From FactCheck.org, Annenberg Public Policy Center

1. **Keep an open mind.** Most of us have biases, and we can easily fool ourselves if we don't make a conscious effort to keep our minds open to new information. Psychologists have shown over and over again that humans naturally tend to accept any information that supports what they already believe, even if the information isn't very reliable. And humans also naturally tend to reject information that conflicts with those beliefs, even if the information is solid. These predilections are powerful. Unless we make an active effort to listen to all sides we can become trapped into believing something that isn't so, and won't even know it.

2. **Ask the right questions.** Don't accept claims at face value; test them by asking a few questions. Who is speaking, and where are they getting their information? How can I validate what they're saying? What facts would prove this claim wrong? Does the evidence presented really back up what's being said? If an ad says a product is "better" for instance, what does that mean? Better than what?

3. **Cross-check.** Don't rely on one source or one study, but look to see what others say. When two or three reliable sources independently report the same facts or conclusions, you can be more confident of them. But when two independent sources contradict each other, you know you need to dig more deeply to discover who's right.

4. **Consider the source.** Not all sources are equal. As any CSI viewer knows, sometimes, physical evidence is a better source than an eyewitness, whose memory can play tricks. And an eyewitness is more credible than somebody telling a story they heard from somebody else. By the same token, an Internet website that offers primary source material is more trustworthy than one that publishes information gained second- or third-hand. For example, official vote totals posted by a county clerk or state election board are more authoritative than election returns reported by a political blog or even a newspaper, which can be out of date or mistaken.

5. **Weigh the evidence.** Know the difference between random anecdotes and real scientific data from controlled studies. Know how to avoid common errors of reasoning, such as assuming that one thing causes another simply because the two happen one after the other. Does a rooster's crowing cause the sun to rise? Only a rooster would think so.

See <http://www.factchecked.org/ToolsOfTheTrade.aspx>

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