



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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Christmas Truce: a burst of humanity in a dark time

By SANDY SAMPLE

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, 2014, will mark the 100th anniversary of a spontaneous World War I event that has become legendary through tales told around campfires, letters sent home and printed in newspapers, stories retold by aging veterans, and stories passed on in books, songs, and even a picture book for children.

The story has traveled around the world countless times, summoning tears from those who hear it and prompting fresh pondering of a age-old question: "Why do nations find it easier to wage war than to create lasting peace?"

When these events occurred almost a hundred years ago, they were unplanned, unanticipated, and certainly not blessed by military leaders on either side in the war. Yet they had a powerful lifelong effect on those soldiers who found themselves participating in what we now call The Christmas Truce.

The Christmas Truce began early on Christmas Eve in 1914 and continued for a day or more, at many points along the lines of battle on the Western Front, in Flanders (northern Belgium) where German troops were hunkered down in trenches on one side of No Man's Land and English troops were huddled in similar trenches on the other side of the battlefield.

As darkness fell, soldiers on both sides were cold, weary, homesick and filled with yearning for the kind of Christmas cheer they had always known back home. Though

the English soldiers had received brass boxes filled with cigarettes and a Christmas card from the King and Queen, they were not cheered — and they also suspected that at military headquarters far away, the generals had probably received brandy and fur-lined gloves. The German soldiers felt a similar longing for their homes and hearths so far away.

It was cold and foggy on those lines of battle, and soldiers on both sides were weary of war, even though they believed in the values and ways of life they had been taught they

were fighting to preserve. And then small, isolated events occurred along two-thirds of the British-held sections of the front that warmed even the coldest war-weary hearts, that collectively became The Christmas Truce.

It took various forms in various places along the front. A Christmas song sung in German was echoed by the same song sung in English. A wooden board with a hastily-scrrawled message, "you no fight, we no fight" was hoisted high. A white flag was carried into No Man's Land by a lone young soldier. Two soldiers climbed out of their trench, waved across the field, then climbed back down — and when no shots were fired, soldiers on both sides cautiously climbed out unarmed and met in the middle. A fir tree was chopped down and set up in the middle of the field.

By the afternoon on Christmas Day, thou-



TRUCE cont. p2

6 Ways Americans Voted Against Corporate Power in the Most Expensive Midterm Elections Ever

So the national elections didn't go so well. But across the country—from California to North Dakota—citizens made decisions that will give you reason to hope.

By MARY HANSEN and KAYLA SCHULTZ

Deep breaths, everyone. The midterm election didn't exactly go how many people hoped. The Democrats' loss of the Senate could mean a Congress that's a lot friendlier to things like the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline and the adoption of sweeping new trade deals.

But don't despair just yet.

In a few statewide ballot measures and local elections, Americans voted against corporate interests, embracing progressive

policies (and even a couple progressive politicians). They endorsed protecting the environment from oil and gas companies, getting corporate money (like the record \$3.76 billion spent during this midterm election) out of politics, and favoring local businesses over chain stores.

Here are six local victories that got us excited.

1. People in Ohio, Massachusetts, Florida, Illinois—and a whole lot of Wisconsinites—voted to overturn Citizens United

In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled on

6 WAYS cont. p8



Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Holiday Party Potluck & Song Fest

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Join Honduras Delegation, Jan. 25-Feb. 3, 2015

State of democracy one-year after the elections: insecurity and migration

Honduras is being increasingly described as “nearly a failed State.” Elections in Nov. 2013, which the Honduran oligarchy and its US government supporters hoped would put the coup of 2009 behind it, has instead seen a continuation of official lawlessness, impunity for the most heinous crimes, threats, killings and illegal evictions of farming communities and struggles over land rights between communities and foreign tourism and mining companies. Over 100 journalists and lawyers have been murdered with no one brought to trial while farm cooperatives, democracy and human rights activists, indigenous and LGBTQ leaders live under death threats and danger of sudden violence.

Activists and popular organizations in Honduras call for international solidarity and accompaniment. This delegation will meet with political and popular movement leadership to look at the state of democracy. We’ll talk with many individuals and groups about the current situation, the US role in making Honduras the “murder capital of the world”, and how we can provide solidarity support from the US and Canada. The delegation, based in Tegucigalpa will travel outside the capital to witness first-hand what Hondurans are living through.

The \$950 delegation fee includes double occupancy hotel rooms, in-country transportation, all meals, translation and an information-packed itinerary organized. (International airfare not included.) To apply, send email to AfGJ National Co-Coordinator, Chuck Kaufman, Chuck@AFGJ.org.



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John McCutcheon back for a Peace/Life Concert January 15

John McCutcheon returns in a benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Thursday, January 15 at 7pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Avenue. This concert will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the events that inspired John’s classic peace song, “Christmas in the Trenches.” [Read more; see “A Christmas Truce: a burst of humanity in a dark time” this issue.]

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door and youth 18 and under are \$5. Groups of 10 or more are \$15 per person. Tickets can be purchased by check or cash at the Brethren Church, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438 or at Beads of Contentment, 1028 J St., Modesto, 523-6335. Out-of-towners

can call the church to arrange to purchase tickets by mail. John McCutcheon concert tickets are a meaningful holiday gift.

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the concert. You will receive tickets to the concert, your name in the program, and reserved seating. Five levels of sponsorship are available:

Autoharp — \$40 *One ticket*

Guitar — \$75 *Two tickets*

Banjo — \$150 *Four tickets*

Piano — \$300 *Eight tickets*

Hammer Dulcimer — \$500 *Sixteen tickets*,

For information on sponsorships, contact Michael Jurkovic, 209-614-1573.

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

By DAN ONORATO

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

It’s December so it’s time to get together and partee! Which is to say, *bring food to share and enjoy the favorite dishes and beverages other people bring, and then wiggle the vocal chords into wintry tune for some lively, frolicking singing.*

Once again, by popular demand, Maestro **John Poat**, lead singer of the local band Wooden Nickel, will strum and tickle his guitar and rouse us into singing a wide variety of

songs, from holiday and folk favorites to peace, labor, and rhythm and blues favorites, and, of course, everyone’s triple star Beatles delights.

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

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

A Christmas Truce

from page 1

sands of British and German soldiers were trading food, cigarettes, souvenirs, and sharing haircuts, family pictures, and in one place, a barrel of beer. Along several stretches of No Man’s Land, soccer games were played on frozen ground pocked with shell holes, using tin cans or sandbags stuffed with straw as soccer balls. Someone slaughtered a pig, cooked it in No Man’s Land, and shared it with whoever was hungry, no matter what side he was on.

In some parts of the Western Front, the Christmas Truce lasted for only a few hours, though it continued longer in other places. But, inevitably, the sounds of gunfire and mortar rounds replaced the sounds of caroling and laughter. Some soldiers wrote letters home about it, and some of these were printed in hometown newspapers, but for many, nobody they told believed it could have happened. Good will that might

have become friendship yielded to duty that called soldiers on both sides back to war. The war did not end, and would not end for another four years.

It has been said that the Christmas Truce represented an outburst of spontaneous solidarity among ordinary, working-class soldiers that outraged higher-ups and militarists on both sides. And indeed, as Christmas Day approached in 1915, all British units received strict orders that there be no repeat of the spontaneous truce of the previous year. The Christmas Truce was, perhaps, but a brief burst of glory in a dark time. But to those who experienced it, that burst of glory formed a powerful memory that lingered long and was held tenderly.

The Christmas Truce is the theme of this year’s Peace Essay Contest, and we’ll see how students view the possibilities the story opens up for how they view the world and their own lives. It will also be one of the most moving of the songs John McCutcheon sings at his Modesto Concert on January 15th. Please join us in celebrating its 100th Anniversary, and may the power of its story call forth something of truth and possibility for your life also.

Read more; see “John McCutcheon back for a Peace/Life Concert Jan. 15” above.

Be informed!

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

Clayborne Carson featured speaker at Sonora MLK celebration

By PAT CERVELLI

January 11 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee in Sonora. Since 1996, the group has presented a program to commemorate the work of Dr. King each January. The event has grown over the years and now about 400 people attend the free celebration at the Sonora High School auditorium. This year the featured speaker will be Dr. Clayborne Carson, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Centennial Professor of History at Stanford University and the founder of its *Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute* which houses the official MLK archives. His topic is Income Inequality.

The Sonora event begins at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 11 at the Sonora High School Auditorium located at the corner of N. Washington St. and Shaws Flat Rd. The program will include music and the prizes for the essay contest. It will be followed by a reception with refreshments in the school cafeteria. Admission is free and the site is handicapped accessible.

Dr. King directly addressed income inequality in his later years when he was organizing the *Poor People's Campaign* in 1968. After observing that gains in civil rights had not improved the material conditions of life for most African-Americans, Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference began organizing the *Poor People's Campaign* to alleviate poverty for all Americans regardless of race: African-Americans, Whites, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans and Puerto Ricans. In 1966, Dr. King and the SCLC resolved to expand the civil rights struggle to

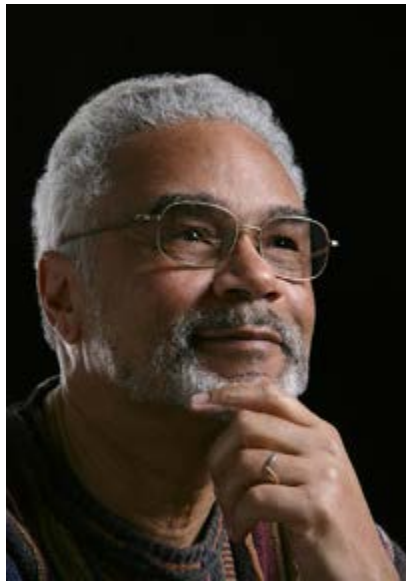


Photo: Michael Colopy

include demands for economic justice. Dr. King challenged the Vietnam War which not only violated his belief in non-violence but was draining money away from the anti-poverty programs of LBJ's *Great Society*. Dr. King said, "We believe the highest patriotism demands the ending of the war and the opening of a bloodless war to final victory over racism and poverty."

The *Poor People's Campaign* presented its demand to Congress for an "economic bill of rights," a \$30 billion anti-poverty package that included a commitment to full employment, a guaranteed annual income and more low-income housing.

In the midst of this effort, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis where he went to march with African-American sanitation workers who, in the wake of the death of two of their workers, were demanding safe working conditions, the right to unionize and better pay. Dr. King viewed the struggle of African-Americans to unionize as an important step toward economic justice.

After Dr. King's death, dramatizing their needs and uniting all races under the common issue of poverty, *Poor People's Campaign* participants set up a 3,000-person tent city on the Washington Mall where they stayed for six weeks. The effort resulted in some positive gains.

Clayborne Carson has devoted most of his professional life to the study of Martin Luther King, Jr. He was selected by Coretta Scott King to edit and publish her late husband's papers. Under the leadership of Dr. Carson, the *King Papers Project* has produced seven volumes of *The Papers of Martin*

Luther King, Jr., a definitive, comprehensive edition of Dr. King's speeches, sermons, correspondence, publications, and unpublished writings. Dr. Carson went on to found the *Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute* at Stanford University which houses the MLK archives.

As a young man, Dr. Carson was a civil rights and anti-war activist. His latest book is a memoir, His first book, the award-winning *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, remains the definitive history of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. His other publications include *Malcolm X: The FBI File* and *African American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom*, a co-authored survey of African-American history.

Besides being an internationally-known King scholar, Dr. Carson has written a musical play, *Passages of Martin Luther King*, which was performed at several universities as well as in Beijing and in the Occupied Territories of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. He was an advisor for the PBS series on the civil rights movement, *Eyes on the Prize*. Other films for which he has served as advisor are the 1995 Oscar-nominated *Freedom on My Mind*, *Chicano!*, *Blacks and Jews*, *Citizen King*, *Negroes with Guns: Rob Williams and Black Power*, *Have You Heard from Johannesburg?*, and *Al Helm: Martin Luther King in Palestine*.

He has also developed the Liberation Curriculum initiative that has become a major source of educational materials about MLK and the ongoing struggles to achieve peace with social justice. He has lectured throughout the world on many topics related to non-violence and the African-American freedom struggle.

For more information, see the website www.mlmartinlutherkingjr.org, go to the Facebook page, or call Pat Cervelli, 928-3494.

Visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute at <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu>

Civil Rights leader Julian Bond to speak at 21st Annual MLK Commemoration

By JAMES COSTELLO

Julian Bond, highly respected leader and activist in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, will speak at the 21st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration on Saturday, February 7, 2015 at the Modesto Junior College Performing Arts and Media Center, 435 College Ave., Modesto, at 7:00 p.m. Bond's topic will be "The Road to Freedom: From Alabama to Obama."

From his civil rights and anti-war activism in the 1960s to his support for gay rights in the new millennium, Julian Bond has been on the cutting edge of social change. As an activist, he has faced jail for his convictions, most recently for protesting the Keystone Pipeline.

Co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1960, he helped organize voting drives and sit-ins. An elected member of the Georgia House of Representatives, Bond was denied his seat by legislators until the intervention of the United States Supreme Court. Co-chairman of an insurgent delegation to the 1968 Democratic Convention, he became the first African-American to be nominated for Vice President of the United States. He served

as Chairman of the NAACP from 1998 to 2010 and was the first President of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Bond has taught at Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, American University, and is a Professor Emeritus in the History Department at the University of Virginia.

He has delivered his message for equality not only through the political arena. In addition he appears frequently on "America's Black Forum," the oldest black-owned show in television syndication; has written a nationally distributed newspaper column; and narrated the award-winning documentaries "A Time for Justice" and "Eyes on the Prize."

A first-hand eyewitness to many watershed moments in the history of the Civil Rights Movement, Bond delivers powerful speeches on the centuries-long struggle of African-Americans for equality, diversity in the shaping of laws, and civil rights



moving into the future, as well as keynotes on African Americans' impact on music, national affairs and leadership.

Join us in welcoming Julian Bond to Modesto.

The event is free. However, we depend solely on donations of money or services from our co-sponsors, caring groups, businesses, and individuals. *Will you help us bring Julian Bond to our community?*

ACTION: Make your tax-deductible check payable to "Modesto Peace Life Center-MLK." Send it to Jim Costello, 1849 Richard Way, Ceres, CA 95307-4504. The Peace/Life Center is a 501 (c)(3)

non-profit organization; EIN # is 94-2800825. Information: jcostello@igc.org

SPONSORS at press time: City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus.

Good, Clean Fun

By JENIFER WEST

It was probably inevitable, what with all the ‘from scratch’ stuff that goes on around here. I resisted for as long as possible. New ingredients and supplies to buy, a whole new skillset to learn... But, in my never-ending quest for self-sufficiency, the time has finally come. And now, my family and friends are the cleanest around. The latest endeavor? Homemade soap.

Not sure what finally spurred this effort, except maybe dissatisfaction with the Brand X soap we’ve been using. That, and a growing awareness of the questionable stuff in the various commercial personal care products! The skin is our largest organ, after all, and absorbs whatever we put onto it – good or bad. These days, with the wealth of information available at the touch of a button, I felt brave enough to consider it again.

What finally broke it loose for me was an e-book called *Smart Soapmaking* by Anne L. Watson. She knows her stuff, and has clearly taught others the craft. When you get right down to it, she explains, soap is pretty simple stuff: water, lye, and fat. To get fancier, one can add colors and scents, but it’s not, strictly speaking, necessary. Still, the day I’d gathered the materials and set aside time to give it a whirl, I found myself procrastinating. When I realized it was due to a (justifiable) fear of working with the lye, I reread the recipe (Anne’s Shea Butter Supreme) and instructions again, got out the materials, and ‘suited up’ (gloves and eye protection are a must). Lye is very caustic, of course, and when mixed with water, gives off obnoxious fumes. The way to deal with that is protective equipment, and ventilation. It’s particularly important to protect one’s eyes – a mishap can result in permanent blindness.

Although there isn’t adequate space in this column for the exact details and instructions, the process is pretty straightforward: Mix the lye and water, melt the fats together and carefully blend the two mixtures together. Once the mixture thickens a bit, it is poured into molds, allowed to harden, cut into bars, and set aside to ‘cure’ for several weeks. There are other methods of making soap, each with its own challenges and benefits, but the ‘cold process’ method outlined above is the easiest, and is the one recommended for any new ‘soaper’ to learn first. It is advisable to obtain either pH strips or phenolphthalein drops to test the soap before using (or giving away!). The drops are much easier – a drop on still-caustic soap will turn pink; there won’t be any color change on soap that’s mild enough to use.

Following that first recipe carefully resulted in success – a white bar, with a luxurious lather that leaves the skin feeling good – not dried out like the detergent-based stuff you buy in the store. In fact, the hardest part of the process was waiting for the soap to cure. This step is necessary, however, as it allows the lye to continue to saponify (react chemically with the fats, changing it from lye to soap), which makes the bars milder. Moisture continues to evaporate from the bars, making them harder and longer-lasting, as well.

Aside from using the bars, one of the nicest things about making soap is giving it away. It’s been a lot of fun, handing out the homemade bars – the reaction is invariably positive!

Once one becomes comfortable with the basic cold process



method of making soap, the possibilities are endless: The combinations of soap texture, colors and scents offer all the creative outlet anyone could want. The supplies are available online (Amazon and Bulk Apothecary, among others). Craft stores may offer them, as well – just be sure that what you buy can withstand the rigors of cold processing. A lot of colors and scents change, in the presence of lye.

Another method of making soap is ‘hot process’, wherein one ‘cooks’ the soap batter, usually for around three hours. This process forces the lye to saponify over the course of hours, instead of weeks, and the soap ends up with a different texture. The obvious advantage is that it can be used right away. However, one does need to be present to check the soap every half-hour or so. The finished soap will still benefit from curing time, but since the lye has been mollified by the cooking process, that step is not absolutely necessary.

To make liquid soaps, a different type of lye is combined with the fats. This approach also allows one to make clear soaps, which can be used on their own, or combined with other cold or hot process soaps for interesting effects.

Finally, for those who want to skip the lye part of the process, ready-made ‘melt and pour’ soap bases are available in craft stores and online. These can also be colored and scented, as well.

Why not gather up a few molds and supplies, and plan your own ‘soap party’ today!



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Students: Deadline for entry to the Modesto Peace/Life Center’s Peace Essay Contest is December 5!

If you have not entered the Peace Essay Contest, you still have time. You may download the Contest flyer and application at <http://www.stanislausconnections.org/Peace%20Essay%20Contest%202015.pdf>

The Peace Essay Contest is an annual event sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center. It is open to all students in grades 5-12 who are 1) residents of Stanislaus County OR 2) attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.

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7 Ways to Get Happy—Without Costing the Planet

The starting point is to realize we have choices — like meaningful work, authentic relationships, and gratitude.

By SARAH van GELDER

We come into this world naked with nothing to count on but love.

Along the way, we pick up other ideas about what's important—status, possessions, money, a bucket list of experiences and accomplishments. But those who reflect back, as they near the end of life, often rediscover love as the source of real happiness.

It is a form of happiness that endures because it starts with the fundamentals and aspirations of being human.

Philosophers and religious leaders have long warned against getting distracted by petty ambitions. “It is preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else, that prevents men from living freely and nobly,” said British philosopher Bertrand Russell.

Still, many of us do get distracted and confused. After all, we need material security to live, and support our families, and our increasingly unequal society makes that more and more difficult. Meanwhile, advertisers spend billions to convince us that buying more stuff will make us happy; the elusive goal of material well-being stays just out of reach.

It is true that all of us need a basic level of material security. But after that, more stuff does not bring more happiness. The research shows that sustainable happiness comes from other sources, like having meaningful work to do (paid or unpaid) and having authentic relationships. It is a form of happiness that endures, through good and bad times, because it starts with the fundamental requirements and aspirations of being human.

In the nearly 20 years we've been covering sustainable happiness, we've found a remarkable consistency to what spiritual leaders, philosophers, and researchers say about it.

A starting point is to realize that we have choices.

Viktor E. Frankl, concentration camp survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, wrote, “Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing: your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.”

Here are some of the things we've learned that you can do right now:

1. Show up for your life mindfully

Mindfulness—and its sibling, compassion—can lighten the burdens of your past and lessen your worries about the future. Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk and translator for the Dalai Lama, says that by fully inhabiting the present moment, we become conscious of the interplay of our emotions and desires and less at the mercy of events around us. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/sustainable-happiness/>

this-is-your-brain-on-bliss

2. Kick your addictions

If you rely on drugs or alcohol to get through the day, then kicking that addiction and dealing with the underlying causes is your first step. But many forms of addiction are more subtle. Maybe you spend so much time on Facebook or checking email that you miss out on connecting with the people around you. Some cafes now have laptop-free days to encourage customers to show up ready to interact with each other. Or maybe you've gotten addicted to shopping and having the best or the latest. Make conscious choices about where you direct your attention, and consider what brings deep happiness. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/time-for-a-tech-sabbath>

Getting clear on the work that ignites your interest and passion adds greatly to your happiness.

In the nearly 20 years we've been covering sustainable happiness, we've found a remarkable consistency to what spiritual leaders, philosophers, and researchers say about it.

3. Find work you love

In a time of chronic unemployment, this may seem like a luxury. But getting clear on the work that ignites your interest, if not your passion, adds greatly to your happiness. When Shannon Hayes finished her dissertation, she realized what she really wanted was to work on her family farm. And she risked everything she had worked for to make it happen. There are times when we have few choices—when we have to take whatever job is available. But there are also moments when we do have choices, and doing work that taps our deepest gifts and desires is among the most satisfying experiences we can have. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/what-happy-families-know/homemade-prosperity>

4. Live simply and liberate your time

With less clutter, you can spend time on the things that offer you the most meaning and enjoyment. If you don't need as much stuff, you have more freedom to choose how much time you spend working for pay. If you make or grow more of what you need and trade with others, you can be less dependent on the cash economy and paid employment. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/the-movement-to-live-more-simply-is-older-than-you-thought>

5. Find and celebrate gifts—yours and those of others

Too often, we lose track of our uniqueness because our gifts don't fit the expectations of schools or work places. Puanani Burgess, a native Hawaiian poet and community builder, learned this lesson when she met a so-called at-risk student who was struggling with school, but he came to value

his gifts as a fisherman and the resources they provided for his family. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/sustainable-happiness/blessings-revealed>

6. Give the gift of your time

Share meals with your family and friends, like author and mother Cathy Garcia-Prats, who spent years of dinner time feeding her children's minds and souls, not just their bodies. This holiday, instead of shopping to exhaustion, give repurposed gifts or gifts of service. Instead of multitasking, give your coworkers or acquaintances your full attention. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/what-happy-families-know/you-are-who-you-eat-with>

7. Choose gratitude

We can rehash over and over every slight or perceived insult, allowing the sense of being wronged to dominate our experience. Or we can choose to turn our attention instead to what we appreciate. Some people keep a gratitude journal, noting things each day that bring beauty or pleasure. Research shows that these journals increase happiness. Take Pavithra Mehta, who with her friends started a restaurant where meals are free—paid for by the voluntary donation of other customers. Once you've eaten, you can choose whether to make a contribution to cover someone else's meal.

Sustainable happiness is enhanced when everyone is doing well.

The good news for our world is that sustainable happiness doesn't mean we have to use up and wear out the planet in a mad rush to produce more stuff. We don't need people working in sweatshop conditions to produce cheap products that feed an endless appetite for possessions.

Instead, sustainable happiness is enhanced when everyone is doing well. It comes about in thriving communities free of the poverty and powerlessness associated with highly unequal societies. And it flourishes when we live in a healthy, natural world, where other animals, birds, and fish also thrive.

The work of rebuilding thriving communities can be difficult and contentious. But this is the way to authentic and sustainable happiness. When our families, our neighbors, those we meet on the street, and the creatures of the natural world are doing well, their happiness contributes to our own. Trust and well-being become a generative cycle. Sustainable happiness in one realm fosters well-being in all the other realms of life. Interconnectedness—love, even—is unleashed.

Sarah van Gelder is co-founder and editor in chief of YES! Magazine. This piece was adapted from *Sustainable Happiness: Live Simply, Live Well, Make a Difference*, edited by Sarah van Gelder and the staff of YES! Magazine, and published by Berrett Koehler. Order now at [yesmagazine.org/happiness-book](http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness-book) or find it at your local, independent bookstore beginning in January 2015. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness-book>

From http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/7-ways-to-get-happy-without-costing-the-planet?utm_source=YTW&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=20141114

CLIMATE CHANGE 2014: Synthesis Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Headline statements from the Summary for Policymakers: Observed Changes and their Causes

Human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems.

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level has risen.

Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by economic and population growth, and are now higher than ever. This has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Their effects, together with those of other anthropogenic drivers, have been detected throughout the climate system and are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.

In recent decades, changes in climate have caused impacts on natural and human systems on all continents and across the oceans. Impacts are due to observed climate change, irrespective of its cause, indicating the sensitivity of natural and human systems to changing climate.

Changes in many extreme weather and climate events have been observed since about 1950. Some of these changes have been linked to human influences, including a decrease in cold temperature extremes, an increase in warm temperature extremes, an increase in extreme high sea levels and an increase in the number of heavy precipitation events in a number of regions.

Future Climate Changes, Risks and Impacts

Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks

Cumulative emissions of carbon dioxide largely determine global mean surface warming by the late 21st century and beyond. Projections of greenhouse gas emissions vary over a wide range, depending on both socio-economic development and climate policy.

Surface temperature is projected to rise over the 21st century under all assessed emission scenarios. It is very likely that heat waves will occur more often and last longer, and that

extreme precipitation events will become more intense and frequent in many regions. The ocean will continue to warm and acidify, and global mean sea level to rise.

Climate change will amplify existing risks and create new risks for natural and human systems. Risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development.

Many aspects of climate change and associated impacts will continue for centuries, even if anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are stopped. The risks of abrupt or irreversible changes increase as the magnitude of the warming increases.

Headline statements are the overarching highlighted conclusions of the approved Summary for Policymakers which, taken together, provide a concise narrative. The four statements in boxes here are those summarizing the assessment in the Summary for Policymakers, sections 1-4.

Human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems.

Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks.

Future Pathways for Adaptation, Mitigation and Sustainable Development

Adaptation and mitigation are complementary strategies for reducing and managing the risks of climate change. Substantial emissions reductions over the next few decades can reduce climate risks in the 21st century and beyond, increase prospects for effective adaptation, reduce the costs and challenges of mitigation in the longer term, and contribute to climate-resilient pathways for sustainable development.

Effective decision making to limit climate change and its effects can be informed by a wide range of analytical approaches for evaluating expected risks and benefits, recognizing the importance of governance, ethical dimensions, equity, value judgments, economic assessments and diverse perceptions and responses to risk and uncertainty.

Without additional mitigation efforts beyond those in place today, and even with adaptation, warming by the end of the 21st century will lead to high to very high risk of severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts globally (high confidence). Mitigation involves some level of co-benefits and of risks due to adverse side-effects, but these risks do not involve the same possibility of severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts as risks from climate change, increasing the benefits from near-term mitigation efforts.

Adaptation can reduce the risks of climate change impacts, but there are limits to its effectiveness, especially with greater magnitudes and rates of climate change. Taking a longer-term perspective, in the context of sustainable development, increases the likelihood that more immediate adaptation actions will also enhance future options and preparedness.

There are multiple mitigation pathways that are likely to limit warming to below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels. These pathways would require substantial emissions reductions over the next few decades and near zero emissions of carbon dioxide and other long-lived greenhouse gases by the end of the century. Implementing such reductions poses substantial technological, economic, social, and institutional challenges, which increase with delays in additional mitigation and if key technologies are not available. Limiting warming to lower or higher levels involves similar challenges, but on different timescales.

Adaptation and Mitigation

Many adaptation and mitigation options can help address climate change, but no single option is sufficient by itself. Effective implementation depends on policies and cooperation at all scales, and can be enhanced through integrated responses that link adaptation and mitigation with other societal objectives.

Adaptation and mitigation responses are underpinned by common enabling factors. These include effective institutions and governance, innovation and investments in environmentally sound technologies and infrastructure, sustainable livelihoods, and behavioral and lifestyle choices.

Adaptation options exist in all sectors, but their context for implementation and potential to reduce climate-related risks differs across sectors and regions. Some adaptation responses involve significant co-benefits, synergies and trade-offs. Increasing climate change will increase challenges for many adaptation options.

Mitigation options are available in every major sector. Mitigation can be more cost-effective if using an integrated approach that combines measures to reduce energy use and the greenhouse gas intensity of end-use sectors, decarbonize energy supply, reduce net emissions and enhance carbon sinks in land-based sectors.

Effective adaptation and mitigation responses will depend on policies and measures across multiple scales: international, regional, national and sub-national. Policies across all scales supporting technology development, diffusion and transfer, as well as finance for responses to climate change, can complement and enhance the effectiveness of policies that directly promote adaptation and mitigation.

Climate change is a threat to sustainable development. Nonetheless, there are many opportunities to link mitigation, adaptation and the pursuit of other societal objectives through integrated responses (high confidence). Successful implementation relies on relevant tools, suitable governance structures and enhanced capacity to respond (medium confidence).



My name is Itzcuahtli (Eat-Squat-Lee) and I am 11 years old. I am on a silence strike until world leaders take action on Climate Change

By world leaders I mean you! We have waited too long for the people called leaders to take action. We now face a crisis that threatens everyone's future. I wanted to do something, so I stopped talking on *October 27, 2014*.

The so-called "leaders" are failing. Maybe it's up to youth to lead. Maybe each one of us has to be a world leader.

If you feel the way I do and are ready to be a leader **join us December 10th** for a Silence Strike. Refuse to speak for a day - or even an hour. When the silence strike is complete — speak up about climate change and never stop. There will be more actions leading up to the UN summit in Paris on 12/15 you can join in on... so stay tuned. Our voices must be heard!



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1. Click on this link to sign up or go to our take action page now: <http://www.climatesilencenow.org/take-action.html>
2. Wear a green band, cord, rope, yarn or string whatever you can find on your left wrist to show your solidarity.
3. Share pictures of you wearing your green band and share your action with your friends, email pics and stories to us and we will post them on this site and our facebook page
4. Share on your social media pages and use #climatesilencenow and #ourfuturematters

May our silence amplify the voices of children everywhere calling for climate action now.

For more information contact Itzcuahtli@EarthGuardians.org.

*visit www.EarthGuardians.org. Instagram [_Itzcuahtli_](https://www.instagram.com/Itzcuahtli)
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Earth-Guardians/113066278734489>*



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What is the IPCC?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts.

The IPCC is a scientific body under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.

Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC on a voluntary basis. Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, to ensure an objective and complete assessment of current information. IPCC aims to reflect a range of views and expertise. The Secretariat coordinates all the IPCC work and liaises with Governments. It is supported by WMO and UNEP and hosted at WMO headquarters in Geneva.

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body. It is open to all member countries of the United Nations (UN) and WMO. Currently 195 countries are members of the IPCC. Governments participate in the review process and the plenary Sessions, where main decisions about the IPCC work programme are taken and reports are accepted, adopted and approved. The IPCC Bureau Members, including the Chair, are also elected during the plenary Sessions.

Because of its scientific and intergovernmental nature, the IPCC embodies a unique opportunity to provide rigorous and balanced scientific information to decision makers. By endorsing the IPCC reports, governments acknowledge the authority of their scientific content. The work of the organization is therefore policy-relevant and yet policy-neutral, never policy-prescriptive.

<http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization.shtml>

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6 Ways Americans Voted Against Corporate Power

from page 1

Citizens United, deciding that corporations can spend unlimited amounts of money on campaigns. This allows them to put mass amounts of money into causes that benefit business, but not necessarily citizens.

The “Democracy for All” constitutional amendment, which would restrict companies’ campaign funding, did not pass when it came before the Senate in September. But yesterday, voters in Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Florida voted for ballot measures to officially support an amendment to overturn the Citizens United decision. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/senate-voted-to-keep-big-money-in-politics-three-reasons-to-celebrate>

In many counties throughout the five states, the referendum passed with a vast majority. In Sharon, Massachusetts, 75 percent of voters wanted Citizens United gone, while 77 percent did in Wassau County, Wisconsin. The potential amendment has now been brought before voters in 54 communities in Wisconsin. Those communities make up 41 percent of the state’s population.

“Big money has such a big influence in election and government, moving us away from democracy,” said John C. Bonifaz, president of Free Speech for People. “The general rule in an election is that money equals power and that it drowns out the power of ordinary citizens ... The movement to overturn Citizens United is needed more than ever.”

2. Counties and towns in California, Ohio, and Texas banned fracking

Residents in four counties and towns in California, Texas, and Ohio voted against the interests of gas corporations yesterday by passing fracking bans.

Chevron Corporation and Occidental Petroleum contributed \$7.7 million to fight anti-fracking measures in Mendocino, San Benito, and Santa Barbara counties in California. They only defeated one of them, in Santa Barbara.

In Mendocino County, voters adopted a Community Bill of Rights, a law guaranteeing citizens the right to clean air and water—and ecosystems the right to exist and flourish. Under the new law, fracking is a violation of those rights, as is the extraction or sale of water for use in fracking anywhere in the state. With more than two-thirds of Mendocino County voters in favor, the initiative passed easily.

Across the country in Athens, Ohio, citizens passed a similar Community Bill of Rights by an even larger margin, with 78 percent voting in favor. The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, a public-interest law firm focusing on environmental issues, has long been advocating for the passage of similar bills throughout the country (more than 150 towns, cities, and counties across the U.S. have already adopted such policies).

“With this vote, the people of Mendocino are challenging a legal structure that protects a corporate ‘right’ to frack above the rights of communities to not be fracked,” the Fund’s Ben Price said on Global Exchange’s blog.

Fifty-seven percent of voters in San Benito, California, supported a referendum banning fracking. And, despite the roughly 275 active fracking wells in Denton, Texas, voters there approved a referendum to ban the practice.

3. Richmond, California, stood up to Chevron

Since a 2012 fire that sent 15,000 people to the hospital at

Chevron’s Richmond refinery, Chevron and the City Council of Richmond have been on rocky terms. The City Council sued the oil giant for damages caused by the fire, and the company and council have been in negotiation battles for years over proposed restrictions on the upgrade and expansion of the refinery.

So it may come as no surprise that Chevron spent around \$3 million in the city council and mayoral races to try to get a friendlier slate of candidates elected. But the citizens of Richmond had something to say about that.

Tom Butt, a current city council member who spent just \$58,000 on his campaign, beat the Chevron-backed candidate, Nat Barnes, 51 percent to 35 percent. Further, residents elected all three of the Richmond Progressive Alliance-supported city council candidates, against whom Chevron ran vicious campaign ads.

4. North Dakota decided to keep big-box pharmacies out

In a North Dakota referendum, Walmart spent about \$7 million attempting to overturn a 1963 law preventing chain pharmacies from operating in the state. It was a move that many believed threatened the viability of the state’s thriving independent pharmacies. Yesterday, North Dakota voters upheld the decades-old law, putting many local pharmacists at ease. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/ahead-of-election-north-dakotans-fight-to-protect-local-pharmacies-from-corporate-takeover>

“Now, especially rural pharmacists can move on without so much anxiety [about losing their business],” said Mike Schwab, executive vice president of the North Dakota Pharmacists Association. Schwab said that, after the North Dakota House of Representatives rejected bills to overturn the pharmacy ownership law in 2009 and 2011, this week, citizens added their own voices to its support.

5. Tallahassee passed an anti-corruption campaign spending law

Sixty-seven percent of voters in Tallahassee, Florida, supported a referendum to amend the city charter, imposing campaign contribution limits on a local level. From now on, donations cannot exceed \$250 per donor. Contributors will receive a small tax rebate, and the city plans to create an ethics board and take other steps to ensure ethical practices, like monitoring conflicts of interest for politicians.

The referendum is called the Anti-Corruption Act and was created by a national group called Represent.Us, which aims to change the rules around lobbying and transparency in politics. It also had bipartisan support, with allies from Common Cause to Tea Party groups.

Represent.Us intends to push this strategy outward and upward, starting at the local level in other cities and ultimately taking aim at the federal government.

“This was the big field test for our theory,” Represent.Us CEO Josh Silver told The Huffington Post of what he hoped to learn from the Tallahassee victory. He said his organization will promote several similar city referendums in the next two years, as well as two statewide ballot initiatives in 2016. <https://represent.us/about>

6. Berkeley chose a tax on sugary beverages linked to obesity

Berkeley, California, is the first city to adopt a special tax on sugary beverages. Seventy-five percent of voters yesterday decided drinks containing added sugar—like juice and soda—will now be taxed 1 cent per ounce. These sweet drinks have been linked to rising obesity rates throughout the country. <http://online.wsj.com/articles/berkeley-voters-approve-tax-on-sugary-drinks-san-francisco-ban-falls-short-1415189224>

San Francisco had a similar measure on the ballot—taxing 2 cents per sugary ounce, twice as much as Berkeley. Passing it required a two-thirds majority vote, which didn’t happen. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/11/05/berkeley-passes-soda-tax/18521923/>

The American Beverage Association spent more than \$11 million campaigning against the tax in the two cities, with \$9 million of it focused on San Francisco, where the initiative was voted down.

“Berkeley has a proud history of setting nationwide trends, such as non-smoking sections in restaurants and bars, curb cuts for wheelchairs, curbside recycling and public school food policies,” said Vicki Alexander, co-chair of a group that campaigned to pass the tax, in a statement.

Mary Hansen and Kayla Schultz wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas and practical actions. Mary and Kayla are online reporting interns at YES!

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/6-ways-americans-voted-against-corporations>

Poets: Enter MoSt’s Third Annual Poetry Festival

Join us on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd., from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for our Third Annual Poetry Festival featuring workshops, book tables. Emcee **Gillian Wegener**, Modesto Poet Laureate and MoSt President *and Special Guest Poet, Playwright, Author & Workshop Leader, Indigo Moor*

Guidelines: Entrants may enter *one* poem in any or all categories (up to five poems, total). Please submit *two copies*

of each poem you are entering. In the top right corner of one of the copies, print your name and the name of the category. On the second copy, please print only the category and *no name*. This will assure that judging is completely “blind.” No prize-winning poems *from previous contests* may be

entered, but “Honorable Mentions” will be accepted. Tables will be available for Festival attendees to sell their books & broadsides, as well as to exchange books with others. Registration Form (along with poetry contest submissions) must be postmarked by: **JANUARY 6, 2015.**

To register, download the official flyer and registration form at http://www.mostpoetry.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/MoSt_3rdFestival_print.pdf

For additional information, comments email info@most-poetry.org or contact Cleo Griffith, cleor@yahoo.com or Louise Kantro, kantro@sbcglobal.net



Modesto-Stanislaus
Poetry Center

POET: Calder Lowe

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Calder Lowe is a writer, award-winning editor, former college English instructor, university writing lab director, community activist and Ragdale alumna. A collection of her poems and flash fiction, *Holding the Light in Your Arms*, was published in 2010 by Jacaranda Press and her prose collection, *The Light on His Feet*, will be released in June of this year.

Her poems have been published in *Will Work for Peace*, *New Millennium Writings*, *Reed: A Journal of Poetry and Prose*, *Words Save Lives*, a Poetry Center San Jose anthology, *Caesura*, *Spirit, Peace and Joy*, a Pen Women Press anthology, *convergence*, and numerous other



small presses and journals. She is the 82nd Annual *Writer's Digest* First Prize Winner in the Non-rhyming Poetry category and her book, *The Call: An Anthology Of Women's Writing* (Dragonfly Press), was awarded Runner-Up status in the 2014 Los Angeles Book Festival in the Compilations/Anthologies category; and *Holding The Light In Your Arms*, a collection of poetry and prose (Jacaranda Press), was awarded Honorable Mention in the same festival.



Thirst

In thirst, the cells invite moisture,
the space created covenanting with loss.
In plenty, awareness is an unwelcome guest,
drawing attention to nonchalance and grandiosity,
what comes too easily, rather than what is hard-won
and humbly embraced.

Lack signals hunger,
sets the table for inclusion,
renders holy whatever particles
the air bestows on a porous surface,
exchanges manna for splintering wood.

Arithmetic

The skyscraper crumbles to its knees,
its usefulness outworn, one supposes.
It has not kept up with its neighboring financial district
populated by monumental high-rises,
landmarks pointing the way to a bullish market
and a remote God even the local New Jerusalem Tabernacle
has abandoned in favor of a more accessible,
indwelling Savior.

The man limping past the bus stop on West San Carlos,
his green backpack a moving violation,
overspilling as it is with beer cans,
hunting knife, and half-chewed books,
is non-plussed by the building's demolition.
No different than Korea or Nam. Another landmine
detonated, a corresponding grenade igniting
the interior of his skull. That platoon? How many lost?
Numbers on storefronts and street signs
tilt into recitations of grade school counting lessons.

These days he is oblivious to sights, sounds,
downed electrical lines, onrushing traffic.
You name it. Everything that is, but smells.
The scent of anything rotting, half-eaten tacos,
blackening fruit, squirrel intestines,
sends his right index finger
twitching as a barometer of disaster.
He licks the tip and holds it up to a derelict breeze.
If the wind is blowing from the east and his finger dries
quickly, he lowers his head, hunches his shoulders,
pushes past pedestrians, and squats
beside the nearest bench.

A tattered, outdated book slides
from its pouch, and a soiled medic's patch
stiffens the margin of the page delineating
the multiple cures derived from the application
of leeches to bare skin. As if in a trance,
he coaxes the knife free of its sheath
and carves another notch in his left forearm.

(New stanza)

He is concentrating really hard.
He is in math class. Beads of sweat ring his eyes
His head pivots and cocks backwards.
Blood criss-crosses the hatched surface,
coagulates into warm droplets he touches
reverentially. That makes *twelve*.

Madonna in the Closet

Mario has opened the window again
and is looking beyond the flagpole
towards Mexico, towards home. His longing,
palpable, tugs at the corners of the classroom
until I am pulled into the vortex of his sorrow.

He is sustained by tracings he makes
of the Virgin of Guadalupe. When one of them
is defaced, he cries softly in my arms,
his spindly, nine-year-old body
all edges and sharp bones, stabbing my heart.

One Tuesday, he begs me to hide his latest drawing.
Taped to the closet's back wall, the Virgin is an icon
amidst the crayons, aprons, and paints.

By the twelfth week, he no longer turns to her for comfort,
but hums mariachi tunes under his breath.
On the last day, I open the closet to find
the Virgin now has tears penciled on her left cheek.
Unfastening the tape, I swathe the picture in a tube.
Quietly re-open Mario's window.

"Madonna in the Closet" was previously
published in *onTarget*

It Happens

It happens
You'll be sitting
the silenced phone beside you
You'll be looking at the floor
and the one line
in the hardwood plank
will extend
through the lathe and plaster wall
out past the lawn
and the next street
and the next
until you
find yourself
only you're not yourself
but this being of light
standing on a promontory
your index fingers
coordinates east and west
points of a star your body
the vertical/lateral thrust of a cross
and you'll know
you'll simply
know

Green Tips for a Green Planet: Real vs. Fake – Support your local tree farms

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

It's December and most US households plan their winter holiday decor around a beautifully adorned tree.

The Good News – real tree hunting at one of the nation's local tree farms is a family adventure, real trees provide a great wintry aroma, and supporting tree farms keeps large areas of land open for agricultural use.

While 40 or 45 million (fewer than 10%) trees are cut for holiday use each year, most are from tree farms that maintain some 446 million trees throughout the US. In fact, up to 3 trees are planted by tree farmers for each tree harvested. So whether you go directly to the tree farm or buy from a tree lot in town, you are supporting sustainable agriculture and a healthy environment.

Using a fake tree as an alternative is actually more detrimental to the environment, and if you are concerned about saving trees, avoid chopping down the forest babies. When we used holiday trees at our house, an age old Pagan tradition, we dug up at least two of our trees and planted them in the yard after the holidays. Our front yard is home to a very large and beautiful Japanese Black Pine.

The Bad News – fake trees are made from vinyl, one of the most difficult plastics to recycle. The electricity used to melt plastic to manufacture fake trees uses fossil fuels (mostly coal) and releases carbon into the atmosphere.

The carbon footprint of a real tree is measured in the

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

By DAVID HETLAND

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

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

Contributions of cash are also needed in order to purchase perishables, e.g., candy, cocoa, drink sticks, etc. **All donations may be brought to the Modesto Peace/Life Center office** (call ahead to make sure the office is open). For more information, contact Shelly(521-6304) or Dave (388-1608).

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

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

growing process (fertilization), harvesting and transportation from farm to retailer to home to the tree's final use. Modesto has a recycling program through which the trees are picked up curbside following the holidays, chipped and used in the community or made into compost.

If you have an artificial tree remember, hold on to it at least 10 years, and plan to use a real tree each year into the future.

Real trees are a win win, and if holiday trees aren't your thing, a pine bough or two in the house lends a refreshing hint of winter's outdoor charm.

PS: You might want to think twice about burning a real Yule Log (or anything else) indoors, unless you have an eco-friendly fireplace or use eco-friendly fireplace fuel options. Watch for tips on efficient fireplaces and environmentally sensitive heating sources in the January issue of *Connections*.

EPA Study: Highly Toxic Bee-killing Pesticides Yield Little or No Benefits for Soybean Production

From the Center for Biological Diversity

PORTLAND, Oregon: A new study from the Environmental Protection Agency has found that the neonicotinoid seed coatings linked to massive bee die-offs — including the largest bumblebee die-off in history, where 25,000 bees died in a single incident in a Portland suburb — provide little to no benefits for soybean production. Neonicotinoids, highly toxic pesticides, are used as seed coating on 30 percent of the 76 million acres of soybeans harvested every year in the United States. While the EPA study focused on soybeans, millions of acres of other crops, such as wheat and corn, are also subjected to neonicotinoid seed treatments.

"It's shocking that chemical companies are pushing these highly toxic pesticides on millions of acres of soybeans de-



spite the fact that they provide little or no benefits for farmers or yields," said Lori Ann Burd, endangered species campaign director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "In addition to killing bees, neonicotinoids are contaminating our waterways and causing bird declines of more than 3 percent annually. Now that the EPA has found that neonicotinoid seed treatments don't even provide significant benefits, the next step is for the agency to ban these pesticides."

Neonicotinoids are already banned in the European Union. Effective in 2016 they will also be banned in national wildlife refuges in the United States due to their harmful impacts on wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. The Center joined the Center for Food Safety in petitioning for this ban.

"The evidence is mounting that these pesticides have unacceptable environmental impacts and are, at best, providing

28th ANNUAL PEACEFUL HOLIDAY FAIRE

Stockton's Holiday Season Alternative Faire

Presented by

Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County
Central United Methodist Church
3700 Pacific Ave. (across from UOP on Pacific)
Stockton, CA

Friday, Dec. 5, 4 pm to 9 pm

Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 am to 2 pm

The Peaceful Holiday Faire provides a venue for local artisans to sell their wares and to support the Peace & Justice Network. Our goal is to have items for sale that promote non-violence, fair-trade, and support our environment locally and globally.

Contact 209-242-2254.

only negligible benefits," said Burd. "We can't ignore the science any longer; these dangerous chemicals need to be banned."

The Center for Biological Diversity believes that the welfare of human beings is deeply linked to nature - to the existence in our world of a vast diversity of wild animals and plants. Because diversity has intrinsic value, and because its loss impoverishes society, we work to secure a future for all species, great and small, hovering on the brink of extinction. We do so through science, law, and creative media, with a focus on protecting the lands, waters, and climate that species need to survive.

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

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

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Five Ways YOU Can Advocate for Refugees at the Border

Edited From the Friends Committee on National Legislation

Five things that you can do to advocate for and assist these children and families in crisis at the border:

1) Ask your representatives and senators to provide needed funding for these children and families.

Congress passed a continuing resolution that ramped up border security, but failed to fund basic needs or court expansion to process the backlog of cases. As of August 2014, there were almost 400,000 immigrant cases awaiting resolution. Our government is responsible for overseeing refugees' well-being under U.S. law and international law. Congress will have to come up with new funding – for all government activities – after a temporary funding measure ends on December 11. Congress should decide at that point to increase funding to:

- a) Meet the basic needs of these children and families
- b) Fund courts and legal assistants to ensure due process

These refugees are not sneaking over the border; most of them are presenting themselves to border agents, seeking help. They are a vulnerable population fleeing violence and seeking refuge in the United States and all over Central America, but they are being held in dire circumstances by our federal government. You can help strengthen Congress' sense of responsibility for providing funding for these families and children at the border, and help move border assistance to the top of Congress' "to-do" list.

2) Get in touch with your senators and representatives about protecting all children under the human trafficking laws.

There are a number of bills up for consideration that seek to eliminate important protections in the Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act (TVPR). According to U.S. law, all refugees seeking asylum are entitled to a fair hearing in a timely manner. TVPRA outlines additional protections specifically for trafficking victims and children, reiterating their right to establish a "credible fear" of returning to their home countries before a welfare expert, asylum officer or immigration judge. Instead of affirming these protections, the proposed roll-back bills suggest that an expedited procedure used to deport Mexican children be expanded to include immigrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

TVPRA protections are not being properly applied for all children. Mexican children are not allowed to present their case of "credible fear" to an immigration judge (or other expert) with legal counsel. Instead, border patrol agents interview the children in the detention centers within 12 hours of detaining them, while they are still traumatized from their journeys, and before they have the advice of legal counsel. As a result, most of the children are denied refugee status, and are returned to the violence in their home countries.

Congress should be focusing on strengthening the pro-

cess for Mexican children, not weakening the protections for all Central American children. These proposed roll-back policies would subject more children to intimate interviews with border patrol who have no training in child welfare or social work and are not suited to conduct interviews about trauma, abuse or sexual assault. They would also put a time limit within which a child could make their case and would prohibit their release from detention centers to relatives or community members. Effectively, any roll-back would deny more children a fair hearing with access to counsel in the interest of rushing their deportation.

3) Stop the private prison industry from profiting at the expense of refugee children.

Our government continues to spend \$298 per person per day to detain refugees in ill-equipped family detention facilities.

Undocumented immigration is a civil – not criminal – offense, meaning immigrants pose no threat to public safety and detaining them is unnecessary. Unfortunately, the relationship between border control and the private prison industry fuels a high rate of unnecessary detention.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) holds an average of 34,000 immigrants in detention on a daily basis because of a bed quota enacted by Congress.

Three of the largest private prison firms spent a combined \$45 million on campaign contributions and lobbyists in the last decade. In that time, the number of civil detainees in for-profit facilities (rather than federal facilities) rose almost 40 percent. Undocumented immigration actually dwindled while private incarceration significantly increased. This arbitrary incarceration quota is inhumane and expensive, and yet large private prison corporations continue to profit from it.

With the influx of unaccompanied children at the border this summer, private prison firms are profiting even more. The two largest private prison firms saw a significant stock increase since July 30 as their facilities were re-purposed into family detention centers. GEO Group, now operating two family detention facilities in Karnes, TX and Artesia, NM saw a 7% stock rise.

These refugees are survivors of trauma with a right to legal counsel, but the facilities offer minimal access to legal or mental health services. Lawyer meetings and mental health counseling is often conducted over Skype. Advocates who have spoken with detained families report that prison staff members threaten parents and children with separation if they misbehave and undermine family dynamics by putting parents in powerless positions in front of their children.

NGOs, communities and faith groups have offered to house and care for these refugees, but instead our government continues to spend \$298 per person per day to detain them in ill-equipped family detention facilities, presumably to meet the bed quota.

4) Get involved in hands-on activism in your area or nationally.

FCNL's focus is on Congress, and we hope you will stay

in close touch with your representative and senators about your concerns and what you learn first-hand about the children crossing the border. Meanwhile, there are ample opportunities to welcome the families who have managed to cross the border into new communities. Here are some ways to connect with local groups to see what active citizens and city governments are doing on a local level:

- The New Sanctuary Movement is a rebirth of a 1982 movement of faith and immigrant communities committed to providing sanctuary to people facing deportation due to misguided or misapplied government policies. <http://sanctuary2014.org>
- The Linking Communities Project: Creating Welcome for Refugees is a joint project of Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Church World Service, the Center for Applied Linguistics, the International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, U.S. Committee on Refugees and Immigrants, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and World Relief, in conjunction with Refugee Council USA and Welcoming America. They are expanding their programs in Ohio and Pennsylvania and creating programs in Texas and North Carolina. <http://www.hias.org/TLCproject>
- Welcoming America is a national project committed to helping established Americans welcome new immigrants and new Americans into their communities. <http://www.welcomingamerica.org/resources/resources-on-unaccompanied-children/>
- Cities for Citizenship is a collaboration project between cities nation-wide that have recognized the important contributions of immigrant populations and are advocating for pathways to citizenship. <http://citiesforcitizenship.org>

5) Continue to advocate for these children by seeking comprehensive immigration reform.

Why don't people just enter legally and apply for immigration? Well, because the legal pathway is blocked.

There are millions of immigrants already in this country with no way to legally become citizens. In the meantime they have no protection from exploitive employers, and are fearful of seeking police protection in instances of crime or abuse. Because there are almost 400,000 cases awaiting resolution, every day over one thousand people are deported or incarcerated without proper procedure. Families are often separated and sometimes people who have spent over half their lives in the United States are deported to a country they do not remember.

Learn more about comprehensive immigration reform by reading FCNL's Immigration Bill Checklist http://fcnl.org/resources/newsletter/mayjun13/an_immigration_bill_checklist/

To take action, visit http://fcnl.org/issues/immigration/advocate_for_refugees_at_border/

12 CALENDAR



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

ACTIONS FOR PEACE Sonora - Stockton

SONORA: Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

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

DECEMBER

- 5 FRI: Peace Essay Contest submission deadline.** See <http://stanislausconnections.org/Peace%20Essay%20Contest%202015.pdf>
- 13 SAT: Peace Center's Annual Holiday Potluck Song Fest.** Bring food to share. Enjoy scrumptious food and spirit-lifting singing at the home of Dan and Alice Onorato, 1532 Vernon Ave., Modesto, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Everyone or every family bring with them a new, unwrapped book for a child (K-1 to K-6).
- 13 SAT: The ILL LIST 11:** A Poetry Slam Invitational, State Theatre, 1307 J. St. 8:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/377>
- 22-24 MON-WED: A Christmas Story,** State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/417> for showing times.
- 28 SUN: The Modesto Film Society** presents *The Shop Around the Corner*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 12:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/327>
- 28 SUN: The Modesto Film Society** presents *Annie*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 3:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/328>

LOOKING AHEAD

- January 15, 2015: John McCutcheon Concert** (See article, page 2).
- January 11, 2015: Sonora's MLK Birthday Celebration:** Speaker Clayborne Carson. 2 pm, Sonora High School Auditorium (see article, page 3).
- February 7, 2015: Annual MLK Commemoration:** Keynote speaker: Julian Bond (see article, page 3).
- February 7, 2015: MoSt's Third Annual Poetry Festival.** St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing. For up to date information, visit www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm

Oakdale Rd., 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. Workshops, book tables. Emcee Gillian Wegener; Special Guest Poet, Indigo Moor. Entry deadline: JANUARY 6, 2015. See article, page 8.

2015 Sunday Afternoons at CBS: All concerts start at 3 pm at 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. January 11: River Lights Chorus; February 8: Grace Lieberman And Friends Valentine Concert. March 8: Jessica Leash, Cantorial Soloist/Artist/Scholar In Residence. Tickets, 571-6060 or at CBS. More info at www.cb-smodesto.org/concerts.php

March 19, 2015: Panel: "Ending the Culture of Violence on School and College Campuses." Free event envisions raising public awareness and involving individuals and groups to curtail the riptide of violence in our schools. 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Martin G. Petersen Education Center, 720 12th St., Modesto. Email endcultureofviolence@gmail.com

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

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

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

MONDAYS

Walk With Me, a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

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

TUESDAYS

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

LifeRing Secular Recovery: Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 526-4854

Ukulele class/play-a-long led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in song-books provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. www.Funstrummers.com

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 6:30-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info:

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

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

CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS: Info: 537-7818, jcostello@igc.org

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

Contact Lori for more information at 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>

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

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

PFLAG Sonora/Mother Lode, third Tuesdays of January, April, July, and October, 6:30 to 8 pm, Tuolumne County Library Community Room, 480 Greenley Rd., Sonora, Info: 533-1665. Info@pflagsonora.org, www.pflagsonora.org

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

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

PFLAG Oakdale, third Wednesdays, Golden Oaks Conf. Room, Oak Valley Medical Bldg., 1425 West H St., Oakdale, 7 pm. Info: flagoakdale@dishmail.net
Transgender Support Group, 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email info@stanpride.org, or tgsupport@stanpride.org

Mindful Meditation: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Stan, 549-7770, stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com, or Anne, 521-6977.

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

THURSDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRIDAYS

Funstrummer Ukulele Band every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 505-3216; www.Funstrummers.com

Latino Emergency Council (LEC) 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Dale Butler, 522-8537.

Village Dancers: Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

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

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

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

SATURDAY

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

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