



## Houseless, not homeless: a glimpse of people and their pets, living on the streets of Modesto

By SALLY MEARS-BOWDEN

There are many houseless people around Modesto and surrounding areas, but how many people notice the companions that accompany them throughout their lives, wherever the streets or circumstances take them? These pets are a constant, loyal friend to some of these folks, where they may sometimes be the only loyal friend around sometimes – it’s unconditional.

Imagine that you and your children are suddenly in the predicament of being displaced. Luckily there are some programs like Family

Promise (A wonderful program), and others that may be one route to pursue to get you back on your feet again. Then, imagine you are alone in this situation.

While an option like Family Promise may not be available to you, there are some options out there for temporary housing, food, facilities etc. yet – sometimes those are not options either. There may be a number of reasons why these options may not work out (lack of room, strict rules etc.). And just maybe, one BIG reason that is not negotiable in the eyes and heart of that displaced citizen: they have a friend that is not allowed in help centers. Leaving

THIS family member out is definitely not an option. The houseless person will stick by that companion – period.

The result is a life outdoors. How does that work out? Well, it’s complicated. Though many who are on the street may eventually develop communities, for various reasons of company, mutual safety/crime watch, peer support; the whole dynamic can find itself

seriously lacking, and in dire need of certain things that may not first come to mind, at least to those on the outside who haven’t been there.

My hope is a on-going dialogue with the wonderful people I meet at some of the local parks; folks who have been “house-less” for

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## June 17 film night focuses on global warming

By DAN ONORATO

Here’s Rotten Tomatoes’ summary of *Chasing Ice*, the acclaimed 2012 documentary the Peace/Life Center is showing on Wednesday, June 17, that visually chronicles the irrefutable evidence of our planet’s climate change:

“Acclaimed National Geographic photographer James Balog was once a skeptic about climate change. But through his Extreme Ice Survey, he discovers undeniable evidence of our changing planet. In *Chasing Ice*, Balog deploys revolutionary time-lapse cameras to capture a multi-year record of the world’s changing glaciers. His hauntingly beautiful videos compress years into seconds and capture ancient mountains of ice in motion as they disappear at a breathtaking rate. Traveling with a team of young adventurers across the brutal Arctic, Balog risks his career and his well-being in pursuit of the biggest story facing humanity. As the debate polarizes America, and the intensity of natural disasters

ramps up globally, *Chasing Ice* depicts a heroic photojournalist on a mission to deliver fragile hope to our carbon-powered planet.”

And here are a few film review comments: “They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but in this instance, a few moments of jaw-dropping time-lapse footage eclipse every other environmental documentary we’ve seen before.” *TimeOut UK*. December 11, 2012.

“Ideologues such as Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh use “Al Gore” as a curse word to dismiss the overwhelming evidence that burning fossil fuels has warmed the planet and is melting the world’s ice, from pole to pole. Balog answers them with simple, blunt images.” *Chicago Tribune*, November 16, 2012.

You won’t want to miss this one. The film starts at 6:30, and a discussion will follow. The Center is located at 720 13<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto.

Mark your calendar now



Brandy

### 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday June 7, 2015

8:00 a.m. — Noon

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# 33rd Annual Peace Camp June 26, 27, and 28, 2015

Camp Peaceful Pines  
near Pinecrest, California



## Registration Form

**Adults** \$75 before May 1; \$80 before June 8; \$85 after June 8

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth (ages 4 -18)** \$55 before May 1; \$60 before June 8; \$65 after June 8

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Child (ages 3 & under FREE)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Voluntary Donation to provide a camper scholarship = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to: Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353-0134**

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I need vegetarian meals.  Other dietary needs: \_\_\_\_\_

I have a special need for a cabin assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

I can offer a ride Friday/Saturday.  I need a ride Friday/Saturday

### 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) 480-4576; kschroeder70@yahoo.com

# Register for Peace Camp, June 26-28

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

Join us for the Modesto Peace/Life Center's 33rd annual Peace Camp in the Sierra, June 26-28 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108, about 100 miles east of Modesto.

Lori Wong will lead the workshop "Meeting Challenges Through Vulnerability and Compassion to Effect Change: Embodying Peace to Create a Peaceful World." In this workshop, we'll explore our relationship with difficult emotions such as anger, sadness, and despair, and how accepting them with honest awareness and acceptance can evoke genuine compassion and the motivation to act from peace rather than anger, hatred, fear, or anxiety. We'll also learn that these elements are necessary ingredients for efficacy in promoting change.

Lori Wong is a Stanford-certified Compassion Cultivation Training™ (CCT) teacher, trained through Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. Lori is a graduate of Spirit Rock's Community Dharma Leader program.

Guadalupe (Lupe) Martinez, Assistant Executive Director of the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) will facilitate a workshop on **environmental justice**. CRPE is a national environmental justice organization providing legal and organizing assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color. They have focused on issues such as clean air, fracking, climate justice, toxic waste and green economic development.

Lupe worked as a farm worker and union organizer with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. In 1996 he was elected to the UFW Executive Board and subsequently was elected third vice president. Lupe is the first full-time organizer with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. He has worked there for over 10 years, following his passion for organizing for justice.

Scott Gifford, our **song leader**, will bring Appalachian dulcimers and ukuleles. Bring whatever else you play. If there's a favorite song that you'd like to sing around the campfire this year, let him know by email (scottdgifford@sbcglobal.net).

Peace Camp regular **Reo Maynard** will lead a **nature hike**. Reo is a nature enthusiast from Fresno who works as an Infection Control Consultant. He has a B.S. in Biology, collects and studies insects and is currently writing screenplays on speculation for movie studios. **Tim Smart** returns to guide us through the night sky on a **star walk**. Tim has been a professional naturalist and astronomy instructor. He is currently a public school teacher in Modesto.

At the 6,200-foot elevation in the Stanislaus National Forest near the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus River, Camp Peaceful Pines is a beautiful setting for Peace Camp and features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work. Families and individuals are welcome.

The camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$80 before June 8 and \$85 after June 8. Young people 18 and under are \$60 before June 8 and \$65 after June 8. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are available. Campers may arrive after 2:00pm on Friday. The camp opens with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions, other information will be provided to participants before camp.

**Information:** Ken Schroeder, 209-480-4576, kschroeder70@yahoo.com

# John McCutcheon back to perform “Joe Hill’s Last Will”

By KEN SCHROEDER

John McCutcheon will perform “Joe Hill’s Last Will,” an inspiring one-man play about the famed labor activist’s life and death on Thursday, June 11 at 7PM at the Prospect Theater Project, 1214 K St., Modesto.

The scene is a cell in the Utah State Prison at 4:00 a.m., one hundred years ago. Joe Hill, American Labor’s most iconic songwriter is awaiting execution at dawn and he’s got a story to tell. It’s the story of his life. But it’s also the story of the growth of the Labor Movement in early 20th century America. It’s a story of humor and love and injustice and courage. It’s the story of America.



Joe Hill, a Swedish immigrant to the United States who was also a musician, writer, a man of wit and insight, who knew how to craft songs that informed, inspired, and inflamed. He created a template for songwriting that was used by Woody Guthrie and by the Civil Rights Movement: taking well-known melodies and crafting new words that made the songs leap to life in a new and changing world.

Songwriter and labor historian, Si Kahn, created the play based largely on Hill’s own words and music. In the hands of multi-Grammy nominee and folk music legend, John McCutcheon, rarely have they had such expert treatment.

The story takes the issues of labor, immigration, workers’ rights, the death penalty, and war from the annals of 1915 to the headlines of 2015. It’s a story that America has been wrestling with for 100 years.

Tickets are \$23 and small service charge at [www.joehill-modesto.eventbrite.com](http://www.joehill-modesto.eventbrite.com).

Sponsorships are available and come with tickets and recognition in the program and on a poster at the event. The levels of sponsorship are: Activist- \$100 (2 tickets); Organizer- \$250 (2 tickets); Sisterhood and Brotherhood- \$500 (4 tickets); Solidarity- \$1000 (4 tickets). For information contact Michael Jurkovic, 209-614-1573 or [nikitabroz@gmail.com](mailto:nikitabroz@gmail.com). The Modesto Peace/Life Center is 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

# FACT SHEET: Due to Reduced CalWORKs Grant Levels, Families Lose Cash Assistance While Still Living in Poverty

By KRISTIN SCHUMACHER

California has the highest poverty rate in the nation. Between 2011 and 2013 on average, nearly 9 million Californians, including more than 2 million children, were living in poverty, using the federal Supplemental Poverty Measure.<sup>1</sup> Without the various public supports and services that make up California’s safety net for low-income children and families, an additional 1.3 million children would have been living in poverty during this period.<sup>2</sup>

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program is a critical component of California’s safety net, providing modest cash assistance while helping parents find and keep jobs. More than 1.2 million Californians, nearly 80% of whom are children, benefit from CalWORKs. Yet, during and after the Great Recession, state policymakers made choices that reduced the level of support offered to families participating in CalWORKs, including eliminating the annual state cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and cutting grant levels. As a result, CalWORKs grants have lost value since 2007-08 despite the modest grant increases that were included in the two most recent state budgets.

Reduced CalWORKs grants not only make it harder for families to make ends meet, but also mean that families lose eligibility for cash assistance sooner than if grant levels were higher. This is because the income eligibility limit for cash assistance is based on a calculation that uses the maximum CalWORKs grant level as a key component. As a result, when grant levels decrease, the income level at which working families lose cash assistance also decreases.

Because the value of CalWORKs grants has eroded, families currently lose cash assistance before their incomes lift them out of poverty. In 2007-08, the income limit for a family of three for CalWORKs cash assistance equaled 115% of the federal poverty line.<sup>3</sup> Under the Governor’s proposed 2015-16 budget, the limit would be just 96% of the 2015 poverty line—the fifth year in a row that the income limit for cash assistance would fall below the poverty line.

As policymakers craft a budget for the upcoming fiscal year, priority should be given to creating a multiyear plan for raising CalWORKs grant levels and reinstating the COLA. Doing so would better position our state to assist hard-working, low-income families as they begin to earn their way out of poverty.

1 The Supplemental Poverty Measure is a more accurate indicator of economic well-being than the Official Poverty Measure (OPM) because, unlike the OPM, it takes into account key household expenses such as housing and medical care, as well as factoring in the impact of public programs. The estimate for all Californians is from the US Census Bureau, and the estimate for children is based on a Budget Center analysis of data included in a recent report from The Annie E. Casey Foundation. See Kathleen Short, *The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2013* (US Census Bureau: October 2014) and The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Measuring Access to Opportunity in the United States* (February 2015).

2 The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Measuring Access to Opportunity in the United States* (February 2015).

3 The federal poverty line is based on the Official Poverty Measure, which is the most commonly used measure of poverty.

To see the graph that accompanies this article, visit [http://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Families-Lose-Cash-Assistance-While-Still-Living-in-Poverty\\_Fact-Sheet\\_05.12.2015.pdf](http://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Families-Lose-Cash-Assistance-While-Still-Living-in-Poverty_Fact-Sheet_05.12.2015.pdf)

From the California Budget & Policy Center, 1107 9th St., Suite 310, Sacramento, CA 95814 | 916.444.0500. [www.calbudgetcenter.org](http://www.calbudgetcenter.org). Email: [contact@calbudgetcenter.org](mailto:contact@calbudgetcenter.org)

The California Budget & Policy Center was established in 1995 to provide Californians with a source of timely, objective, and accessible expertise on state fiscal and economic policy issues. The Budget Center engages in independent fiscal and policy analysis and public education with the goal of improving the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians.

What drew me to Hill’s music, especially as I began to explore it more closely in preparation for the one-man play I’m touring ..., is the fact that Hill’s approach to music was so much the polar opposite of today’s music industry ethos. Joe Hill never did a gig, a show. He never stood up in front of people for money or applause. He sang at rallies and on picket lines. He wrote songs from his prison cell for struggles people wrote him about. He knew that music was a powerful force in people’s lives and that it informed, inspired, and helped give people strength in tough times. It was a weapon against the powerful and a chance to bring humor and levity to dire circumstances.

— John McCutcheon

# Beating the Blues

By JENIFER WEST

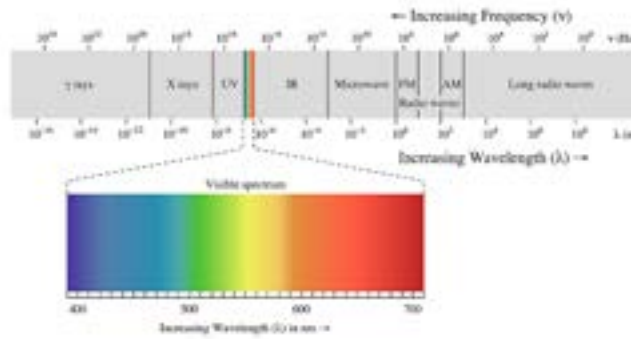
It seems there's a lot of talk about depression these days. Most people will experience it, at some point or another, in their lives. It can be brief, caused by a temporary life situation, or long-term, whether caused by life circumstances or a more organic cause, or both. Regardless of how it comes to be, depression can be dull and nagging, or intense and overwhelming, or some combination of the two. Unfortunately, because this particular challenge can have so many different causes (and often more than one), there is no one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with it. But the monster can be tamed, and even conquered.

Depression symptoms can be mild to severe. It's usually fairly obvious when someone is suffering from severe depression, although some people are adept at concealing it. Anyone exhibiting a sudden and drastic change of attitude or behavior, regardless of whether or not he or she is known to suffer from depression, needs professional help immediately. Other warning signs include lack of, or increase in, appetite; apathy or lethargy; daredevil-like behavior; giving away treasured possessions; withdrawing socially; and lack of interest in favorite activities, among others.

Many people suffer from a more insidious form of depression, which is just as real, and can be as difficult to live with, as the person suffering from a more obvious and severe form of depression. Surprisingly, some people who struggle with mild depression may not even realize it. A coworker, for example, was surprised to learn that feeling overwhelmed when faced with a relatively minor task such as cooking dinner or taking out the trash is a common symptom of mild depression.

Fortunately, we live in a time when there are many ways to manage depression, from counseling and medication to alternative approaches. Your medical practitioner can help you identify any underlying physical causes, and may prescribe medication, including any of a number of antidepressants. If life circumstances are the cause, counseling (with or without medication) can be helpful. Even simple things like eating well and getting adequate sleep can make a real difference. Exercise has also been shown to be beneficial, and it usually doesn't take long to feel the benefits.

Other approaches include alternative therapies, such as wide spectrum light. We are designed to absorb at least some strong sunlight every day, which can be difficult to manage due to our modern, primarily indoor lifestyle. That sunlight plays a role in Vitamin D production is well known of course, but there may well be other, as yet undiscovered substances our bodies need, and are able to make only when exposed to the sun's rays, that play a role in keeping us healthy on various levels. This writer can personally attest to the benefits of light therapy: Last winter, I began using a wide spectrum light for a half-hour each morning. When spring rolled around, I figured I didn't need it anymore. A few weeks later I found myself complaining to someone close to me that I 'just can't seem to get anything done'. She asked if I was still using the light, which I hadn't thought about since I unplugged it the last time. Within a few days of resuming the daily dose of 'sunlight', both my outlook and productivity began to improve. Light therapy is now a permanent part my routine. There are many other ways to fight depression, all of them




good for you, and many of them cheap to free. An 'attitude of gratitude' can work wonders. Thinking about, and preferably, keeping a journal of, at least one thing to be grateful for each day can gradually lift one's spirits. It's ok if it's the same thing every day, at first – the point is to get in the habit of thinking about things to be thankful for. Pretty soon, you just might find yourself looking for things during the day to include in the next day's entry – adding depth to both your gratitude and your journal. A friend who also wrestles with depression and I have exchanged emailed 'thankfuls' – things we're grateful for on a given day. Start writing down something you're thankful for, today – right now – even if all you can muster is something mundane. Keep at it, and you'll soon discover other things for your list. The beauty is that you'll also be creating a powerful tool that you can use later, whether you're feeling down or not.

Doing something for someone else can also make you feel better. Doesn't matter what it is, as long as it's something good for someone else. And if it's a surprise, or done anonymously, that's even better!

Depression is more common than most people realize, but whether mild or severe, no one should have to live with it constantly. There are many ways to fight it and win – all it takes is a little determination to find what works, and effort to stick with it once you do.

**Be informed!**  
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# Celebrate The State Theatre's 80th with cake and a classic film, *The Thin Man*, Sunday, May 31

Join us for an afternoon of vintage newsreels, The State's never-before-seen documentary, and the 1934, black-and-white blockbuster *The Thin Man* ~ starring William Powell, Myrna Loy and "Asta" the Wire Fox Terrier ~ as The State continues celebrating its 80th birthday with a screening of one of the most popular comedies ever made.

In addition to the unveiling of the new documentary, live entertainment by organist Kyle Barker and drawings for prizes, enjoy a complimentary piece of our enormous birthday cake, complete with 80 candles marking the decades since The State opened on Christmas Day in 1934.

Luckily for Modesto movie-goers, the historic movie palace, that beguiled early audiences with its Art Deco decor and modern amenities including "refrigerated air," is still in operation today and drawing bigger crowds than ever. Help us mark this momentous occasion that was made possible by your ongoing support and the generous donations that keep our nonprofit theater open year-round to one and all.

<http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/506>

Doors open at 1 p.m.; Cake at 2 p.m.; Film at 2:15 p.m. Admission: \$5




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# Killing Fields – 40 years later

By LENG POWER

The first memory I have is of the plane ride to America. I had spent the first three years of my life at the Koa-I-Dang refugee camp along the Thailand border. This is only a part of my family's story of survival and only one story among millions of Cambodians who had to flee their homeland to escape mass genocide.

2015 marks 40 years since the Killing Fields, the period between 1975-1979 when Pol Pot took over Cambodia and the army of Khmer Rouge soldiers embarked on systemic murders of intellectuals, progressives, and elites in Cambodia in an effort to turn the country back to "Year Zero". Those who were not murdered right away were taken into labor camps where they died of starvation or brutal work conditions. Families were separated, husbands from wives and children from parents some never to be reunited. It is estimated that between 1.5 to 4 million Cambodians were killed during this period. Those who survived and escaped, wound up in refugee camps for years awaiting sponsorship from individuals in host countries such as the United States.

Forty years later, the third largest genocide in recent history is described in a paragraph or two in high school world history text books, though there is no amount of space that can record and reflect the profound loss and tragedy of humanity that Cambodians suffered and survived through.

Another early and vivid memory is of the INS office when we landed. The carpet was red and the room was bright. This is where we took our pictures for resident alien cards (green cards). The intake process for new arrivals is quite extensive. From what I recall, there were a series of medical evaluations (in which I cowered in the corner for many) and volumes of forms and paperwork my parents had to complete. I don't know if my family realized at the time that this country would be our new home and life as we knew it had changed in every way possible.

This was a shared experience for Cambodian communities all across America who now had to forge some semblance of a life again. Doctors,

teachers, professionals did not have the appropriate credentials to practice here so they took jobs as factory workers, field workers, cleaning staff so that they might support their families. Language, skill sets, weather, food, shelter, customs, all became barriers to manage and overcome. They had survived only to restart and that process proved to be a journey fraught with its own challenges.

I tell those who are interested in this story that we are not yet a generation removed from this atrocity but since there is little context to share this story, it remains untold. Survivors are aging and many still do not want to relive the details of their pain so they suffer in silence. My parents were among those who shared their stories so we can adequately honor the sacrifices and know our history.

Dinnertime at our house, while growing up, would often include conversation about the scarcity of nourishment during the Pol Pot regime and how my father would stow away his food rations in the labor camps so he could share with them his wife and children as they ate together in the dark as to not draw attention from patrolling soldiers. How, while fleeing, they laid among dead bodies so they themselves would not be caught and killed. Even as I research others experience in an effort to broaden my understanding, I temper it with an instinct to guard my heart as I come across accounts that I do not have the emotional strength to finish.

As the children, siblings and story holders of survivors, we are presented with a unique responsibility to not only create space for healing but also to preserve fastidiously what it was that the Khmer Rouge sought to destroy. I am hopeful that the emergences of groups like Khmer Youth of Modesto who seek to empower Khmer youth and preserve culture and the Modesto Cambodian Buddhist Society who provide a sense of community for Khmer elders and families as well as the planning efforts around commemorating 40 years of survival, that from the dark recesses of humanity, resiliency of spirit and hope for the future is courageously possible.

## Photo References

Pictures of Refugee Camp "KID Hospital" by Chhan Touch - Thai / Cambodia Border Camps Website. Licensed under GFDL via Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KID\\_Hospital.jpg#/media/File:KID\\_Hospital.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KID_Hospital.jpg#/media/File:KID_Hospital.jpg). Family Picture is mine (I am in plaid dress front row) Picture of skulls is from stock image of Killing Fields



Survivors are aging and many still do not want to relive the details of their pain so they suffer in silence. My parents were among those who shared their stories so we can adequately honor the sacrifices and know our history.



# Nature Literacy or Nature Deprivation? Why

By LYNN HANSEN, Professor of Biology,  
Modesto Junior College

Nature deprivation is a common condition for today's youth. With increased attention to electronic gadgets, kids are deprived of the simple pleasures of unstructured time in nature and the freedom to explore and learn self-confidence from those experiences. Such is the alarm sounded in 2008 by Richard Louv, nature writer and investigative reporter, in his bestselling chronicle, *Last Child in the Woods*, Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.

Citing extensive examples of the negative effects for children alienated from nature, Louv warns that children are more likely to learn about nature from Disneyland, videos, computer games, CDs and DVDs than from direct experience. When real nature experiences that are unpredictable and spontaneous become less common, kids are deprived of decision-making opportunities, self-esteem building and physical activity

necessary for mental and overall health. In addition, today's plugged-in youth are experiencing childhood obesity in epidemic proportions. According to the CDC, between 1985 and 2010 obesity in California more than doubled (moving from less than 10% to over 24% in twenty-five years). And in the March 9, 2015 issue of *Nature*, Elie Dolgin cites studies showing that being outside allows for normal eye development whereas excessive inside reading, texting, watching TV, even if exercising inside, inhibits normal eye development resulting in myopia.

One might wonder why children prefer indoor play "where the electrical outlets are" to exploring the nearby riparian habitat or going bird watching? Multiple answers exist. Children today are over-scheduled with extra-curricular activities such as sports, after-school programs, music lessons, non-formal educational groups and have little time to interact with their families let alone have unstructured time to poke around in a creek. With a great degree of wistfulness I remember the hours I spent as a child hiking into the nearby woods, or going down to a local stream, looking for frogs or even picking lady slippers in an old growth forest keeping an eye out for evidence of black bears. The rules were simple then: be home before supper and in the house before dark. Not so today.

In addition to over-scheduling, fear deprives children from

freedom of exploration. The fear is two-fold. We are afraid that our children will be kidnapped, and many fear nature itself. After all there are all those weird people out there ready to snatch our unsuspecting child. And one can get hurt in nature, what with all those black widow spiders, hornets, mountain lions, snakes, and gopher holes to step into lurking outside. It used to be that broken arms were one consequence of tree climbing exploration, but now we are more likely to see repetitive stress injuries of children from excessive video game playing. With the fear of nature there is also the fear of

– to mention a few of the learning challenges existing in our schools – how frustrated you would be in this environment.

To further complicate the problem in our area, Modesto City and Sylvan School Districts, citing economic reasons, abandoned their participation in one of the best residential sixth grade outdoor education camps available, Foothill Horizons located in Sonora. Currently, Modesto City District policy forbids participation in this program during school time unless every school in the system participates – citing fairness. But this policy is easily circumvented. Parent clubs in some Modesto City schools such as Lakewood fundraise

and send their students to Foothill Horizons during non-school time. But students from other Modesto City schools that do not have sufficient parent club resources for Foothill Horizons stay home.

A partial solution to this problem is that within our community there are teachers and non-profit agencies, unwilling to see young people deprived of Nature's lessons, that have stepped

up – overcoming bureaucracy, economics, fear and over scheduling – to provide excellent outdoor education programs in our region. Tuolumne River Trust Education Director Meg Gonzalez delivers river education programs for 4th and 5th grade students (Trekking the Tuolumne) and also for Jr. High students (Tuolumne River Adventure Club) as well as internships for post-secondary students in an effort to increase water literacy and river stewardship in our community.

The Great Valley Museum offers traveling teacher programs and museum tours to acquaint students with local natural history and science standards based lessons.

Karen Retford from Empire Elementary school, uses a school garden, programs such as Trekking the Tuolumne, Salmonids in the Classroom, Service Learning by weeding at Dos Rios river restoration project on the San Joaquin River and field trips to Big Basin and Arches State Parks along the coast – all privately funded by grants – to enhance her instructional program.

Janet Wheeler, 2nd Grade teacher at Julien school in Turlock, centers lessons around a school garden to teach literature, math, science, social studies and nutrition.

For years, Salida Elementary School students in grades



Teacher Janet Wheeler with 2nd Grade students doing a writing exercise in Julien Elementary School Garden, Turlock.



Jr. High Students from Tuolumne Adventure Club teaching water safety to youth as a service-learning project.

lawsuits emanating from visits to public parks and private lands, making them even more sanitized or limited in access. Swing sets and teeter-totters are largely gone from the playground equipment collage.

So what does Nature offer? The time spent in natural surroundings exploring is restorative, allows children and adults to appreciate, reflect, experience the very processes linked to survival. We all need "nature sense" if we are to grasp our role in creating and maintaining a sustainable environment where air is healthy to breathe, water is potable and green trees, flowers, animals help create perspective and calm us. Nature teaches. Nature inspires. Nature heals.

One would assume that Nature would be the ideal classroom for local school children as part of their education process. But in the wake of "No Child Left Behind" (translate that into "No Child Left Untested") with its kill and drill activities teaching to the test, to today's transitioning into Common Core, many teachers are no longer satisfied with the teaching experience and children are beleaguered with a cascade of overwhelming tasks. This is especially true for students trying to engage the learning process without understanding English. Instead of providing discovery nature experiences and hands-on activities, many school days are structured minute by minute with specific curriculum objectives and very little if any unstructured time. Imagine, if you are a child who is an English learner or one who has ADHD

# Outdoor Education Matters

1 & 2 have traveled to Caswell Park to experience a nature field trip, Grade 3 enjoyed Stanislaus River at Knights Ferry and Grades 4 & 5 routinely participate in field experiences through Trekking the Tuolumne.

All Oakdale Joint Union Elementary Schools 4th Grade classes, guided by science teacher Krista Smith, study the salmon life cycle then culminate that experience with a field trip to Knights Ferry each Fall to see salmon spawn.

Brett Sutterley and his colleagues from Walnut Elementary and other Turlock schools participate in the LiMPETS (Long Term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students) program sponsored by Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History and the Packard Foundation, each year taking students to Monterey Bay where they visit Monterey Bay Aquarium and do hands-on science sampling and recording sand crab populations at Alilomar that they then post on a science database. Before this experience, as many as 80% of these students have never been to the ocean.

Katie Merenda from Gregori High School provides field trips to the Stanislaus River for AP students assisting with salmon carcass counts in collaboration with Fish and Wildlife and her Global Club participates in the LiMPETS project in Monterey.

Robert S. Withrow-Clark, current 4-H Youth Advisor with the UC Ag Extension, supervises two place-based programs in this region: Reconnecting With Nature Project at Khol School in Stockton and Sustainable Urban Agriculture at Washington K-8 School in Stockton.

Although these programs do improve nature literacy in our community they do not reach all students nor take the place of Foothill Horizons Outdoor School. Sofia, a 6th Grade student from Lakewood Elementary, feels she is lucky to have experienced three days at Foothill Horizon, yet notes that all

6th grade students in Modesto don't get the same opportunity. Seeing the inequity, she is determined to do something about it. At this writing Sofia is a K-6 representative for the LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) for Modesto City Schools and a strong advocate for reinstating Foothill Horizons Outdoor School for ALL students in Modesto. We applaud her efforts and urge Modesto City and Sylvan School Districts to reinstate Foothill Horizons into the 6th Grade Curriculum. When this happens, it will be an important step in providing nature literacy and its accompanying life skills for every student they serve. See Sofia's speech before the



Students from The Global Club at Gregori High School sampling Sand Crabs for the LiMPETS Project



Robert S. Withrow-Clark, 4-H Youth Advisor with students in a Sustainable Urban Agriculture Program in Stockton, CA

Modesto City School's Board at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIU12-npMoo&feature=youtu.be>

In the words of Garrison Keillor, "Nothing you do for a child is ever wasted." Amen Brother!

**ACTION:** To increase nature literacy in our community volunteer time and/or money to any of the following place based outdoor education organizations:

1. Trekking the Tuolumne and Tuolumne Adventure Club. Volunteers needed. Contact Meg Gonzalez Tuolumne River Trust Education Coordinator, [meg@tuolumne.org](mailto:meg@tuolumne.org) or (209) 236-0330
2. Foothill Horizons 6th Grade Outdoor School, Stanislaus County Office of Education Contact Jess Hewitt, Director. Intern positions. <http://www.stancoe.org/SCOE/iss/outdoor%2Ded/>

3. Oakdale Joint Union Elementary 4th Grade Salmon Days. Volunteers needed 4 days in November. Contact Krista Smith, [ksmith@ojusd.org](mailto:ksmith@ojusd.org)
4. The Global Club, Gregori High School. Contact Katie Merenda [merenda.k@monet.k12.ca.us](mailto:merenda.k@monet.k12.ca.us) Donations accepted.
5. Field Studies Opportunities for K-3 Students: Independence Charter School, Salida Union School District. Volunteers needed and appreciated. Contact Lorraine Freeland 209-545-4415 or [lfreeland@salida.k12.ca.us](mailto:lfreeland@salida.k12.ca.us)

6. Great Valley Museum, Traveling Teachers and Museum Docents needed. Contact Brian Sanders (209) 575-6196, <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/gvm/>

7. 4-H Youth Activities, U.C. Cooperative Extension, Urban Farming Project. Volunteers needed. Contact Robert S. Withrow-Clark, (209) 953-6118 [rwithrow-clark@ucanr.edu](mailto:rwithrow-clark@ucanr.edu)

8. Turlock Education Foundation: designate donations for LiMPETS for Turlock students. Info@

[TurlockEdFoundation.org](http://TurlockEdFoundation.org) or 209-417-5750 P.O. Box 638, Turlock CA. 95380

9. Ag in Motion, Free Jr. High Science Programs. Contact Michele Laverty, Director 521-2902 or [www.agscience-center.org](http://www.agscience-center.org)

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We all need "nature sense" if we are to grasp our role in creating and maintaining a sustainable environment where air is healthy to breathe, water is potable and green trees, flowers, animals help create perspective and calm us. Nature teaches. Nature inspires. Nature heals.

# Forgiveness

Peace Essay Contest  
First Place ~ Division II  
Amber Coston

Independent Home School ~ Susan Janis

"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it." (Twain) Often times we seek peace by attempting to avenge wrongs, which only deepens our pain and turmoil. All over the world, people are searching fervently for serenity when the key to peace is right within their reach; forgiveness. We should be willing to learn from the experiences of others, who have been magnanimous enough to pardon someone who has committed an offense against them. Lieutenant Stigler, a German WWII pilot, was faced with the decision of whether to hold on to his anger or to let go of the hostile feeling toward the country he blamed for the demise of his brother. Forgiveness allows us to lay aside our disagreements and differences and work together without belligerence.

During WWII, a twenty-one year old American pilot, Charles Brown, had been sent on his first mission to bomb Bremen, Germany. During this assignment, German fighter planes had injured his B-17. Separated from the rest of the planes in formation that had been appointed the same task, Lieutenant Brown was left to face another attack on his plane. After a second beating from German bullets, over half of his crew was wounded or dead. With coughs and sputters, the single aircraft glided at an unusually low altitude over their enemies' territory.

"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it.

From a Nazi airbase below, Lieutenant Stigler, a German fighter pilot, heard the hum of a bomber plane overhead. He looked up just in time to see it pass behind some trees. The Lieutenant's older brother, August, had been killed earlier in the war; it was a feeling of vengeance that urged Franz Stigler to take off after the American bomber in his plane. As he approached the brutally incapacitated B-17 from behind, Stigler was amazed that no one fired at him. He looked more closely and saw that the back gunner was dead. The German Lieutenant aimed at the bomber, placed his finger on the trigger and then lingered for a moment. During this moment he remembered what Gustav Roedel, his previous commanding officer, had told him before his first mission, "You follow the rules of war for you, not your enemy. You fight by rules to keep your humanity." Although the kill would have awarded him The Knight's Cross, the highest German award, Stigler realized that he could not take the plane out. The kill would not have been in defense of his country, but rather to avenge his brother's death.

The Americans in the plane were helpless. It was a miracle that their aircraft was still in flight. Stigler would later recount, "It was the most severely damaged B-17 I had ever seen still flying." Mercy and compassion overrode Stigler's need for revenge. The German pilot guided his plane alongside the bomber, locked eyes with the American pilot, but did not fire. With a nod to the terrified men, Stigler changed his mission. Although it put his life in danger for helping the enemy, Lieutenant Stigler shepherded the B-17 across the North Sea. He saluted the Americans and turned back toward the German airbase.

Many years later, Lieutenant Brown began having nightmares about the event with the German fighter pilot. His dreams ended with the German destroying the B-17 and the men in it. Desperate for relief, Lieutenant Brown put out advertisements in hopes of finding the man who spared his

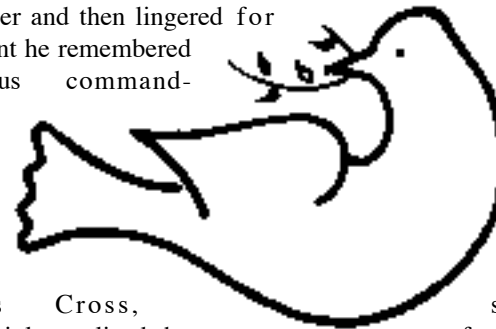
and his crew's lives. Lieutenant Stigler replied to the advertisement. The German and American pilots met for the first time forty-six years after the day Lieutenant Stigler guided them across the North sea. Franz Stigler was asked what he thought of Charles Brown. Though struggling to hold back tears, he replied, "I love you Charlie." When he showed mercy to an American enemy, Franz Stigler had no idea that the man would one day become like a brother. (Blake)

The bravery, integrity, and most of all forgiveness that was displayed in the story of these two enemies, looking beyond their differences and becoming friends, is very inspiring. By sparing Brown's life, Lieutenant Stigler unintentionally freed himself from the shackles of anger and pain that had enslaved him since his brother's death. Forgiving others is not easy, but it can improve our mental and physical health. If we return evil for evil then we are no better than our adversary. Romans 12 says, "Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you live peaceably with all men ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

A greater amount of courage is required to show compassion to our enemies than repay them for what they have done to us. Just think how greatly peace would increase if each of us repaid one unkind action directed toward us with benevolence. If we would be more willing to forgive and look beyond differences, peace would have a larger place in the heart of our world. "To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness." (Muller)

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## Kablooey

*Ghazal for America*

The man on the TV says someone we love is always dying  
but he's wrong – everyone we love is always dying

and what's more I tell him what's more is that miracle vial  
you're searching for won't fix a goddamned thing. Diane

I tell him though that's not his name Diane no elixir will  
grow back your ladyfriend's skin. It's kablooey. It was dynamite

back in the day but now it's something off the butcher's block  
and I'm sorry darling but she's kaput. Times are dire

and if I lost a leg outside the green zone you'd tell me  
the same thing. Maybe you're more a *diamond*

*is half full* sort of guy I don't know – I've never been  
much of an optometrist. Chances are we won't be dining

this way again so I'd like to say before you sign off:  
expletive deleted. You're a real pal a dynamo

in the sack but don't fool yourself. We're only watching  
because those folks on the other channels are always dying

to sell us five-in-one pasta strainers and knives that cut through  
tomatoes. But really don't all knives cut through tomatoes Diane?

## Dana Koster – Mother, Feminist, Woman of Letters

Dana Koster has earned degrees from UC Berkeley and Cornell University. She was a Wallace Stegner Fellow. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in such publications as the *Indiana Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *PN Review*, *Clackamas Literary Review* and *EPOCH*. Dana is a board member of the MoSt Poetry Center and Chair of the City of Modesto Poets' Corner Committee.

She says of her activist history; "I'm an intersectional feminist activist - both in my everyday life and through my writing. In my days as a lecturer at Cornell University, I dedicated a portion of every semester to feminist analyses of the texts and films that we studied in class. I believe that feminism should be inclusive to trans women, to women of color and to anyone who believes in equality."

She lives in Modesto with her husband and young son.



## Star Map

This one in the rudimentary shape  
of a man: his abrupt limbs  
ending. The space  
between the man  
and the forked tongue  
at his shoulder  
always expanding.

## Dark Matter

It's there:  
an itch, unseen  
but prickling.

The matter inferred  
but unproven

that fills  
the gaps  
in the night  
with seeming.

The Moon Smells Like  
Burnt Gunpowder

How did we smell it when our heads were screwed  
into our helmets? Easy. We touched it

with gloved hands, walked the empty vistas  
like shades of the Otherworld,

and the regolith held an electric charge,  
stuck to everything: the crannies

of our suits, the Module's disced feet –  
a fine film of lunar soil

that filled the cabin with the smell  
of bitter sulfur, Roman candles

aimed at a best friend's ear.  
Made you feel the red prickles of a kickbruise

welling on your shoulder, back when  
the moon was a faraway dream.

But when we studied the molecules,  
they were all wrong – not combustible at all.

Just glass. Motes formed  
and scattered by meteorite impacts.

The moon smells like burnt gunpowder,  
we said. We had to say something.

## Yellow Window

When we touch, I hear the rumble of horses.  
I'd forgotten the pasture is full of horses.

In sleep, you entice me to swallow your breath.  
I will not break you as one breaks horses.

Outside, the earth is flat and resolute.  
Fog rolls through the valley on the backs of horses.

I wonder if I will outlive you, or you me  
but I only ask you to speak of horses.

You say there are filaments of night in my hair.  
I am telling you they are strands of horseness.

The moon is not a spy at our yellow window.  
The sun is not a chariot pulled by horses.

# Houseless, not homeless

from page 1

long stretches, or short term or rotating in/out of this situation.

Initially, I had come to Beard Brook Park the last weekend in February hoping to meet some people with pets during Church at the Park services. The Humane Society of Stanislaus County (HSSC) has had a table at this event a few times over the last 2 months, providing free dog food for the residents of this particular park community. I spoke with HSSC volunteers, Emmie and Vanessa, about what they do. HSSC knows that there are many people living in the streets who have pets, but these pet owners opt to share their own food with them, since they have no dog (or cat) food. This is where HSSC comes in, as well as other donors and organizations. HSSC received a large donation from Amazon, and now has started providing bagged food for the Beard Brook Park residents. They plan on making this a regular occurrence at this event every other Sunday. If you would like to help HSSC with this program, or other HSSC programs (spay/neuter, adoption programs, education), contact them at [info@humanestanislaus.care](mailto:info@humanestanislaus.care)



Above: Ray and Blackie.  
Right: "Clockwork" and Lil Girl.



The following is an account of just a few of the people I spoke with at Beard Brook Park, one of our oldest parks in Modesto. We spoke about their struggles, their circumstances and their four-legged family members:

First I met Sylvia and Ray, and their 7 month old black spaniel named Blackie. Sylvia and Ray have been homeless for around 10 years. You could see how much they loved their little companion, Blackie. Among the main struggles they have been faced with are replacing stolen items, including their ID's, which are very difficult to replace. Ray had nine backpacks stolen just last year alone. Safety is a huge issue, and you can see how protective they are over Blackie, who sports a donated fuzzy jacket. They stay at Beard Brook because it feels safer there than at other local parks. Lots of theft goes on, from the outside mostly, but it's a day-to-day struggle to keep your personal items and your companions safe. Sylvia's request: To get some help with replacing her lost ID.

I spoke with Richard who was there with his beautiful dog Brandy (approx. 8 years old). He has had her since she was a puppy. Currently Richard and Brandy live in his truck. A soft spoken man, Richard is one of the many nearby residents who volunteers to help with the Church in the Park event setup each weekend.

I met a man called "Clockwork" and his dog, Lil Girl, a gorgeous and healthy Akita mix (1-1/2 yrs. old). Clock and I spoke for a long time. He mentioned that years ago, when

he first came to live on the streets, he was lucky enough to have a mentor who showed him the ropes of the homeless lifestyle. Clockwork has been homeless for 7 to 8 yrs. We reminisced about the old Beard Brook Park, since both of us had played there as kids. It has changed a lot since those days. He talked about the unspoken honor system that resides within

the homeless community that some, unfortunately, don't adhere to, and who make it more difficult for everyone else. He said that so many residents living at the park feel like family to each other and respect each other and their personal property. I asked him what are some types of help that don't seem to get addressed. He said that an evening food service would be so welcomed, and so too, the need for clothing –outer and under garments, socks, shoes etc.

"Anyone can become homeless, but everyone has built-in skills that can be useful in a homeless community (teachers, builders, etc.). People are able to help each other in these situations using their personal strengths for the greater good of the local community of residents."

What is the future of the park? Maybe this could be the beginnings of a tent city, complete with personal storage and shower facilities? Or, as rumors have it, is this park being purchased for some other use? If so, where will all these citizens move?

All in all, the main issue that affects everyone in this park is security, which is really enforced in this community; and feeling that sense of home. Maybe the companion animals are instrumental in bringing this sense of home to their people. And dogs aren't the only companion animals out here; there are cats as well and, I am sure, a few other animals too. They stick with their humans through thick and thin, many times more often than people. It is a struggle for both pet and 'parent', but the bond is strong.

The stories continue, as do the day-to-day struggles. And I hope to cover more individuals with their pets over the months to come. A special resilience resides in so many of these residents, and that is mind-blowing to say the least. The path to understanding first is dialogue. It's a start.

On the way out, Emmie and Vanessa from HSSC picked up one puppy from a new litter that residents were caring for,



to have a vet check him over. The needs are great for human – and animal alike.

**ACTION:** Contact me at [40ryke209@gmail.com](mailto:40ryke209@gmail.com) for more information about help with acquiring, or replacing a lost or stolen ID through the "Homeless ID Project." Also, if you have any ideas, donations, skills to contribute. Let's work together. It takes a village after all!


Church in the Park: to donate or volunteer contact them at: [www.ChurchInTheParkModesto.org](http://www.ChurchInTheParkModesto.org)

Humane Society of Stanislaus County: To donate or volunteer email [info@humanestanislaus.care](mailto:info@humanestanislaus.care)

Visit <http://www.humanestanislaus.care/>

**ACTION:** To help, contact John Lucas, [lucasjal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lucasjal@sbcglobal.net) or call 209-527-7634.

"Anyone can become homeless, but everyone has built-in skills that can be useful in a homeless community (teachers, builders, etc.). People are able to help each other in these situations using their personal strengths for the greater good of the local community of residents."



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# Statement of Marshall Islands to the 2015 NPT Review Conference

by **TONY de BRUM**

Permanent Mission of The Republic of The Marshall Islands  
To The United Nations  
New York

Hon. Mr. Tony de Brum  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of the Marshall Islands  
9th Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on  
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons  
General Debate  
27 April 2015

Mr. Secretary-General, Madame President, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen –

For far too many years, these circular negotiations on nuclear non-proliferation have failed to listen closely to those voices who know better. There are several nations and peoples in the world who have experienced nuclear weapons directly — and the Marshall Islands stands among them in close solidarity. In particular, many Hibakusha have traveled from Japan to this meeting to ensure global decision-makers hear their powerful message.

How many in this room have personally witnessed nuclear weapon detonations?

I have — as a young boy at Likiep atoll in the northern Marshall Islands, during the time in which 67 nuclear weapons were tested between 1946 and 1958 — at an explosive scale equivalent to 1.6 Hiroshima Shots every single day, for 12 years.

When I was nine years old, I remember well the 1954 Bravo shot at Bikini atoll — the largest detonation the world had ever seen, 1000 times the power of the Hiroshima blast. It was the morning, and I was fishing with my grandfather. He was throwing the net and suddenly the silent bright flash — and then a force, the shock wave. Everything turned red — the ocean, the fish, the sky, and my grandfather's net. And we were 200 miles away from ground zero. A memory that can never be erased.

These nuclear tests were conducted during the Marshall Islands time as a United Nations Trust Territory — and many of these actions were taken, despite Marshallese objections, under UN Trusteeship Resolutions 1082 and 1493, adopted in 1954 and 1956. Those resolutions remain the only specific instances in which the United Nations has ever explicitly authorized the use of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons tests have created lasting impacts in the Marshall Islands — not only a historical reality but a contemporary struggle for our basic human rights — but I have not traveled to the NPT meeting to air out any differences with our former administering authority, the United States. The facts speak for themselves. Instead, I bring with me this moral lesson for all nations — because no one ever considered the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, the Marshallese people still carry a burden which no other people or nation should ever have to bear. And this is a burden we will carry for generations to come.

The serious shortfalls in the NPT's implementation are not only legal gaps, but also a failure to address the incontrovertible human rights clarified by the recent outcomes of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Norway, Mexico and Austria. Over 150 nations, including the Republic of the Marshall Islands, have joined the Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons at the UN General Assembly's First Committee. An overwhelming global majority agrees that the humanitarian dimension of disarmament must be the strongest centerpiece of multilateral assurance.

It should be our collective goal to not only stop the spread of nuclear weapons, but also to truly achieve the peace and security of a world without them, and thus end the cycle of broken promises. This is why the Marshall Islands serves a

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**It should be our collective goal to not only stop the spread of nuclear weapons, but also to truly achieve the peace and security of a world without them, and thus end the cycle of broken promises.**

co-agent in action presently before the International Court of Justice, which has brought this matter to the direct attention of the world's nuclear powers. After decades of diplomacy, the NPT's defining purpose remains unfulfilled, and those who are unwilling to negotiate in good faith will be held to wider account.

Still, there is hope — the Republic of the Marshall Islands lends its support to the recent outcomes, driven by the United States and the "P5 plus 1," that opens doors towards a framework approach which will prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. These negotiations are far from final — but if they are completed, the international community will have proven that multilateral negotiation can still yield positive steps towards averting nuclear danger.

If only such resolve was carried into the NPT. It is true that the world has slowly reduced the number of nuclear weapons. But no one can keep a straight face and argue that sixteen

thousand nuclear weapons are an appropriate threshold for global safety. We are seeing nuclear nations modernize and rebuild when they could use the opportunity to reduce. There is no right to "indefinite possession" to continue to retain nuclear weapons on security grounds.

At this year's meeting, we need to address legal approaches capable of achieving "effective measures" on disarmament — and if that means a new legal framework towards the time bound elimination of weapons and risks, with good-faith parameters rather than loopholes, and with meaningful participation from all necessary nuclear actors — then the Marshall Islands is all for it.

The 2010 NPT action plan is an important benchmark but it reveals serious shortcomings in implementation — which cannot merely be "rolled over" without consequence. The valid right of NPT Parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only exists with the highest standards of safety and security — and NPT States must be held to full account for violations or abusing withdrawal provisions.

We should further affirm that the Test Ban Treaty is vital to the NPT, recognizing that its entry into force is essential. The Marshall Islands' own direct experience should be lesson enough for the world to firmly commit to ending nuclear testing.

Further, all relevant States Parties should take necessary measures to bring about entry into force of agreements establishing nuclear-free weapons zones. In particular, the support of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for a nuclear-free Pacific has long been clouded by other agreements, and we are encouraged that the United States has provided a new perspective on the Rarotonga Treaty's Protocols. We express again our aspirations to join with our Pacific neighbors.

Madame President,

There may be different avenues towards on achieving a world without nuclear weapons — but our worst fear is merely continuing the status quo — seeing no meaningful answer at all. Perpetuating the status quo, patting ourselves on the back and expecting accolades for making zero progress at this NPT Review Conference is totally unacceptable to all peoples and all nations. Surely we can, and must do better.

This entry was posted in Nuclear Abolition and tagged Marshall Islands, NPT on April 27, 2015 by Tony de Brum.

<http://www.wagingpeace.org/statement-of-marshall-islands-to-the-2015-npt-review-conference/>

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Local Public Radio

FM **104.9**

[www.ValleyMedia.Org](http://www.ValleyMedia.Org)

Local Bands, Real News



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

## ACTIONS FOR PEACE Sonora - Stockton

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

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

## MAY

**31 SUN: Celebrate The State's 80th** with Cake and a Classic film, *The Thin Man*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., Modesto. 1:00 pm, film at 2:15 pm. See <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/506>

## JUNE

**6 SAT: Film American Graffiti.** State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Film at 3 pm <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/458>

**7 SUN: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast,** Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto, 8 am – Noon.

**11 THURS: John McCutcheon performs his one-man play, "Joe Hill's Last Will."** Benefit for the Modesto Peace/Life Center Prospect Theater Project. See article, this issue.

**13 SAT: Citizens' Climate Lobby,** Modesto Chapter, 10:30 a.m., 937 Oxford Way, Modesto. Questions: Call Kathy, 523-5907.

**17 WED: Film Night at the Center** presents *Chasing Ice*. Discussion after. 6:30 pm, Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. See article, this issue.

**21 SUN: The Modesto Film Society** presents *Rebel Without a Cause*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/345>

**26-28 FRI-SUN: 33rd Annual Peace Camp** in the Sierras. See info., this issue.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**September: 2016 Peace Essay Contest** applications available.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

**LifeRing Secular Recovery:** Sunday 10:00 am, Kaiser CDRP, 1789 W Yosemite Ave, Manteca. LifeRing Secular Recovery: Support group for people who choose to live free of alcohol and other addictive substances. We avoid discussion of politics and religion in our meetings so each person can focus on building their personal sobriety recovery plan. (209) 591-8741, [www.liferingmodesto.org](http://www.liferingmodesto.org)

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

### TUESDAYS

**Pagan Family Social,** third Tuesdays, Golden Corral, 3737 McHenry Ave, Modesto, 6:00 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

**LifeRing Secular Recovery.** Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 591-8741.

**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](http://www.funstrummers.com)

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

**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 p.m., Center for Human Services Building, 1700 McHenry Way, Room 12 Modesto.

**Modesto Folk Dancers:** All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 480-0387.

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

**Transgender Support Group,** 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30

## 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), 4:30-5:30 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

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

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

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

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

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

to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email [info@stanpride.org](mailto:info@stanpride.org), or [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgsupport@stanpride.org)

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

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

### THURSDAYS

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

**Third Thursday Art Walk,** Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modesto-artwalk.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](mailto:RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com)

**Latino Community Roundtable (LCR)** meets on the second Thursday of each month at Noon at Bel Piatto Italian Cucina, 1000 Kansas Ave., Modesto, CA. Info: call Maggie Mejia, (209) 303-2664, <http://lcrstan.org>  
The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.com)

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

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

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

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

### FRIDAYS

**Funstrummer Ukulele Band** every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 505-3216; [www.funstrummers.com](http://www.funstrummers.com)

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

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

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

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

**Hispanic Leadership Council:** 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

**Citizens' Climate Lobby,** Modesto Chapter, meets every second Saturday, 10:30 a.m., 937 Oxford Way, Modesto. Questions: Call Kathy, 523-5907.

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

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

**For complete calendar information and regularly scheduled activities, visit <http://www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm>**

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