

Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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7 reasons to oppose surge in Afghanistan

By MADRE

MADRE, an international women's human rights organization, partners with community-based women's organizations worldwide to address issues of health and reproductive rights, economic development, education, and other human rights by providing resources, training, and support to enable our sister organizations to meet concrete needs in their communities while working to shift the balance of power to promote long-term development and social justice. Since 1983, MADRE has delivered nearly 25 million dollars worth of support to community-based women's organizations in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Balkans, and the United States. For more information, visit www.madre.org

We know that elements in the military and Congress exerted great pressure on President Obama to ratchet up the war on Afghanistan. To achieve a more rational and peaceful

outcome, we need to exert a counter-pressure. MADRE calls on the Obama administration to chart a whole new course in US-Afghan relations, based on the understanding that the US needs to engage with the rest of the world, not just occupy it.

Seven Reasons to Oppose a Troop Surge

1. More troops will mean more civilian casualties.

- Each year that the occupation drags on, more Afghan civilians are killed. In 2008 alone, **more than 2100 civilians were killed**, a 40 percent jump over 2007.
- The Taliban is known to **attack villages where US soldiers have been**. More US troops will make more civilians vulnerable to reprisal attacks.

Oppose troop surge . . . continued p. 8

Latin America: make an Alliance for Global Justice

By GEORGE PAUK

I . . . strongly believe that the Alliance for Global Justice (AFGI) is providing important work and great leadership for progress in our relations with our southern neighbor nations. We need to find ways to make the work of the Alliance for Global Justice much more prominent in order to get our nation on a good course.

In a time when it is increasingly obvious that our foreign policy has been very poor, it is essential that new policy be developed. For decades, the misinformation that has been disseminated to the people of the United States and the relations of our government with nations such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba have been a monumental disaster. . . .

Most of the people of the United States and also many in the other nations being impacted are not aware or not able to at least take into account the magnitude of the huge expen-

Latin America continued p. 8

California Universal Health Care Act of 2009 guarantees comprehensive benefits to every Californian

Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) recently announced the reintroduction of legislation that would provide all Californians with universal health care. The California Universal Health Care Act of 2009 would guarantee comprehensive health care benefits to every California resident and streamline claims and reimbursements, which will save billions of dollars in health care administrative costs. Under Senate Bill 810, every Californian would have medical, dental, vision, hospitalization and prescription drug benefits. The bill also preserves a patient's right to choose his or her own doctors and hospitals.

SB 810 is co-authored by 43 legislators in both houses and is supported by a broad coalition of patients, nurses, doctors, teachers and school employees, retired workers, local governments and school districts.

The California Universal Health Care Act is nearly identical to legislation (SB 840) that was introduced in 2007 by former Senator Sheila Kuehl. The California Legislature passed SB 840 in 2008, but was vetoed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

See SB 810 FACT SHEET on p. 11.

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Pancake Breakfast
Sunday June 7, 8 – Noon



Peace Camp, June 26 - 28
Registration Form inside

27th Annual Peace Camp June 26, 27, and 28, 2009



Camp Peaceful Pines
near Pinecrest, California



Registration Form

Early Registration Deadline: June 1, 2009

Adults (age 18 and older)

1. _____ Address: _____
 2. _____ City/State: _____ Zip _____
 3. _____ Phone#: _____
 4. _____ Email: _____

Total x \$70 ----- \$ _____

Youth (ages 4 -17)

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____
 3. _____ Age _____ 4. _____ Age _____

Total x \$50 ----- \$ _____

Infant (ages 0 - 3) _____ Age _____ **NO CHARGE**

Early registration discount by June 1: subtract \$10 per person _____ (-) \$ _____

I need vegetarian meals _____ Voluntary Donation for scholarships \$ _____

Special Health needs, allergies, etc. _____

Special needs for cabin assignment: _____ **GRAND TOTAL** \$ _____

I can offer/need a ride Friday _____ Saturday _____

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

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

Parent authorization for minor children (must be signed if applicable)

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

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

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

For camp information and scholarship availability:

Call Ken Schroeder, (209) 526-2303.

Have fun at Peace Camp 2009!

By KEN SCHROEDER

This summer marks the 27th year that peace-minded folks have gathered in the Sierras for Peace Camp. Join us on June 26-28 at Camp Peaceful Pines for great discussions, stimulating community and fun for people of all ages. The weekend offers workshops, hiking, campfire, singing, a talent show, children's activities and delicious, healthy meals.

This year's camp will feature community organizer Homero Mejia leading a session on "Organizing to Win Health Care for All." Homero has worked for four years with the Stanislaus and the San Joaquin County affiliates of PICO (People Improving Communities Together). Born in Michoacán, Mexico, he is a graduate of California State University, Stanislaus. Romero expresses his long-time passion for social justice through his involvement in theater, and with the organizations MEChA, PUENTE and Red Nations. He will lead us in understanding the issues behind the campaign to achieve health care for all and tell us how community organizing brings people together to win concrete improvements in the community and the nation.

Also, Modesto High School students will discuss local student activism. Their group has organized Project Ecuador to fund the building of a school in that country, has attended peace vigils regularly, and has organized students to work for positive change.

About Camp Peaceful Pines

At the 6,200-foot elevation in the Stanislaus National Forest on the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River, Camp Peaceful Pines rests 25 miles above Pinecrest off Hwy 108. Surrounded by tall peaks, the camp has a creek running through it. The Clark Fork and Sunrise Rock, with views of the river valley, are short walks from camp.

The camp features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents (unheated) and a cabin for those with special needs. Campers share in meal preparation, clean-up, and other work. Families and individuals are welcome.

The \$70 fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Young people are \$50. *Early registration, before June 1st, entitles registrants to a \$10.00 per person discount.* Because of all the volunteer work, the cost of camp is reasonable, having increased only \$5 since 2001. Partial financial aid and day-rates are also available.



Registration forms are available at www.stanislausconnections.org and can be printed and mailed. **Registration before May 15 will also get you a cool peace bumper sticker.**

Campers may arrive any time after 2:00 p.m. on Friday. The camp opens with supper on Friday and closes at noon on Sunday. Directions and information will be mailed to participants before camp.

ACTION: Info: Ken Schroeder in Modesto, 209-526-2303, kschroeder70@yahoo.com

Peace Camp is organized by the Modesto Peace Life Center.

How wonderful it is that nobody need
wait a single moment before starting
to improve the world.

— Anne Frank *Dairy of a Young Girl*
Young German Jewish diarist (1929-1945)

2009 Peace Essay Contest

Our world is filled with a variety of peacemakers. Some make the headlines while others quietly work behind the scenes. Some deal with international situation while others work in their own communities. They may be as close as a family member or next-door neighbor, or as far away as someone on the other side of the globe. The focus of each person's work may differ, but common to all peacemakers is a commitment to using nonviolent principals and actions to nurture and encourage a more peaceful world.

The 2009 Peace Essay Contest invited students to study *living* peacemakers in our community and throughout the world. Each writer nominated one of these peacemakers whose work inspired them, to be the 2009 Peacemaker of the Year.

The 23rd annual Peace Essay Contest received 448 qualifying essays.

Sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center and by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts, the contest was open to all students, grades 5 – 12, who live or attend school in Stanislaus County.

2009 Peace Essay Committee: Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Russ Matteson, Suzanne Meyer, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, and Shelly Scribner.



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No Ordinary Man

By SARAH LEWIS

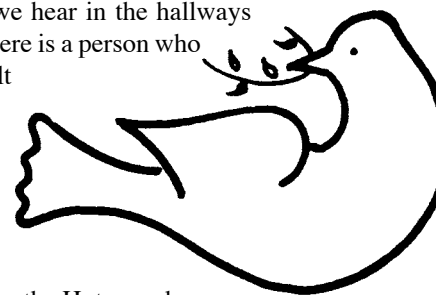
Division III ~ First Place

2009 Peace Essay Contest

La Loma Junior High School ~ Mrs. Lima

Few people have the power to change the world, but as Gandhi once said, "We must become the change we wish to see in the world." Every day each of us is faced with small choices of peacemaking. Will we remain calm when a rude driver cuts us off in traffic on the freeway? Will we overlook the offensive comments we hear in the hallways of our school? But once in awhile there is a person who is faced with a much more difficult choice—the choice of risking one's life to save the lives of others when no one else will.

On April 6, 1994 a man named Paul Rusesabagina was faced with this choice. For a long time in the nation of Rwanda, two ethnic groups—the Hutus and the Tutsis had been fighting with each other. When the fighting got out of control, thousands of people were being murdered every day. As the manager of a luxury hotel in Rwanda, Paul was thrown into the unusual position of choosing whether or not to shelter and protect potential victims in his hotel. His peacekeeping efforts were simple and effective. He calmly and skillfully negotiated under terrifying circumstances in order to get food and supplies for those in his care. By carefully maintaining friendships with local policemen and a few peacekeepers from the U.N., he managed to keep



the Hutu militants outside the hotel gates. He was able to save 1,268 Tutsis and Hutu refugees.

In November 2005 President George Bush presented Paul Rusesabagina the Presidential Medal of Freedom. At the ceremony President Bush said,

"That hotel soon became a haven amid the carnage Without that shelter, every one of them would have almost surely have been killed during those weeks and months of merciless terror. This good man saved them by holding off the enemy with his commanding presence, his shrewd manner of negotiating, and his incredible calm amid the crisis and chaos."

After witnessing first hand the extreme violence and cruelty in Rwanda and responding immediately to the need, Paul Rusesabagina has now created an organization called, The Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation. This organization provides support, care, and assistance to children orphaned by, and women abused during, the genocide in Rwanda. Paul recognized that there were more victims than just those who were murdered. His foundation provides funding to meet educational, vocational, mental health, medical and other social needs for these people.

As indicated by the title of his autobiography, *An Ordinary Man*, Paul Rusesabagina does not consider himself a hero. He says of himself, "I'm not a hero. I'm simply a man who made a decision to hold on to my family, my life, and my beliefs until the end." Although he didn't think he had any power or influence to save lives, his choices allowed him to be able to rescue over a thousand people. Paul Rusesabagina simply chose to become the change he wanted to see in the world.

The other first amendment freedom

By ANNE BRITTON, Book Fair Chairman,
Friends of the Modesto Library

The Constitution included the freedom of the press in the very first amendment because of its importance. The "press" has change mightily in 200+ years, with new formats and delivery systems. Though formats have changed, public libraries continue to provide access to information, opinion and commentary – regardless of point of view or the format. Today there are multiple video and audio resources, large print collections, electronic databases of health, news, and history at the County Libraries in thirteen Stanislaus communities. And of course they offer a free gateway to Internet for any and all. All of this at no charge.

But what good is freedom of the press without the ability to read! Women in Afghanistan have marched for just that right. Modesto Library's mission includes ReadingWorks' tutoring, storytimes, beginning readers, book lists of titles for appropriate grade levels, Traveling Tales collection, and special literacy events all of which promote a good foundation of early childhood reading in our community.

Times are tough. But as Anne Herbert* said in 1980: "Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries."

The Friends of the Modesto Library (www.modestolibraryfriends.org) was founded in 1974 to resist censorship of

material in the Modesto Library and support full access. One way this non-profit group continues to support the mission of the library is to provide the opportunity to buy low cost, high quality new books for children at an annual book sale. The Community Book Sale is coming up at the end of May. It is one way of helping the library to get us all through the current tough times.

On May 28-30, 2009 the Friends will host a sale of new children's books from over 100 publishers – all for 50% of regular price! There is also a "members only" pre-sale the evening before on May 27 from 6-8 p.m. when the selection will be at its best. The Friends' portion of the sale profits will be used to support the mission of the library. The volunteers who work the sale will earn books, many of which are donated to library and literacy programs. The biggest return will be the chance for teachers, parents and grandparents to find high quality, new books at exceptional bargain prices.

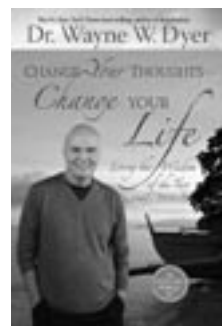
More books in the hands and homes of more children will help keep the "other" freedom of the press strong – the freedom to read!

*Quoted in *The Next Whole Earth Catalog: Access To Tools*, ed. Stewart Brand (1980).

A good book to go with your green tea

By MARGARET DEMOTT-FELDMAN

If meditating on a regular basis is one of your new year's resolutions, consider adding another centering activity, which would include reading verses of Lao-Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, an ancient Chinese text, laden with significant commentaries about the nature of our existence. The good news is that author Wayne Dyer has unearthed the twenty-five-hundred-year-old Asian classic for the reader and presents it in such a way that its many meaningful messages are readily available for those who seek a simple read that is reflective in nature.



Change Your Thoughts-Change Your Life, Living the Wisdom of the Tao is the product of significant research on the part of Dr. Dyer. He supplies the reader with an explanatory essay for each of the eighty-one verses of the Tao and includes ways to apply its timeless teachings to today's world in the section following each essay entitled "Do the Tao Now." If the reader puts into practice the wisdom of each verse as Dr.

Dyer claims he, himself, has done, Dyer promises a forever changed way of looking at one's life and an altogether more peaceful life that is in harmony with nature.

In Verse 1, "Living the Mystery", Dyer explains just what he thinks Lao-Tzu meant when he wrote these puzzling lines so long ago. Interpreting the essence of the verse for today's use, Dyer encourages the reader to, "...relax, let go, allow and recognize that some of your desires are about how you think the world *should* be, rather than how it *is* in that moment. Become an astute observer... judge less and listen more. Take time to open your mind to the fascinating *mystery* and uncertainty that we all experience." Following his interpretation, Dyer shows the reader how to use the verse's wisdom in dealing with life's annoyances or irritations. He encourages going within and permitting "the paradox of wanting the irritant to vanish and allowing it to be what it is." This "going within" and choosing to contemplate rather than react, which is encouraged throughout the book, is the key to changing one's life as Dyer assures his readers that his book will do for them.

Other verses include "Living with an Independent Mind," "Living by Your Inner Light," and "Living Without Accumulating," to name a few. Each verse contains wisdom for the reader as he journeys through life with an emphasis on using introspection when dealing with the many challenges that we all encounter. The ancient wisdom of the Tao was relevant more than twenty-five hundred years ago, and it still



applies today if only we choose to join Dr. Dyer and heed the advice.

If you need some help dealing with the stress of daily living, consider stopping by your local book store some time soon and picking up a copy of *Change Your Thoughts-Change Your Life*, and add a verse from the book once a day or once a week to your self-care routine. Reading this book can certainly enrich your life, and it can also help you on your own journey inward. Couldn't we all stand to be a little more thoughtful and a little less reactive in our everyday lives? That's precisely why this book is potentially a worthwhile read for anyone concerned with his own

personal development.

If you enjoy this book, Wayne Dyer has written many others, which are equally as good, in the field of self-development, including *There's a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem*, *Ten Secrets for Success and Inner Peace*, and *Being in Balance*. He has also produced a significant number of audio/CD programs and videocassettes, and he'll was a presenter at the *I Can Do It Conference* in San Diego this spring. In the meantime, consider engaging with the ancient wisdom that Dyer has made readily available in *Change Your Thoughts-Change Your Life*, and take him up on his offer to help you become a more peaceful, balanced person, so that your "ripple effect" in our humble existence is a positive one, one which is more effective in promoting peace.

New Community Garden springs up!

A Community Garden is developing on the back lot of the Modesto Church of the Brethren at 2301 Woodland Ave. Plots are available for members of the community to grow either produce or flowers, or both! Plots are on a first come, first served basis and will be randomly assigned. Although chemical pesticides and fertilizers are allowed in some areas of the garden, organic gardeners can indicate that they prefer a plot in the organic only area. All plots measure a minimum of 18 feet by 19.5 feet. A seasonal fee is required.

To sign up to garden, contact Leah Knipe or Sonia Ramirez at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 523-1438 or email goodnews@modcob.org

MJC offers exciting summer Spanish study in Mexico

By DAVID HOOBYAR, Adjunct Spanish Professor, Modesto Junior College

¡Ay ay ay México! Translation- Ahhhhh México! Land of ancient civilizations, fantastic gastronomy, sunny beaches and your chance to immerse yourself this summer in its culture while studying beautiful and practical Spanish, from June 12th to July 11th.

Modesto Junior College's Modern Language Department is taking students on a language study trip to Cuernavaca, close to México City, to give students an opportunity to live with a Mexican family and obtain college credit.

I just returned from a trip to the states of Jalisco and Nayarit. While there has been concern about México in the press lately, I found friendly people, interesting cultural contrasts and great experiences. Some caution — a desire to learn and a taste for adventure can really make it a great and memorable trip!

Find out more at <http://www.mjc.edu/litlang/spanishinmexico.html>. Attend an organizational meeting on Wednesday, May 6 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Founders Hall, Rm. 123, Modesto Junior College, East Campus, 435 College Ave.

stanislaus CONNECTIONS

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

By Lillian Vallee

55. Elder Hunger

Whenever my father visited me, in the last years of his life, the first thing he would do is to take an ordinary house broom and sweep the patio and sidewalk. He did this to help by contributing somehow to the order of the household, but the simple ritual seemed to clear away whatever had happened before his arrival and made his every visit feel like a new moon, a west wind, or a holy rite purifying the small space of any transgression. To this day, whenever I hear the swish of a broom, I think of his gentleness and humility. It wasn't until his death that we realized the high standard of his devotion and how critical it was in holding the family together. I have been thinking of my father again, with gratitude, as a result of two books which remind me of the profound hunger people of all ages have for the restrained but persistent guidance of elders who teach by example.

The first book was sent to me by a Lithuanian friend, accomplished photographer Arunas Baltenas, who for the last three years has been taking photographs of a cluster of villages in southwestern Lithuania; the book, a collaboration between Baltenas and Ona Drobeliene, is called *Forest Dwellers of Dzukai* and documents the ageing population which lives very simply, as villagers have lived there for centuries, with the forest at its center. The villagers' reliance on a forest economy (the soil is too poor for a productive farming) is expressed in their belief that "all that is good comes from the forest." The photographs are moving, lyrical: a windowsill decorated with moss, dried statice and berries; an old woman

bent over to light a votive on a grave (the villagers also take care of neglected grave sites); a man in a dugout poling his way across a small lake; a woman harvesting linden flowers; or a man in fur cap and smile herding cows to graze in the woods. With the exception of one photo, the people are all elderly, the women in head scarves and the men ruddy with outdoor work.

As stirring as the photos themselves, documenting a dying way of life, is the urgency of author and photographer to preserve and express something we are all hungering for: a straightforward, non-materialistic, balanced life, hard but beautiful, and always rich in villager relationships--to their God (the small, omnipresent shrines and the large, rough-hewn crosses), to their environment (each family has its own mushroom hunting "paths"), to each other (the wonderful photo of two women sharing a happy moment on a warm, tile stove), to their plants and animals (the cosseted horses, apiaries, tables and enameled bowls full of herbs), and to their dead (they build fires in the cemeteries in November and hold vigil). The lyricism of the photographs is celebratory and sorrowful. Where are the young people who should be inheriting this age-old knowledge? What important message is disappearing along with the restrained life style and distinctive dialects?

Another friend, Monolin (Manny) Moreno is finishing a book entitled *The Elder*, about revered Navajo elder Harry Jack. Moreno's book, similar to the Baltenas-Drobeliene book in its mournful undercurrents, documents the last years of Jack's life when he was changing from a spirited and healthy 500-mile runner to an increasingly incapacitated elder requiring a great deal of patience and care. Moreno describes how Jack's increasing frustration with the limitations of his failing body results in difficult and isolating behavior. This does not stop him, however, from expressing, at every opportunity, thankfulness for whatever is left. Jack, tough and unrelenting, teaches the author, and many other recovering alcohol and drug addicts, the importance of health, commitment to community, and sensitivity to the suffering of others, no matter what their backgrounds.

Both books are about the importance of elders who are devoted to their long-lived traditions and protocols, and even though the people of the two books are separated by continents and seas, the message is the same: cultural renewal resides in the spirit and in relationships, not in acquisition. In Lithuania the villages of the forest dwellers are being depopulated by young people seeking adventure and more

affluent lives in cities and abroad. In California the story is about the difficulty inherent in passing on the old ceremonial ways preserved at such a high price in Indian communities. In both cases the books are signaling potential losses of old and wise traditions still vibrant and needed more than ever. If there is an undercurrent of grief, however, it is mitigated by the hope that always resides in children.

In the Baltenas-Drobeliene book there is one photo of children with baskets; they are heading to church or rectory to have their dyed eggs and homemade sausages and breads blessed for Easter breakfast. They appear radiantly happy and entirely secure in this village, among their grandparents. Will they be the ones to take up the traditions of the elders?

In reviewing Moreno's book, I watched a videotaped scene in which a very old Harry Jack is sitting at a table, hunched and weary. In comes Little Joseph Cloud, two, maybe three years old with a drumstick someone had given him. Legs barely over the edge of the chair, he sits at the same table and begins to drum with surprising rhythm and seriousness. Harry Jack observes him for a moment and then, in spontaneous solidarity, joins in the drumming with the red plastic fly swatter he is holding in his hand. A current of delight passes between the two. The serious little boy drumming electrifies the old man who begins singing in his language a song as old as memory. Everything that is critical to our wholeness seems to hinge on what happens in this brief moment of mutual enchantment.

Sources: Arunas Baltenas and Ona Drobeliene, *Silu Dzukai* [The Forest Dwellers]; and Monolin (Manny) Moreno, *The Elder*; and videotape filmed by Brett Bearwatcher

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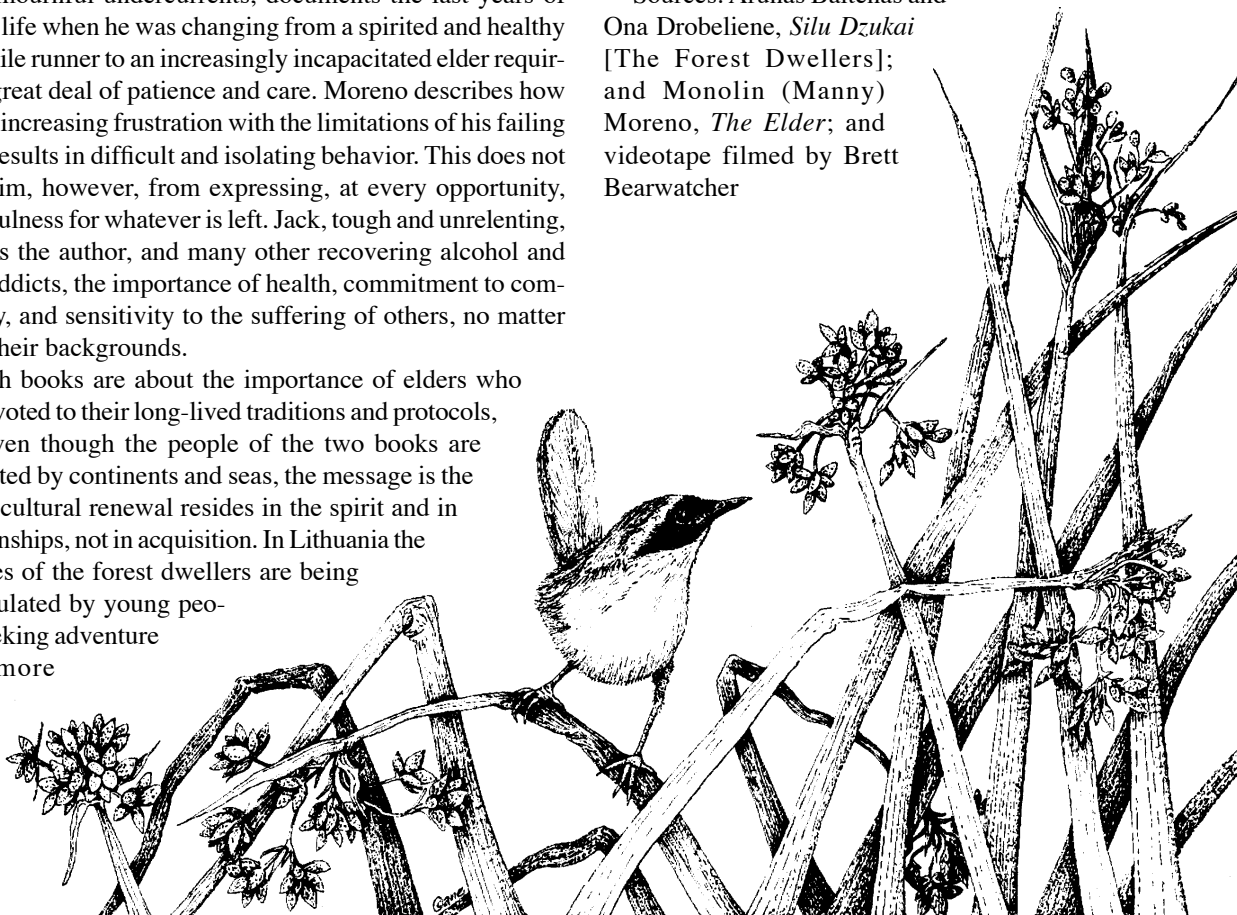
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The Richness in Costa Rica

By LOUIS & MARGARET DEMOTT-FELDMAN

Costa Rica, a small Latin American country whose name in Spanish means *rich coast*, has much more to be proud of in terms of richness than its beautiful coastline. In fact, its most valuable riches can't be measured in terms of its indigenous natural beauty or its material wealth. Rather, one can encounter Costa Rica's greatest riches in the hearts of its people, including the hearts of its wise government leaders.

Did you know that Costa Rica is the only country in the world that has no army or defense arrangement? Instead of building its defenses, Costa Rica is building the hearts of its people, one step at a time, in an effort to create a culture of peace. This is being done by means of combining a governmental Ministry for Peace with an Academy for Peace. Because of this, Costa Rica may well be a place where peace can be modeled for the rest of the world.



In 2009, a bill aimed at integrating a Ministry for Peace into the current Ministry of Justice in Costa Rica is expected to pass, and the new law will require that the Ministry for Justice and Peace collaborate with nonprofit organizations that are working for peace in Costa Rica. The educational vehicle for the Ministry for Peace is the Academy for Peace, sponsored by the Rasur Foundation, and founded and directed

by Rita Marie Johnson, a passionate educator who is helping to implement its novel peace skills practice, *BePeace*, into Costa Rica's

BePeace

public school system. She and her colleagues are setting out to convert the nation by teaching the specific skills outlined in the *BePeace* curriculum. Also included in the peace training are leaders of society and groups who deal with violent situations, such as policemen and prison guards.

BePeace utilizes a combination of a heart-mind centering followed by meaningful communication, which relies on strategies involving empathy and honesty. Unlike an intellectual approach where peaceful communication strategies start from a place in the mind, *BePeace* strategies start at the center of human emotion, the human heart, which is

then followed by a heart-brain connection. This centering is designed to help focused humans find practical solutions to everyday challenges and problems as well as guidance in creative planning. There is also training in empathetic listening which promotes an understanding of what the other party in a conflict is experiencing, followed by honest communication where needs and values are clarified in order to arrive at a peaceful connection between opposing parties. To sum it up, *BePeace* students practice the techniques of feeling peace, speaking peace, and being peace.

As noted in a recent issue of *Connections*, the effort to establish a Department of Peace in the U.S. was reintroduced into the House of Representatives in the form of HR 808. Many who support the movement for Departments of Peace consider *BePeace* to be an integral part of the peace movement at the international level. Surely, what is happening in Costa Rica has the potential to be a solid model of peace-making strategies that could be a part of our country's efforts to develop programs of peace at the government level and in the area of public education.

Because peaceful conflict resolution is a high priority in Costa Rica, it is not surprising that Costa Rica will host the 2009 Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace. Hopefully, representatives from the United States will join representatives from other countries there this summer to advance the cause of government-sponsored internal peace programs, modeled after the grassroots efforts in Costa Rica.



ACTION: For more information about the Academy for Peace in Costa Rica and the *BePeace* curriculum, go to www.be-peace.org. Learn about this

Costa Rican treasure, a treasure that we, too, in America can have, one that cultivates one of the potentially richest places in the world, the human heart.

NOTE: There will be a *BePeace* Intensive Workshop, May 25-29, 2009 at the Unity Center of Walnut Creek, 1871 Geary Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94597; 925 937-2191. Sign-up at <http://www.be-peace.org/3/events.htm>

You are invited to "Remember Iraq"

From direct aid Iraq

We invite you to Remember Iraq.

In December of 2008, The New York Times reported the shocking fact that, quietly and without much fanfare, all three major US television news networks had removed their full-time correspondents from Iraq. In the wake of the US presidential election, and with the media focusing on problems closer to home, the daily reality for Iraqis has largely disappeared from US headlines.

Despite this, Iraqis need faithful partners as much as ever. That's why we're asking you to organize an educational fundraiser as part of a nationwide effort called "Remember Iraq".

As we write, conditions for Iraq's people remain grave. Many continue to be deprived of essential infrastructure: drinkable water, electricity, healthcare, and sanitation. Government remains corrupt and largely unaccountable. Militias and criminal groups retain the ability to once more plunge Iraq into the nightmarish violence of the recent past, and an unwelcome and brutal foreign occupation - lying at the root of much of Iraq's suffering - enters its 7th year. Children, born in a time of war, are being raised in a climate of deprivation and uncertainty, without the means to prepare for a peaceful and productive future. Millions of Iraqis - one in five - remain displaced from their homes, having taken what refuge they can in other areas of Iraq or in other countries in the region, often in desperate conditions.

Many of us have worked for years to change US policy toward Iraq, end the occupation, and promote a future of peace between our peoples. We have a responsibility not to forget our relationship with the people of Iraq, now and in the future. Together, we can do more.

You're invited to participate in "Remember Iraq", a nationwide series of educational fundraisers taking place between March 20 - the day the US invaded Iraq in 2003 - and June 20 - World Refugee Day. The goals of "Remember Iraq" are to raise awareness about the continuing crises for Iraqis and to provide concrete means to engage in solidarity with those who suffer. In the process, we are inviting Americans to reaffirm our relationship and responsibility to the people of Iraq.

"The Rivers", new and never-before-seen film on DVD, featuring the stories of Iraqi DAI team members and aid recipients, all of whom are Iraqis experiencing displacement, is available for showing.

Consider joining us in this effort to make our shared future brighter than our collective past. For more information, to get started with organizing your event, or to order a copy of the film, email remember@directaidiraq.org or call 802-659-4281. Visit <http://www.directaidiraq.org/rememberiraq/>

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People who refuse to become enemies

By LEN and LIBBY TRAUBMAN

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes or decisions possible or impossible to be executed.

— Abraham Lincoln

After violence in Gaza and southern Israel, some Palestinians and Jews built new relationships and strengthened old ones. They fashioned a new kind of public sentiment - beyond fear, beyond borders, beyond war.

Some other people found old, worn-out reasons to withdraw from each other, backwards into their own narratives sometimes even out of fear of judgment from "their own" clans defying principles of change and life.

We cannot make peace with someone whom we refuse to listen to.... Seeking recognition of the truths on each side of a conflict - and recognizing that all parties to a war are wounded - is another part of the truth...

— Gene Knudsen Hoffman

From *Compassionate Listening: An Exploratory Sourcebook About Conflict Transformation*. READ the book at http://newconversations.net/compassion/compassionate_listening.pdf. PURCHASE it at <http://compassionatelistening.org/store/books>

People Who Refuse to Become Enemies

Mira and Noa: A Palestinian & Jew singing to the world

"There Must Be Another Way" continues to be sung together by Jewish Achinoam ("Noa") Nini and Palestinian Mira Awad. WATCH at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIsD1P0I9A>. They have been accused of being naive, sympathizers with the "other" side, and unfaithful to their own peoples. But the women view their music, presented in a mix of Hebrew, Arabic and English, as breaking barriers. HEAR their "Word" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwiDYB0eyRo> as they prepare to perform together at this year's Eurovision Song Contest in Moscow.

One Middle East citizen creates two Web havens for Palestinians and Jews to meet

Others are affected by what I am, and say, and do. And these others have also their sphere of influence. So that a single act of mine may spread in widening circles through a nation or humanity.

— William Ellery Channing

After the Gaza violence, Elad Vazana (Elad@havayati.co.il), one Israeli citizen created two Web havens for citizens across borders to begin engaging to cure the near-absence of Palestinian-Jewish relationships in the Holy Land and worldwide. "Bridges of Peace Between Gaza and Israel" The place for youth from Israel and Gaza, <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=57250485988>. Already with 161 participants, the vision is to create a community of youth who will first communicate then meet face-to-face some day soon.

"Creative ways to build trust & bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians," <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=66559766971>. There are over 248 participants in Elad's second creative initiative to help citizens finally communicate.

Hagar bilingual school students and parents stay close

Weathering the Gaza war was Hagar School - <http://traubman.igc.org/hagarschool.pdf> - the bilingual Arab-Jewish kindergarten in Be'er Sheva. Teacher Rada Alubra calls the children to order. About half of the 25 children are Jewish, the others are Arab. Alubra reads them a story in Arabic, while Jewish teacher, Hanita Hadad, interjects periodically in Hebrew. The classroom is festooned with pictures of animals, letters of the alphabet and the days of the week, all in Hebrew and Arabic.

The Hagar teachers, children, and parents were exemplary together during the war in Gaza, when missiles regularly struck Be'er Sheva. Arab-Jewish kindergarten is a bubble among Be'er Sheva social troubles. Published in Ha'aretz - 04 March 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1068528.html>.

"In the Negev, Israel's social problems are more extreme, as are relations between Arabs and Jews," said Yifat Hillel, the director of Hagar. "The war in Gaza just made the situation worse." "But among the parents, we actually felt that we had to pull together, that we were approaching the edge of a frightening abyss and that we had to reinforce the secure place we had created for ourselves," says parent Anis Farhat.

The parents, both Jewish and Arab, seem convinced that the contact between Arab and Jewish children lets the youngsters oppose extremism. One of the Jewish parents, Shlomit Someh-Lehman, commented, "Before my child is exposed to the winds of racism, he knows that Arab means Wasim or any other child at the kindergarten, children just like him."



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Interfaith engagement in England


In the wake of tragedy and hope, British Muslim and Jewish leaders have come together for interfaith initiatives that are not only important for achieving communal harmony in the UK, but were designed to inspire Middle Eastern political leaders to work for lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. British interfaith initiatives set example for co-religionists in the Middle East. Common Ground News Service - 24 Feb 2009, <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=24908&lan=en&sid=1&sp=0&isNew=1>

During the Gaza conflict, Britain saw a rise in both anti-Semitic and Islamophobic attacks on ordinary citizens. There was an arson attack on a London synagogue and the daughter of a Muslim leader was attacked in Central London and left unconscious. Despite this tension, however, there were encouraging signs. Dialogue between British Muslims and Jews, which has too long been stifled by the "elephant in the room" - the Arab-Israeli conflict - actually became more forthright, with greater attempts to harmonise theological and political positions.

Hundreds of Muslims, Jews join in Arizona

In Tucson, Arizona, the Annual Jewish-Muslim Peace Walk began as a response to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. 250 attended the 6th Annual Jewish-Muslim Peace Walk. Since that day there has been much more dialogue and understanding between Jews and Muslims in Tucson and all over North America.

<http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/daily/frontpage/111724.php>. Tucson Citizen - March 08, 2009.



Is someone you love gay?

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Modesto Chapter
meets on the
1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 7-9 pm
at the Emanuel Lutheran Church
324 College Ave.
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

Oppose troop surge in Afghanistan

... from page 1

2. More troops will not resolve the crisis.

- President Obama says the **main goal is to stop al-Qaeda** and prevent Afghanistan from being used as a base to launch attacks against the US. But he hasn't explained how a troop surge would further that goal or produce any positive results for people in Afghanistan.
 - Even Defense Secretary Robert Gates has written that, **"The United States cannot kill or capture its way to victory."**
 - Intensifying the war will not address the underlying reasons for the resurgence of the Taliban, namely:
 - popular outrage and fear of US attacks on civilians,
 - the corruption of the Karzai government,
 - and the support given to the Taliban by Pakistan.
- These are political problems that cannot be solved by force.

3. A troop surge has already been tried—and it failed.

- In 2007, the number of US/NATO troops was **increased by 45 percent**. During that surge, more civilians were killed than in the previous four years combined.

4. Rampant abuses of Afghan women's rights cannot be eliminated by force.

- The Bush Administration justified the invasion of Afghanistan by pointing to the Taliban's systematic abuse of women. But subsequent US policies in Afghanistan did not uphold women's human rights. **As a result:**
- 1 in every 3 Afghan women experience physical, psychological or sexual violence
- 70 to 80 percent of women face forced marriages in Afghanistan
- Every 30 minutes, an Afghan woman dies during childbirth
- 87 percent of Afghan women are illiterate
- 30 percent of girls have access to education in Afghanistan
- 44 years is the average life expectancy rate for women in Afghanistan

5. US troops are backing an unpopular, corrupt government

- The US hand-picked Afghan President Hamid Karzai, betraying many Afghans' hope for genuine democracy. Karzai's government is seen as **somewhere between inept and predatory**.
- In its efforts to defeat al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the US has brought to power notorious warlords, drug lords, and brutal militia leaders.
- **60 percent of Afghanistan's Parliament are either warlords or have ties to warlords.** One MP, Mohammad Mohaqiq, is **accused of nailing prisoners to walls.**
- Other government officials also stand accused of war

crimes, but are protected from prosecution by a general amnesty.

- Fear of US-allied warlords and militias leads to increased support for the Taliban, which promises to restore law and order.

6. US Troops are Undermining Humanitarian Operations

- The US has militarized humanitarian aid by creating "provincial reconstruction teams" (PRTs) that blur the line between combat operations and aid delivery.
- The PRTs use humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip to extort information from civilians. The practice turns urgently-needed aid into a weapon of war and endangers recipients by associating them with the US military.
- Aid operations are already threatened by the occupation. Half the country is now inaccessible to UN aid workers. **Attacks on aid workers have risen 400% since 2005**, leading many agencies to scale back their programs.

7. Most Afghans Want the US Out

- Afghans have a long and proud tradition of resisting foreign occupation. The current US troop build-up is no exception.
- **Afghan community groups, women's organizations, and student movements have protested the occupation**, but their voices are rarely heard in US media.
- **More than 90 percent of Afghans polled by the BBC** say they oppose the Taliban, but less than half see the US-led occupation as a positive alternative.

Afghan women want a surge in diplomacy, development and democracy, not troops. Here are 10 things we want to see on Obama's to-do list for Afghanistan:

- Set a timetable for the withdrawal of US and NATO troops.
- End US missile strikes in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Demilitarize aid operations and fund reconstruction efforts that benefit Afghans, not US corporations.
- Promote peace talks between all parties involved in the conflict. Negotiations should include women's organizations and other progressive forces and uphold the principle that human rights, including women's human rights, are non-negotiable.
- Compensate families and communities hurt by US military operations and pay war reparations.
- Support local models of governance, such as the Loya Jirga, not a charade of procedural democracy that empowers war criminals.
- Support demands of the Afghan women's movement to end violence against women, ensure women's access to critical services such as healthcare, education, food and water, and give real meaning to hard-won legal reforms meant to protect women's rights.
- Create a fund to meet Afghans' urgent humanitarian needs. After 30 years of intervention and war, the US owes Afghanistan nothing less.
- Support Afghan civil society, particularly women's organizations, which are a crucial counter-force to warlordism, terrorism and government corruption and a key to rebuilding Afghan society.
- Recognize that ultimately, decisions about what happens in Afghanistan should be made in Afghanistan, not Washington.

Published April 4, 2009 by CommonDreams.org

URL: <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/04/04-1>

Latin America

... from page 1

ditures and illegal international work that is being done to insult, interfere, and degrade those nations and their leaders. US organizations such as the NED, IRI, CIA, NSA, and our military have been and continue to operate either clandestinely or under false pretenses in these nations. This counter-productive work is well funded by our tax dollars and it is quite effective. It is no wonder that the socially progressive leaders we are attacking become known in our press for their criticism of our government.

Many of our top embassy people are the same individuals that led brutal illegal wars such as those of Central America. They have usually supported right wing government and even dictators but opposed social progressive governments. In many countries there has, and possibly will continue to be, a hostile and subversive foreign-service contingent. I hear that many of the State Department and our embassy positions will be difficult to change, as they are civil service jobs. I believe that these people now coordinate their work with the interventionist organization such as the NED and IRI who usually work under names and with methods that carefully hide and misrepresent their intent and work. ... They pretend to foster democracy but actually subvert it and even produce violence. The SOA has also trained many military personnel in subversive techniques and now tries to hide much of its work in other bases.

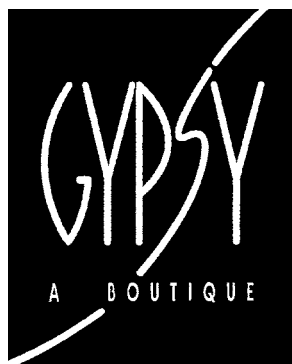
[U.S. Government policy in Latin America] should be properly known as a low intensity war carried out by proxy organizations. Often it works something like this: A small, biased poll is done by these organizations using blatant attack questions among the [people] they support in that country, then right wing groups pick up the drum beat echoing the "poll" results to "show" opposition to the socialist trending party, the election and the president, protests are organized and funded by the NED or IRI in an invisible chain through one of their offspring groups, news of the protests are planted back in the US press, false accusations fly and threats of innuendo such as election fraud, threats of dictatorship and violence are carefully forwarded, our ... politicians pick up the drumbeat and make trips to the country just before critical elections making announcements threatening retaliation. ... In summary, this program extends our "sphere of influence" with the worst of our exploitive business corporations and our continued building of military bases and recurring threat of direct intervention. This is the apparent outline of the insulting and illegal international actions that we are continuing. It [does not show] respect for many other democracies. These actions far outweigh our relatively small, compared to the EU, assistance for projects alleviating poverty and injustice.

The Alliance for Global Justice is almost alone in lighting these dark corners of our political action. Much more needs to be done but funds for investigation or even observation of the nefarious operations of the NED, IRI, etc. are lacking. The AFGJ needs support to continue and step up its work; it is severely underfunded and the staff has often volunteered work. AFGJ could ... do much good to counter the bad information and correct the actions of our nation.

Physician George Pauk lives in Phoenix, AZ and is a member of the board of Doctors for Global Health.

Alliance for Global Justice/Nicaragua Network, 1247 E St., SE, Washington, DC 20003, (202) 256-8032, AFGJ@afgj.org; www.nicanet.org

Edited.



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GEORGIA
ANDERSON

Lorrie Freitas: Poet and child/family advocate

Lorrie Freitas, a Modesto psychotherapist for the past 30 years, also has been a family court and private practice mediator and a coordinator with the Family Court Service orientation and parenting for parents of children of divorce.

A long time member of Loose Association, an improv training group to help people deal with psychological and social issues, Lorrie has conducted in-school programs through the Stanislaus County Department of education and Modesto City Schools on problem resolution skill and conflict management. She also has facilitated numerous personal and psychological skill and development workshops.

A supportive member of the Modesto Peace/Life Center, Lorrie often accompanies the P/LC Song Circle on guitar and ukulele, and teaches ukulele locally (see calendar). Lorrie Freitas: Poet and child/family advocate.

Eighteen

Eighteen had come
So it was time for her to go
Good-bye and here's your suitcase
We'll take in another child
Until she's grown like you
Then send her out to nowhere
Unprotected
Unconnected
At eighteen.
She caught a ride to the future
On a truck with eighteen wheels
And a driver with bad intentions
Eighteen sounded good

— Lin Sexton

Going In Different Directions

Dinnertime is coming soon,
Would you set the knife and spoon?
I'm going out. I'll be back later.
I'll just grab a bite from the refrigerator.

When will you be back?
Don't ask.
I'm on a task.
Mainly... growing up real fast

When will you clean your room?
I haven't time to use the broom.
I'm meeting a friend downtown.
A movie, snack, you know, hang around.

When will you give your dog a bath?
You are about to get my wrath.
All you think of are monster chores.
I'm learning to break dance NOT clean floors.

When will you do your homework?
You know my studies are the last thing that I shirk.
Anyways, staying up past midnight gets me my best A's
Don't I get my teacher's praise?

For goodness sake,
Give that girl a break.
In no time she will be
Old and tired like me.
Sitting in this rocking chair twiddling her thumbs,
Looking for thoughts to have before the reaper comes.
Wish I could drive her stick shift.
Let that girl fly and give both our hearts a lift.

So much happens while you are looking the other way:

While I was decorating your bedroom during your
pink flowered stage,
Your little hamster Lola quickly aged in her fancy
purple cage.

I was down at my office working away,
You were home running hard at play, your legs growing
longer by the day.

The paint on the house was wearing down from the
winter storm
While I was cooking soup for us and making the house
feel warm.

I discovered the tires on the car were going to wear thin,
Whether we went for a ride or decided to stay in,

While I was planning for your years of college up ahead,
You found your first love and felt the terrible pain of loss
and dread.

While I gained, then lost, then gained a pound again,
Nana made our Thursday suppers fun and filling from
within.

Summer saw us swimming laps racing side by side,
With peaches ripening on the tree,

While I was busy tending to something pending,
You grew up and moved away from me.

Lorrie Freitas
August 2008

By the Window — connie Post

originally published in Carquinez Poetry Review

I used to put your baby chair facing the backyard
Facing the big pane glass window

You were so quiet, as I saw your spirit lift and you were
soon lost
Inside the dance of leaves of the tall tree outside

At five months, you would stare for what seemed hours
Cooing at the melodic motion of leaves, your hands and feet
moving
Synchronized with each turn of the tree's kaleidoscope of
light

As the afternoon would seem to drip down upon me
I found tasks to do, not far away, and I would listen....
I would fall effortlessly into your gentle baby sounds
Feeling certain that you would grow to love nature
And that I must be doing something right, to have such a
calm baby

I didn't know then
That the temporary disappearance from this world
Was only the beginning of autism

It was the dawning of other worlds
Of prisms that would take you from us
That would take language from you

It was genesis of a specific kind of spinning
That would yearn to make the picture whole, centered,
To make the light and its refraction seem just right

It is a time encapsulated in my mind,
When I could not have known where your silent motion
would take us
Yet I still cannot separate from it, still cannot disengage
from that time
When I knew where certainty ended and began

Yet, you walk in the living room today
A young man with brown straight hair

Taller than I, slender and carrying a blanket you've had
since you were three

You go to the couch by the window, cover yourself
in warmth
Place your head on the distinct edge of the couch pillow
And watch the leaves dance above you on the trellis outside
Adjusting your position, to merge with all I cannot
comprehend

You smile in a satin and oceanic serenity, I have rarely seen
in another
Become immersed in the incandescence of the entirety of
this one day
This one afternoon from which I cannot disengage
And I realize that you have grown
And have grown to love nature

And that as much as I have lost and found you
In all the waltzes of leaves and light
That I must have done something right.



Tolan article biased against Israel

I was amazed to find that Connections published a 2 and 1/4 article page article heavily biased against Israel. You did not give equal space to a contrary view. The article is very much missing in several key facts.

First, when the state of Israel was created, a two-state solution was proposed and rejected by the Palestinians. Second, the Palestinians are not and never have been interested in a two-state solution; they want the destruction of the state of Israel. Even if a two-state solution was formalized, they would continue with their plans to eliminate Israel.

The author mentions what he felt were excessive security procedures. These were brought about because of the ongoing hostility toward Israel by the Palestinians. Doesn't Israel have a right to defend itself against unwarranted aggression? The 1967 war which the Palestinians lost caused the occupation of the West Bank. Israel believes it is necessary for its security, and history has proved that it is right. What has transpired, the Palestinians have brought down on their own heads and could have been avoided if they had originally accepted the two-state solution proposed by the U.N. If now they end up with no state, then their support of the violence of HAMAS has born this fruit.

The author is correct; time has, in all probability, by-passed a two-state solution. Sadly the bigotry and prejudice of the Palestinians have born them nothing but bitterness and will continue to do so unless they change their ways. It is sad that these two great peoples cannot find a way to live peaceably in one state side-by-side working with each other to each other's mutual benefit.

Religious beliefs should bring us together not separate us with violence and bloodshed.

Peace.

Ken Kohler

Modesto

President Obama, avoid past mistakes

March 29, 2009

The White House

Dear President Obama,

Having lived through the Nixon, Reagan, Bush and Bush years, I could only hope that vision and wisdom would someday return to the United States. Your campaign and election fulfilled that hope beyond what I ever imagined possible.

With that in mind, it is out of deep respect and admiration that I write you my concerns about your plans for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I am concerned both for your success as President, your legacy, and moreover, for the people of those countries and for our health as a nation. Last night, I saw the movie "Innocent Voices", about the forced recruitment of twelve year olds in the Civil War in El Salvador. The results of that moral perversion can perhaps be seen to

this day on our own streets in the acts of Mara Salvatrucha. Omnipresent in that war and so many others were U.S. troops acting as advisers.

On December 20, 1989, we woke to the reality that the United States had invaded Panamá. Seared in my memory is the television image of U.S. troops at the shore aiming machine guns across Balboa Avenue at school children in their white uniforms waiting for the bus in front of our family's neighborhood in Panamá Viejo. We were fortunate that none of our family members died in that surgical removal of Noriega that killed 7,000 Panamanians. My older son was sixteen at the time. Had the draft still been present and had he been slightly older, he might have been sent to wage war against his own family.

The United States has brought death, destruction and moral perversion to too many countries under the pretext of military education and advice. The School of the Americas is one infamous example, training corrupt and brutal military leaders in countries from Central America to the Southern Cone. The outcome has never been good. Families are destroyed, the social structure and infrastructure of these countries is often damaged for years to come and the basic human values of respect for life and the Golden Rule are lost. We cannot expect children in such conditions to grow up morally healthy.

President Obama, I do not understand all the factors you have considered in charting your Afghanistan/Pakistan policy. However, I ask that you please consider very carefully what you plan to do. Please do not allow this move to become your Vietnam or to follow the disastrous course of the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan. Please do not allow our country, in the name of military advisors or by other means to recreate the damage we have caused to so many Latin America countries in yet another region of the world.

Sincerely yours,

Marianne Villalobos

Modesto

Peace Center TV update

By BRAD JOHNSON

Watch TV shows produced by the Modesto Peace Life Center at:

Comcast Cable Public Access Ch. 26, WEDNESDAYS and SATURDAY nights, 9 pm-10 pm.

Stay tuned, after the Saturday night show for Brad Johnson's two-hour show with more free speech and Indy Media programming. Brad is also on Sunday nights 10 pm-12 midnight.

County-wide (Charter Cable Ch. 15), Brad's show is Thursday nights, 7:30-8 pm (Myrtle Osner interview) and Friday and Sunday nights, 8pm-10pm, (Salida meeting or local events, community programming, local bands etc.)

Brad needs volunteers to help run A/V gear at the Salida town meeting once a month and, also board members for the Modesto Cable TV Public Access board of directors.

Check out the "PLC Post Cards to Obama" video as well as the new video of local bands playing at the Modesto sound concert at 1010 10Th street on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/PublicAccess26> or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9cF29ceiUk&feature=channel_page

RADIO: Listen to the all-new X106.1 FM radio, streaming from <http://webpages.charter.net/partytown/ebb.htm>



UC Berkeley workshop on trade and immigration

"U.S. Trade Policy & its Impacts on Food, Land, and Immigration" at UC Berkeley, Saturday, May 2. Barrows Hall, 1p.m. Panel:

NAFTA: David Bacon: NAFTA's impacts on Mexican farmers and workers; implications for immigration to the U.S.

CAFTA: Katherine Hoyt, Nicaragua Network: CAFTA's impacts on farmers/workers/food in those countries; examples of the resistance.

Immigration: Colin Rajah, National Network of Immigrant and Refugee Rights: How US immigration policy fits with US trade policy; and how immigrant-rights movements are resisting.

Agrarian and Land reform: Angus Wright: Successes and setbacks in Brazil; the work of the MST & Via Campesina.

Biofuels: Eric Holt Gimenez, Food First: US gov't and corporate promotion of biofuels; use of land, esp. in Brazil/Amazon.

Indigenous issues/mega projects: Maria Ramos, NISGUA: How mega/infrastructure projects affect farmers/workers; examples of resistance.

US trade with /policy toward Venezuela: Martin Sanchez: results from Summit of the Americas? Any prospects for change in US policy now?

Possible workshops:

- Immigration, food security, and US relations - comparison of Cuba and Haiti.
- Constructing alternatives in food/land/trade? - Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador.
- Big agribusiness in South America - Argentina/Uruguay/Brazil etc.
- Militarization & Counterinsurgency How "Plan Colombia" and "Plan Mexico" support the neoliberal agenda.

Info: North American Congress on Latin America, www.NACLA.org

SB 810 (LENO): The California Universal Healthcare Act

Affordable Health Insurance for All Californians

Background: There are 7 million uninsured Californians, but as insurance companies reduce health coverage, most insured Americans are now worried about how to pay for their health care if they get sick.

The U.S. spends more on health care—and gets less for it—than any other wealthy country. The \$2.5 trillion that we spend every year (17.6% of our GDP) is twice as costly as other wealthy nations, but it buys us a health care system ranked 37th by the World Health Organization. The quality of care in the U.S. is falling behind other wealthy nations.

California spent an estimated \$212 billion in healthcare last year. This is plenty of money to provide every resident of the state with excellent healthcare, ensure fair and reliable reimbursements to doctors, nurses and other providers, and guarantee a high quality of care for all.

SB 810 (Leno), the California Universal Healthcare Act would provide fiscally sound, affordable healthcare to all Californians, give every Californian the right to choose his or her own physician and control health cost inflation.

Truly Universal: Eligibility is based on residency, instead of on employment or income. Under the Act, all residents are covered. No California resident will ever again lose his or her health insurance because of unaffordable insurance premiums, because he or she changes or loses a job, goes to or graduates from college or has a pre-existing medical condition.

Shared Responsibility: Under the Act everyone – individuals, employers and government, pays something in and everyone gets healthcare.

Affordable: The plan involves **NO NEW SPENDING** on healthcare. The system will be paid for by federal, state and county monies already being spent on healthcare and by affordable insurance premiums that replace all premiums, deductibles, out-of-pocket payments and co-pays now paid by employers and consumers.

Total Choice: Under SB 810, delivery of care remains as it is; a competitive mix of public and private providers. All consumers have complete freedom to choose their healthcare providers. No more restrictive HMO networks.

Fair Reimbursements: The Act requires actuarially sound reimbursements for providers. Doctors, nurses, hospitals and other healthcare providers will receive fair and reasonable reimbursements for all covered services they provide. No more uncompensated care.

Efficient: The Act eliminates waste by consolidating the functions of many insurance companies into one comprehensive insurance plan, saving the state and consumers billions of dollars each year. Currently about half of every dollar spent on healthcare is squandered on clinical and administrative waste, insurance company profits, and overpriced pharmaceuticals. The Act is based on a model that has been estimated to save California about \$20 billion through reduced administrative costs in the first year alone.

Under the Act, California will use its purchasing power to buy prescription drugs and durable medical equipment in bulk. It has been estimated that this model of system-wide bulk purchasing could save California \$5.2 billion in the first year.

Most importantly, the Act will make our healthcare system more reliable and secure by stabilizing the growth in health spending; linking spending increases to state GDP and population growth, employment rates and other relevant demographic indicators.

The Act will combine needed cost controls with medical standards that use the best available medical science, and place an emphasis on preventative and primary care to

Dangers of drugs: powerful theater piece at Gallo Center

The Gallo Center for the Arts will present a groundbreaking, week-long community project dealing with the epidemic of crystal-meth, with the presentation of the acclaimed, award-winning play *Cranked* on May 7-13. The project includes one public performance at the Gallo Center on Saturday, May 9th at 8:00 p.m. While *Cranked* has only one public performance at the Center, cast members perform the show a dozen more times throughout the community for schools and after school programs for one week.

Cranked is the first 'prevention intervention' piece that creates awareness and educates families about the crystal-meth epidemic existent in the Central Valley," said Dave Pier, Executive Director of the Gallo Center.

Tickets range from \$8 to \$12, with limited box seats available for \$15. A 15% discount is available for groups of 15 or more. To order, visit www.galloarts.org or call (209) 338-2100.

improve California's overall health in a way that also saves billions of dollars.

The Act utilizes proven financial incentives that support the delivery of high quality care, including bonuses for providers working in rural or under-served areas. The plan invests in needed healthcare infrastructure such as electronic claims and reimbursement systems and statewide medical databases that improve healthcare quality.

Benefits: Coverage includes all care prescribed by a patient's healthcare provider that meets accepted standards of care and practice.

Specifically, coverage includes hospital, medical, surgical, and mental health; dental and vision care; prescription drugs and medical equipment such as hearing aids; emergency care including ambulance; skilled nursing care after hospitalization; substance abuse recovery programs; health education and translation services, including services for those with hearing and vision impairments; transportation needed to access covered services, diagnostic testing; and hospice care.

Download a copy of the bill at http://info.sen.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=sb_810&sess=CUR&house=B%20&site=sen

For more information contact Sara Rogers at (916) 651-4646 or sara.rogers@sen.ca.gov or Zak Meyer-Krings at (916) 651-4003 or zak.meyerkrings@sen.ca.gov

Visit <http://www.healthcareforall.org/>

Attend "The Single Payer Solution: An Education Conference on Health Care in California," Saturday, May 9, 2009, 9:00AM to 3:30PM, Pasadena Presbyterian Church. Cost of Conference: FREE. Optional Euro-Pane box lunch: \$7.00 Plenary speakers: Senator Sheila Kuehl, retired, author of SB 840; Sara Rogers, Health consultant to Senator Mark Leno, principal author of SB 810; Elizabeth Sholes, Directory Of Public Policy - California Church Impact. Other workshops and speakers. Details at https://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/1308/images/Single_Payer_Conference_Pasadena.pdf

Intensive Summer Course: HIROSHIMA and PEACE

The Faculty of International Studies, Hiroshima City University, is sponsoring an Intensive Summer Course: HIROSHIMA and PEACE. Participants will seriously explore current peace-related issues under the guidance of researchers and scholars from a variety of disciplines, ranging from international relations (including issues related to Islam) and media studies to nuclear weapons and the environment. *This course will be conducted in English*, so the ability to use spoken and written English is essential.

Period: Undergraduates from July 28 to August 7; Graduates from July 28 to August 10.

Venue: Hiroshima City University

Credit: 3 credits for both undergraduate and graduate students. Tuition and Material Fee: 20,000YEN (~\$199.00) for undergraduates and 21,000YEN (~\$209.00) for graduates. Home-stay housing for foreign participants will be provided free. The deadline to apply is May 1, 2009.

Info: www.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/Hiroshima-and-Peace/index.htm. Office of Intensive Summer Course, Faculty of International Studies, Hiroshima City University, Ozuka-higashi, Asaminami-ku, Hiroshima, 731-3194, JAPAN. Phone: +81-82-830-1505, fax: +81-82-830-1657 Email: Hiroshima-and-Peace@office.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp

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Photos and ADS should be submitted as high-resolution JPEG or TIFF files. Do NOT submit as pdf files if possible.

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