



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
PEACE/LIFE
CENTER
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VOLUME XXIII, NO. 5

A Less Traveled Path *a tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.*

his
was a lonely road
trod by few
traversing the difficult terrain
of social injustice

his
was a journey of faith
a pilgrimage of conviction
a trying trek
a relentless climb
up the treacherous slopes
of prejudice and discrimination

his
was a less accepted calling
courageously chosen
singlemindedly carried out
a martyred destiny
selflessly sacrificed
for the greater good
of racial equality



his
was a less traveled path
and he was a solitary sojourner
a tragic trailblazer
a determined dream-seeker
whose visionary quest
did not die with him
but lives on
in the searching souls
of those he stirred

— kevin n. gunn

John McCutcheon plays for peace on January 15

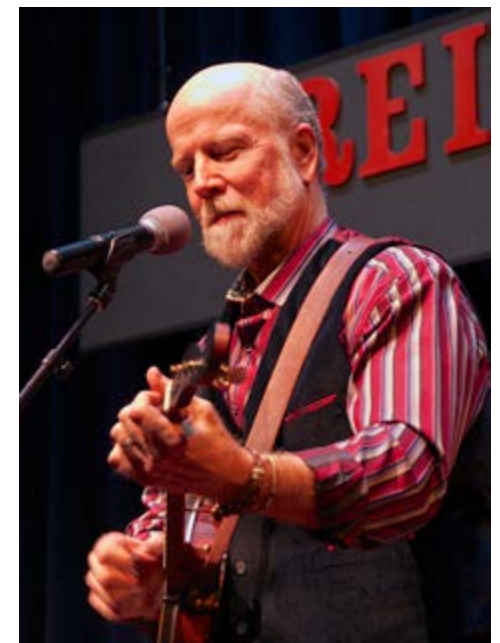
By KEN SCHROEDER

Six-time Grammy nominated folk musician John McCutcheon brings his annual Left Coast tour to Modesto in a Martin Luther King birthday benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Thursday, January 15 at 7pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. John McCutcheon is blessed with gifts as a songwriter, musician and storyteller. Johnny Cash called him “the most impressive instrumentalist I’ve ever heard.” John is a master of a dozen different instruments, including guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano and fiddle.

This season marks the 100th anniversary of the World War I Christmas truce, which is commemorated in John’s classic peace song, *Christmas in the Trenches*. On Christmas Eve 1914 along the Western Front, German and English soldiers put down their arms and ventured out into No Man’s Land to share Christmas. *Christmas in the Trenches* is also the title of a children’s book authored by John. Every one of his concerts has included the song and it will be featured this year.

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.

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**. You can dedicate your sponsorship to another. Specify how you would like the dedication to appear in the program (such as “In Honor of ...” or “To the Memory of ...”)

The Modesto Peace/Life Center is a tax-exempt organization under the IRS code section 501(c)(3). EIN #94-2800825.

Modesto Peace/Life Center Annual Meeting

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2015
PEACE/LIFE CENTER • 720 13th ST., MODESTO

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 8:30 AM | — Coffee and Conversation |
| 9:00 AM | — Business Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Report • Committee Reports • Nomination of Board Members |
| | — Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans, ideas and strategies |
| 12:00 PM | — Adjournment |

For 44 years the Modesto Peace/Life Center has been a meeting place for people concerned about peace, justice, equality, a sustainable environment, education and working for a more peaceful community and world. Please join us!

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SAVE THE DATE: Julian Bond to speak at 21st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. 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."



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?*



(3) non-profit organization; EIN #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; College Avenue Congregational Church.

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)



Clayborne Carson to speak 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 com-



Photo: Michael Colopy

memorate the work of Dr. King each January. This year 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*, will speak on Income Inequality.

The 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, including music and prizes for the essay contest, will be followed by a reception in the school cafeteria. Admission is free and the site is handicapped accessible.

For more information, visit www.mlmlutherkingjr.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>

Kathy Kelly and Georgia Walker found Guilty at Jefferson City Federal Court

Jefferson City, MO— On December 10, a federal magistrate found Georgia Walker, of Kansas City, MO and Chicagoan Kathy Kelly guilty of criminal trespass to a military installation as a result of their June 1 effort to deliver a loaf of bread and a citizens' indictment of drone warfare to authorities at Whiteman AFB. Judge Matt Whitworth sentenced Kelly to three months in prison and Walker to one year of supervised probation.

In testimony, Kelly, who recently returned from Afghanistan, recounted her conversation with an Afghan mother whose son, a recent police academy graduate, was killed by a drone as he sat with colleagues in a garden. "I'm educated and humbled by experiences talking with people who've been trapped and impoverished by U.S. warfare," said Kelly. "The U.S. prison system also traps and impoverishes people. In coming months, I'll surely learn more about who goes to prison and why."

During sentencing, prosecution attorneys asked that Walker be sentenced to five years of probation and banned from going within 500 feet of any military base. Judge Whitworth imposed a sentence of one year probation with a condition that Walker refrain from approaching any military base for one year. Walker coordinates an organization that provides re-entry services to newly released prisoners throughout Missouri. Noting that the condition to stay away from military bases will affect her ability to travel in the

region, Walker expressed concern that this condition will limit her work among former prisoners.

Kelly's work as a co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence places her alongside people in a working class neighborhood of Kabul. She said that the day's proceedings offered a valuable opportunity to shed light on experiences of Afghan families whose grievances are seldom heard. At the conclusion of the sentencing, Kelly said that every branch of U.S. government, including the judicial branch, shares responsibility for suffering caused when drones target and kill civilians.

Read Kathy Kelly's personal reflections on p.11.

See more at: <http://mainetalk.org/hccn/fwd-its-a-long-and-dusty-trial-kathy-kelly/#sthash.cDVSCMbm.dpuf>



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SAVE THE DATE!

Tour the studios of
Stanislaus County artists
April 25 & 26
11a.m. - 5 p.m.

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or Stanislaus County Artists
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Email: openstudio.stanislaus@gmail.com
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Christmas in the Trenches

Words & Music by JOHN McCUTCHEON

Inspired by a back-stage conversation with an old woman in Birmingham, AL, this song tells a story that is not only true, but well-known throughout Europe.

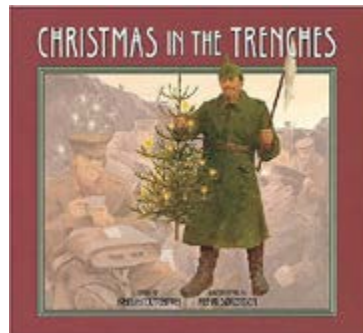
*My name is Francis Tolliver, I come from Liverpool,
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.
To Belgium and to Flanders to Germany to here
I fought for King and country I love dear.
'Twas Christmas in the trenches where the frost so bitter hung,
The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song was sung,
Our families back in England were toasting us that day,
Their brave and glorious lads so far away.*

*I was lying with my messmate on the cold and rocky ground
When across the lines of battle came a most peculiar sound
Says I, "Now listen up, me boys!" each soldier strained to hear
As one young German voice sang out so clear.
"He's singing bloody well, you know!" my partner says to me
Soon one by one each German voice joined in in harmony
The cannons rested silent, the gas clouds rolled no more
As Christmas brought us respite from the war.*

*As soon as they were finished and a reverent pause was spent
"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" struck up some lads from Kent
The next they sang was "Stille Nacht," "Tis 'Silent Night'," says I
And in two tongues one song filled up that sky.
"There's someone coming towards us!" the front line sentry cried
All sights were fixed on one lone figure coming from their side
His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shone on that plain so bright
As he bravely strode unarmed into the night.*

*Soon one by one on either side walked into No Man's land
With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand*

*We shared some secret
brandy and we wished
each other well
And in a flare-lit soccer
game we gave 'em hell.
We traded chocolates,
cigarettes, and
photographs from home
These sons and fathers
far away from families
of their own
Young Sanders played his squeeze box and they had a violin
This curious and unlikely band of men.*



*Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France once more
With sad farewells we each began to settle back to war
But the question haunted every heart that lived that wondrous night
"Whose family have I fixed within my sights?"
'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung
The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs
of peace were sung
For the walls they'd kept between us to exact the work of war
Had been crumbled and were gone for evermore.*

*My name is Francis Tolliver, in Liverpool I dwell
Each Christmas come since World War I
I've learned its lessons well
That the ones who call the shots won't be among the dead and lame
And on each end of the rifle we're the same.*

©1984 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)
<http://www.folkmusic.com/lyrics/christmas-trenches>

Hands Up, Don't Shoot!

By JOHN McCUTCHEON

When I sat down in a backstage dressing room in Birmingham, AL, May 3rd, 1984, scrawling down couplets inspired by a janitor's story I'd just heard, I never imagined that my work and my life would become so entwined with the story of the 1914 Christmas Truce. But now here I am, thirty years later, spending lots of time doing interviews, stories, commentaries about this event, its centenary mere weeks away. I've often thought of that first German soldier, his heart full, lifting his voice into that night sky. It transcended the reality of the dirt, death, and disease that surrounded him on all sides. It was a miraculous thing, really, that audacity of song. Nothing could have been more disarming, literally and figuratively. And I think of that first, courageous soldier who ventured out into that frozen No Man's Land, brokering a ceasefire that had every chance of ending badly. But whatever it was...music, Christmas, confusion over how to respond to this unexpected invitation...peace broke out that night. The anonymity that is required in war to get strangers to kill one another was shattered. Many of these men...and I've met some of them...would never, could never be the same.

And it seems that this month, one that has seen neighbors feel anonymous to one another, that has reduced people to characterizations, that debates the value of one life versus another...is a perfect month to contemplate the risk, the courage, the creativity of that night 100 years ago. "Hands up, don't shoot!" he asked. And the others laid down the very instruments of their defense, their power and took that audacious step, "Hands up, don't shoot!" It is more than a slogan. It is action that invites rather than indicts. Lay down your weapons, lay down your power, for it does not protect you, it insulates you. If we are to be what Martin called that "beloved community," the clue is right there: "love." It means understanding that power only works when there is balance. To use it otherwise, invites the kinds of conflict that has reigned for far too long. The hand that is empty soon curls to a fist.

I've spent three decades considering a century-old phenomenon. What feat of internal engineering is required to make men kill on command? What emotional acrobatics allows men to leave required violence on the battlefield, in the station house, at the football stadium? When we glorify the "right place" for it, shouldn't we be prepared for it cropping up in the "wrong place?" Learning how to follow orders is hard. Unlearning is far more difficult. Somehow, one hundred years ago, this was unlearned in the space of a 16-bar song. A song that had incarnations in two different cultures. Cultures supposedly at war with one another.

This story is not about war. War was merely the theater. It was about being human in an inhumane situation. Hands up, don't shoot. I'm giving you an easy target. Or an opening. Your choice.

<http://www.folkmusic.com/lyrics/christmas-trenches>

Songwriters and Musicians: Join John McCutcheon's Master Class



Join Grammy-nominated folk musician and songwriter, John McCutcheon, for an intense, intimate songwriting Master Class at the historic Highlander Center in east Tennessee. Join other songwriting lovers for this remarkable event at an even more remarkable place. In between sessions enjoy breathtaking views of the Smoky Mountains, healthy, delicious homemade food, camaraderie, and visits to the Highlander library and archives.

Workshop Includes:

- Four days of both the theoretical and hands-on practice of songwriting.
- The first day will be an exploration of traditional music and forms: the most solid basis for creating songs & narratives that both move and last.

May 17th - 21st: Springtime in the Mountains
Summertime at Highlander: June 28th - July 2nd



- John's "kamikaze" songwriting drill: how to write quickly and clearly for specific events and issues.
- A survey of other writers and a deconstruction of their techniques: Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Guy Clark, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Melvina Reynolds, Jean Ritchie, Bruce Springsteen, Stan Rogers, and others.
- A workshop on song presentation and performance.
- One-on-one critiques and "wood-shedding" with John.
- Open-mic/sing-arounds each evening.
- Q&A sessions with John.

Classes will held May 17-21 and June 28-July 2, 2015.

REGISTER EARLY! Visit <https://www.folkmusic.com/camp>

Backyard Pharmacopoeia

By JENIFER WEST

While baking Pioneer Yeast crackers recently, I somehow managed to grab the oven rack with a partly-bare finger, resulting in a nasty burn. After running water over it briefly, I remembered the aloe vera plant on the back patio and grabbed the scissors. Within seconds of pressing the cut end of the leaf against the burn, the pain began to subside. Unfortunately, this occurred at the beginning of the batch, so while preparing and baking the rest of the dough I worked more or less one-handed, holding the aloe leaf to the burned finger of the other.

By the time I finished the last sheet of crackers, the burn no longer hurt. The next morning, the only evidence of the mishap was a slight reddening of the skin, marked faintly where the blister had been.

The aloe plant has powerful healing properties, and has been in use practically since the beginning of recorded history. The ancient Egyptians called it the 'Plant of Immortality.' It has been used to treat digestive issues, and is even used in modern medicine for burns. As a side note, our aloe plant bloomed until late into the fall, its single, tall stem with coral flowers a magnet for hummingbirds for weeks. As of this writing in mid-December, it is preparing to bloom again.

Actually, the burn, and subsequent aloe treatment, were well timed: We are currently considering plants to use in replacing our front lawn. (As has been mentioned in this column before, expanses of thirsty green turf weren't always de rigueur. They actually originated as status symbols – households that could afford to plant lawn on part of their land instead of using it to raise fruits, vegetables or livestock to feed their families were considered very wealthy, indeed.)

Another very useful plant can be grown as an ornamental: A tall member of the daisy (Asteraceae) family, *Echinacea purpurea*, more commonly known as Purple Coneflower, has been used to fight colds, flu, and infections. The root, flowers and leaves are all used to boost the immune system. Like aloe vera, *Echinacea purpurea* is a perennial.

Another entire class of plants has medicinal use: Citrus. The fruit of all varieties contains significant amounts of Vitamin C, which is critical to immune function (among other things). The mother of a friend relates a story of 'living on oranges' from a neighbor's tree, thereby surviving a serious

infectious illness when antibiotics had had no effect. Another definite advantage of this group of plants: Unlike most fruit-producing trees, citrus plants are evergreen.

Yet another group of medicinal plants, which many folks already grow in their yards, are roses. The petals are edible (if not overly palatable), and the 'hips' (the bulbous portion from which the petals emerge) is a source of Vitamin C. Granted, preparing the hips for consumption is time-consuming (the hips must be cut open, the seeds scraped out, and the hips must then be prepared in some palatable way, such as in a jelly, jam, or tea), but they would provide a moderate amount of Vitamin C in a pinch.

Another medicinal plant, although a little fussier to grow, is ginger. It's a tropical plant, whose best medicinal claim to fame is its ability to settle upset stomachs, although it does have other medicinal and, of course, culinary uses. Years ago, I ran a natural food store, and recall an expectant mom who purchased cases and cases of ginger 'beer' (strongly-flavored soda), insisting it was the only thing that would keep her stomach calm. It's also great for motion sickness, as well as the upset stomach that often comes with a cold or the flu. Ginger is another of those things that no household should be without.

There are other plants with medicinal qualities. Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is a perennial with leaves that release a lemony scent when brushed, which is said to lift depression. Growing 1 – 3 feet tall, it attracts bees, and so might be a good addition to a garden or near

fruit trees. It does spread enthusiastically, though, so choose your planting site carefully and pinch off spent flowers to prevent seeds from developing.

Bee Balm (monarda), is another herb with a laundry list of medicinal uses, and can also be used as a culinary herb. The leaves, tossed into a cup of black or green tea, will transform the drink into Captain Picard's signature drink: "Tea. Earl Grey. Hot." Or cold. Either way, the bergamot flavor this herb lends will be a refreshing addition.

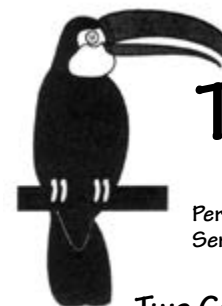
There are many other medicinal and otherwise useful plants – too many to name in this space. So if you are interested in adding some interesting and useful plants to spice up your landscape, consider trying something beyond the standard fare, and throw in something medicinal – you'll no doubt be glad you did!



From top: Aloe, Purple Coneflower, Bee Balm

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



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Green Tips for a Green Planet: Get on board with the Citizens Climate Lobby

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Interested in holding the fossil fuel industry accountable for the “costs” of burning carbon-based fuels? Would you like to realize a dividend or rebate from the industry for those costs?

The Citizens Climate Lobby invites you to discover answers to these questions at the Modesto Area CCL informational and organizational meeting on **Saturday, January 31** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto.

“Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) is a national grassroots non-profit promoting national legislation to impose a steadily rising national fee on the carbon pollution potential of fossil fuels,” according to Harold Hedelman, Northern California Regional CCL Coordinator and meeting facilitator.

During the meeting Hedelman, with the help of Modesto CCL initiators and members of the Alameda County CCL Caucus, will educate and guide volunteers about how to take an active role in advocating for a simple, bi-partisan, and market friendly solution to global warming. He also will

“Real Leadership is extraordinary courage from ordinary people.”

— L. Hunter Lovins

“And that is what the planet needs from all of us, right now.”

— Harold Hedelman

explain CCL practices for lobbying Congressional representatives, the media and local community members and leaders.

CCL’s policy proposal, known as “Carbon Fee and Dividend,” will internalize the costs of burning carbon-based fuels, says Hedelman.

“CCL’s proposal will do four things: internalize the social cost of carbon-based fuels, rapidly achieve large emission reductions, stimulate the economy & recruit global participation...and it will do so for FREE.”



Hedelman asks us to consider “the costs of rebuilding after Hurricane Sandy, for

example, or the health costs in states that burn a lot of coal. The fossil fuel industry has not had to include these ‘social’ costs in the price of their products. The rest of us pay those costs, which is a market failure.

CCL’s proposal fixes that “failure,” he emphasizes. “It is a policy that climate scientists and economists alike say is the best first step to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic climate change from global warming. To keep American industry competitive, a border tariff on fossil fuels will also be collected. CCL’s proposal envisions returning all the revenue collected to American households, as a dividend or rebate.”

ACTION: Bring a brown bag lunch; drinks will be provided. Questions? Contact Kathy Conrotto, 209-523-5907 or 209-380-8063. Harold Hedelman, director, Climate Advocates, 510-473-6897. Visit <http://www.climateadvocates.net>.

Sunday Afternoons at CBS presents: A Capsule of Irving Berlin: His Life, Music and Influence on the American Musical Theater

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

The River Lights Chorus, Modesto Area’s award winning women’s choral group, will highlight the life, music and influence of Irving Berlin in A Capsule of Irving Berlin at 3 p.m. **January 11** at Sunday Afternoons at CBS, 1705 Sherwood Ave in Modesto.

The concert also will feature the men’s award winning groups, Golden Valley Chorus and Velocity Quartet, as well as Young Women in Harmony (young women from Oakdale and Ripon High Schools), and the Temple Singers from Congregation Beth Shalom.

The River Lights segment will be narrated by Rabbi Susan Leider, senior rabbi of Congregation Kohl Shofar in Tiburon, and will explore the Jewish roots of Irving Berlin and how they influenced his



1500-song body of work. The accompanist will be pianist Dan Warshawer, a native of Tel Aviv currently residing in the Sacramento Area.

The Golden Valley Chorus and Velocity Quartet will offer music from the Great American Songbook, The Temple Singers will sing Berlin’s beautiful Russian Lullaby, and all the groups will join together for a rich and powerful finale.

A chili and cornbread dinner will follow the concert, and the singers invite audience members to enjoy the dinner and a sing-a-long afterglow, during which those interested can sing and learn more about participating in the fun of singing contemporary 4-part harmony, no longer limited to straw hats, gartered sleeves or old-timey sounds.

For more information or tickets contact CBS weekdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 571-6060. Individual tickets are \$15 seniors and students with valid ID, \$20 for adults, \$7 for children and \$12 for groups of 15 or more arranged prior to the weekend of the concert. Individual tickets will be available to purchase at the door. Dinner tickets are \$10 each or \$5 for children and can be purchased through the office or at the door. Dinner reservations would be appreciated at the number above.

MORE Sunday Afternoons at CBS

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

FEBRUARY 8, 2015 - GRACE LIEBERMAN AND FRIENDS VALENTINE CONCERT:

One of our most popular concerts each season, featuring some of the area’s most talented musical performers, as Grace guides and cajoles audiences with her infectious wit and charm through a landscape of romantic and unrequited love songs, an audience sing-a-long, and a surprise or two.

MARCH 8, 2015 - JESSICA LEASH, CANTORIAL SOLOIST/ARTIST/SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE: This cantorial soloist has the inspirational voice of an angel with the power to soar above a thousand other singers. Throughout the weekend she will explore the world of Jewish Renewal music and sharing the beauty of inspirational and educational genres from around the world.

All Sunday concerts start at 3 pm at 1705 Sherwood Ave. For concert tickets or

kickoff dinner reservations, call 571-6060 or at CBS. More information at www.cbsmodesto.org/



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This Country Needs a Truth and Reconciliation Process on Violence Against African Americans — Right Now

The decision not to indict Eric Garner's killer is just the latest story in a long history of violence against black men. What response can disrupt patterns set by centuries of racism?

By FANIA DAVIS

I am among the millions who have experienced the shock, grief, and fury of losing someone to racial violence.

When I was 15, two close friends were killed in the Birmingham Sunday School bombing carried out by white supremacists trying to terrorize the rising civil rights movement. Only six years later, my husband was shot and nearly killed by police who broke into our home, all because of our activism at the time, especially in support of the Black Panthers.

As a civil rights trial lawyer, I've spent much of my professional life protecting people from racial discrimination. In my early twenties, I devoted myself to organizing an international movement to defend my sister, Angela Davis, from politically motivated capital murder charges aimed at silencing her calls for racial and social justice. Early childhood experiences in the South set me on a quest for social transformation, and I've been a community organizer ever since, from the civil rights to the black power, women's, anti-racial violence, peace, anti-apartheid, anti-imperialist, economic justice, political prisoner movements, and others.

After more than three decades of all the fighting, I started to feel out of balance and intuitively knew I needed more healing energies in my life. I ended up enrolling in a Ph.D. program in Indigenous Studies that allowed me to study with African healers.

Today, my focus is on restorative justice, which I believe offers a way for us to collectively face this epidemic, expose its deep historical roots, and stop it.

The killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York have sparked a national outcry to end the epidemic killings of black men. Many note that even if indictments had been handed down, that wouldn't have been enough to stop the carnage. The problem goes far beyond the actions of any police officer or department. The problem is hundreds of years old, and it is one we must take on as a nation. Truth and reconciliation processes offer the greatest hope.

Truth and reconciliation in Ferguson and beyond

A Ferguson Truth and Reconciliation process based on restorative justice (RJ) principles could not only stop the epidemic but also allow us as a nation to take a first "step on the road to reconciliation," to borrow a phrase from the

South African experience.

A restorative justice model means that youth, families, and communities directly affected by the killings—along with allies—would partner with the federal government to establish a commission. Imagine a commission that serves as a facilitator, community organizer, or Council of Elders to catalyze, guide, and support participatory, inclusive, and community-based processes.

We know from experience that a quasi-legal body of high-level experts who hold hearings, examine the evidence, and prepare findings and recommendations telling us as a nation what we need to do won't work. We've had plenty of those.

To move toward a reconciled America, we have to do the work ourselves. Reconciliation is an ongoing and collective process. We must roll up our sleeves and do the messy, challenging, but hopeful work of creating transformed relationships and structures leading us into new futures. Someone like

To move toward a reconciled America, we have to do the work ourselves. Reconciliation is an ongoing and collective process.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who headed up South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, might come to Ferguson to inspire and guide us as we take the first steps on this journey.

And the impact wouldn't be for Ferguson alone.

Unfolding in hubs across the nation, a Truth and Reconciliation process could create safe public spaces for youth, families, neighbors, witnesses, and other survivors to share their stories. Though this will happen in hubs, the truths learned and the knowledge gained would be broadly shared. Importantly, the process would also create skillfully facilitated dialogue where responsible parties engage in public truth-telling and take responsibility for wrongdoing.

Getting to the roots

Today, teenagers of color are coming of age in a culture that criminalizes and demonizes them, and all too often takes their lives.

Changing form but not essence over four centuries, this history has morphed from slavery to ... deadly police practices

I work with youth in Oakland, where it's gut-wrenching to see the trauma and devastation up close. Black youth in the U.S. are fatally shot by police at 21 times the rate of white youth. Children of color are pushed through pipelines to prison instead of being put on pathways to opportunity.

Some make it through this soul-crushing gauntlet against all odds. But too many do not.

Defining how long- and far-reaching a process like this would be is difficult because, sadly, the killing of Mike Brown is only one instance in a long and cyclical history of countless unhealed racial traumas that reaches all the way back to the birth of this nation. Changing form but not essence over four centuries, this history has morphed from slavery to the Black Codes, peonage and lynching, from Jim Crow to convict leasing, to mass incarceration and deadly police practices.

This is urgent. Continued failure to deal with our country's race-based historical traumas dooms us to perpetually re-enact them.

Bearing in mind its expansive historical context, the Truth and Reconciliation process would set us on a collective search for shared truths about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of extrajudicial killings of black youth, say, for the last two decades. Through the process, those truths will be told, understood, and made known far and wide. Its task would also include facing and beginning to heal the massive historical harms that threaten us all as a nation but take the lives of black and brown children especially. We would utilize the latest insights and methodologies from the field of trauma healing.

This is urgent. Continued failure to deal with our country's race-based historical traumas dooms us to perpetually re-enact them.

Though national in scope, the inquiry would zero in on the city of Ferguson and several other key cities across the country that have been the site of extrajudicial killings during the last decade. Specifics like this are best left to a collaborative, inclusive, and community-based planning process.

The process will create public spaces where we face together the epidemic of killings and its root causes, identify the needs and responsibilities of those affected, and also figure out what to do as a nation to heal harms and restore relationships and institutions to forge a new future.

Truth and reconciliation works

There are precedents for this approach: Some 40 Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have been launched worldwide to transform historical and mass social harms such as those we are facing. Their experiences could help light a way forward.

The best-known example is the 1994 South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was charged with exposing and remedying apartheid's human rights abuses.



Four girls killed in the Birmingham bombing (Clockwise from top left, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Denise McNair)

from previous page

Under the guidance of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission elevated apartheid victims' voices, allowing the nation to hear their stories. Perpetrators had a means to engage in public truth-telling about and take responsibility for the atrocities they committed. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission facilitated encounters between harmed and responsible parties, decided amnesty petitions, and ordered reparations, and it recommended official apologies, memorials, and institutional reform to prevent recurrence.

With near-constant live coverage by national television networks, the attention of the nation was riveted on the process. Although South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was far from perfect, it is internationally hailed for exposing apartheid's atrocities and evoking a spirit of reconciliation that helped the country transcend decades of racial hatred and violence.

There are North American examples as well, including the 2004 Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission in North Carolina, the first in the United States. This effort focused on the "Greensboro massacre" of anti-racist activists by the Ku Klux Klan in 1979. http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/rjp/resources/rj_dialogue_resources/RJ_Dialogue%20Approaches/Can_Truth_Commissions_be_Effective_US.pdf

In 2012, Maine's governor and indigenous tribal chiefs established a truth commission to address the harms resulting from the forced assimilation of Native children by Maine's child welfare system. It is still in operation. <http://www.mainewanakitrc.org>

And Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, also still functioning, addresses legacies of Indian residential schools that forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their homes, punished them for honoring their language and traditions, and subjected them to physical and sexual abuse.

Get to the truth, get to healing

Like South Africa's and others, the Ferguson Truth and Reconciliation process would draw on the principles of restorative justice. Rooted in indigenous teachings, for some 40 years the international RJ movement has been creating safe spaces for encounters between persons harmed and persons responsible for harm, including their families and communities. These encounters encourage participants to get to truth, address needs, responsibilities, and root causes, make amends, and forge different futures through restored relationships based upon mutual respect and recognition.

Restorative justice is founded on a worldview that affirms our participation in a vast web of interrelatedness. It sees crimes as acts that rupture the web, damaging the relationship not only between the individuals directly involved but

also vibrating out to injure relationships with families and communities. The purpose of RJ is to repair the harm caused to the whole of the web, restoring relationships to move into a brighter future.

Applied to schools, communities, the justice system, and to redress mass social harm and create new futures, restorative justice is increasingly being recognized internationally. In Oakland, California, where I co-founded and direct Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY), school-based programs are eliminating violence, reducing racial disparity in discipline, slashing suspension rates, dramatically boosting academic outcomes, and creating pathways to opportunity instead of pipelines to incarceration. These outcomes are documented in a 2010 study by UC Berkeley Law School and a soon-to-be-released report by the school district. Oakland's RJ youth diversion pilot is interrupting racialized mass incarceration strategies and reducing recidivism rates to 15 percent. (Based on discussions with folks who run the program—no studies as yet.)

Police and probation officers are being trained in RJ principles and practices. Youth and police are sitting together in healing circles, and creating new relationships based on increased trust and a mutual recognition of one another's humanity.

Discipline With Dignity: Oakland Classrooms Try Healing Instead of Punishment

It's impossible to predict whether similar outcomes would emerge from a Truth and Reconciliation process in Ferguson—and the United States. But it's our best chance. And, if history is any guide, it could result in restitution to those harmed, memorials to the fallen, including films, statues, museums, street renamings, public art, or theatrical re-enactments. It might also engender calls to use restorative and other practices to stop violence and interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and mass incarceration strategies. New curricula could emerge that teach both about

historic injustices and movements resisting those injustices. Teach-ins, police trainings, restorative policing practices, and police review commissions are also among the universe of possibilities.

In the face of the immense terrain to be covered on the journey toward a more reconciled America, no single process will be enough. However, a Ferguson Truth and Reconciliation process could be a first step towards reconciliation. It could put us on the path of a new future based on more equitable structures and with relationships founded on mutual recognition and respect. It could also serve as a prototype to guide future truth and reconciliation efforts addressing related epidemics such as domestic violence, poverty, the school-to-prison pipeline, and mass incarceration. A Ferguson Truth



Fania Davis. YES! Photo: Lane Hartwell

After more than
three decades of all
the fighting, I started
to feel out of balance
and intuitively knew I
needed more healing
energies in my life.

and Reconciliation Commission could light the way into a new future.

Fania Davis wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas and practical actions. Fania is a civil rights attorney and co-founder and executive director of RJOY, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. She also has a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies. She acknowledges discussions with Professor Jennifer Llewellyn, the Viscount Bennett Professor of Law at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. Professor Llewellyn has worked with the South African and Canadian TRC's and writes and researches on restorative justice and truth and reconciliation processes.

http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/this-country-needs-a-truth-and-reconciliation-process-on-violence-against-african-americans?utm_source=YTW&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=20141205

EDUCATION CURRICULUM: OUR STORY = Your Story plus My Story

From Libby & Len Traubman, ltraubman@igc.org

The History Project in India and Pakistan — <http://www.thehistory-project.org> — helps school students appreciate sometimes-conflicting stories of historical events in their nations' shared history and heritage.

Co-founders Qasim Aslam and Ayyaz Ahmad met as youth at the Seeds of Peace summer program: <http://www.seedsofpeace.org>

They were inspired to shine light on the global history textbook pandemic.

More than 2 billion young
impressionable minds are learning
history through textbooks whose
narratives are often biased and from
a narrow perspective, contributing to
planetary intolerance.

Led by international youth, the initiative has reached over 1,000,000 young minds and has changed countless lives. Youth now learn to identify biases and stereotypes by juxtaposing contrasting textbook history narratives and by making history education fun.

They are also working in Israel-Palestine. HEAR Qasim Aslam and Ayyaz Ahmad share their journey—roots of their idea, how they're bringing it into schools, their dreams to de-stereotype the future.

Pakistan-India History Project, Co-founders Qasim and Ayyaz, 4 min video - June 2014

<http://vimeo.com/97837920>

<http://traubman.igc.org/messages/681.htm>

Documentary follows group of Palestinians and Israelis

In the documentary, *Two Sided Story*, Emmy Award director, Tor Ben Mayor, follows a group of 27 Palestinians and Israelis who meet through a Parents Circle - Families Forum (PCFF) project, in which they experience and acknowledge the narrative of the other.

Among the participants are bereaved families, Orthodox Jews and religious Muslims, settlers, former IDF soldiers, ex-security prisoners, citizens of the Gaza strip, kibbutz members, second generation Holocaust survivors, non-violent activists and more.

They are not trying to convince each other that their narrative is right, nor are they seeking a political solution. They have simply been asked to listen, to clarify the differences between how they grasp reality and how they see the other side. The participants offer insights into their inner world; they share their personal experiences along with historical and political interpretation to key events in the conflict including the Nakba, the Holocaust, Occupation, bereavement, suicide bombing, Israeli army, the Separation Barrier, etc.

View the trailer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzJkBXQC4Tg>

The American Friends of the Parents Circle is committed to holding 100 screenings of *Two Sided Story* in synagogues, churches, mosques, colleges, schools, community groups, dialogue groups and living rooms all over the U.S.

Join our initiative. Host a screening. Bring the messages of reconciliation, mutual understanding and trust to your communities and living rooms. The DVD is available through a contribution of \$25 for private use only.

To screen the film in your community, make a screening contribution of \$300. For groups with limited budgets, dis-



counts may be available. Contributions can be made through [Network for Good](https://www.networkforgood.org/donation/MakeDonation.aspx?ORGID2=954869142&vlrStratCode=eRICiRtNcKXhjkf6kZ0Af9LEFRzLzSOVb%2bLLAtr uHi5L5Ukd5NWf0Oq3oVdQhzR). <https://www.networkforgood.org/donation/MakeDonation.aspx?ORGID2=954869142&vlrStratCode=eRICiRtNcKXhjkf6kZ0Af9LEFRzLzSOVb%2bLLAtr uHi5L5Ukd5NWf0Oq3oVdQhzR>

Information, contact Shiri Ourian at americanfriends@parentsircle.org.

The Parents Circle - Families Forum is made up of over 600 bereaved families, half Israeli and half Palestinian. Since 1994, the members of this organization - all of whom have lost a family member to the conflict - have undertaken a joint effort in the midst of ongoing violence to transform their incredible loss and pain into a catalyst for reconciliation and peace.

The dialogue is in three languages: Arabic, Hebrew and English and accompanied by a translation into the three languages.

This film is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and through the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The contents are the sole responsibility of the Parents Circle - Families Forum and do not necessarily reflect the views of USIP, USAID or the United States Government.

Visit <http://www.theparentsircle.com/Content.aspx?ID=2#.VI-vNFq8x8M>

Film Night features Harvest of Empire

On Wednesday, January 21, Film Night at the Center will present a powerful documentary that examines the connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis we face today. *Harvest of Empire* looks at the role U.S. military actions and corporate interests have played in triggering unprecedented waves of migration from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America.

The film will start at 6:30 p.m. A discussion will follow.

Poets: Enter MoSt's Third Annual Poetry Festival

The Third Annual Poetry Festival will be held on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd., from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Emcee **Gillian Wegener**,

Modesto Poet Laureate and MoSt President and **Special Guest Poet, Playwright, Author & Workshop Leader, Indigo Moor**

Registration Form and poetry contest submissions must be post-marked by: **JANUARY 6, 2015**.

Download the registration form at http://www.mostpoetry.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/MoSt_3rdFestival_print.pdf

Information, email info@mostpoetry.org or contact Cleo Griffith, cleor@yahoo.com or Louise Kantro, kantro@sbcglobal.net



Modesto-Stanislaus
Poetry Center

Rafael Jesús González, poet and artist

Submitted by TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Rafael Gonzalez, a native of El Paso, Texas, has, throughout his life questioned, borders: "why they separate us and how we can remove them to build a healthier world."

"I call myself Mexican because saying Mexican-American is a redundancy... Mexico is in the Americas and you cannot be Mexican without being American... I think and work in both English and Spanish. My dominant language at any time is place oriented."

"Both languages work simultaneously in my poetry and...inform each other. At the end, there are two versions of the same poem, one...is not a translation of the other.



PHOTO: Peter St. John

They are two complete expressions that work together as a single work."


Rafael feels we have a compromised standard of living in the United States. "We're not a very kind culture. We don't feel we get anything from our taxes, and we don't have an economic system that makes sense or has any real compassion for people. We base

our culture on competition, consumption, and in the end it becomes an abusive culture for so many."

"In this country we don't take time to teach love... If you cannot love, you cannot feel joy. And if you cannot feel joy, you will never feel secure."

"From my point of view, we were never kicked out of paradise. We just screwed the place up royally. Now, we have a lot of work to do in this world of ours... We must begin with music, singing, dance and the arts. They are gone now from so many schools. We must begin again to teach these most essential things: the arts, the importance of love and ways to find and celebrate our joy together."

Rafael Jesús González, taught Creative Writing & Literature Laney College, Oakland where he founded the Mexican & Latin American Studies Dept. He was Poet in residence at Oakland Museum of California and Oakland Public Library in 1996 under the Poets & Writers "Writers on Site" award in 1996. He has thrice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, was honored by the National Council of Teachers of English for his writing in 2003 and 2009 and by the City of Berkeley for his writing, art, teaching, social activism. His book of poems *La musa lunática/The Lunatic Muse* (Pandemonium Press, Berkeley, California) was published in 2009. He now resides in Berkeley. Visit <http://rjgonzalez.blogspot.com/>



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Sembradores de visiones a Benjamin Ernest Linder

Ours is a time to scatter seeds of vision,
bring these images, the hues, and cries of
people together into that one light.

John J. Coveney

Me duele por lo que el mundo pudiera ser
dijo mi amigo, hombre capaz de ver.
Habla por nosotros sembradores de visiones
nosotros labradores de sueños.

El mundo sufre hambre,
por maíz y trigo, sí,
pero también por arcos iris
y tales señas.

Tengo un sueño
otro hombre dijo otra vez
y su sueño nos alimenta aun.

Pero la mayoría andan dormidos
a la orilla del precipicio
y pisan el borde oscuro de la muerte
pero no la honran.

Los sueños de nuestro dormir
están apretados, pesadillas de temor
y en nuestros pechos los corazones
se encogen duros como ciruelas viejas,
la miel en la sangre, oscuro vinagre.

Es tiempo que despertemos gritando
clamando el nombre de nuestra Madre,
buscando los brazos del uno al otro,
arrojando nuestra traición.

¡Oye, hermano! —

¡Oye hermana —

¡Despierta!

Hay trabajo que hacer

que hacer con alegría

y el tiempo ha llegado para sueños nuevos
verdes como el maíz nuevo,

y el metal frío de nuestros rifles y bayonetas
anhela limpiarse

en la tierra de campos nuevos!.

Sowers of Visions for Benjamin Ernest Linder

Ours is a time to scatter seeds of vision,
bring these images, the hues, and cries of
people together into that one light.

John J. Coveney

I ache for what the world could be
my friend said, a man who can see.

He speaks for us vision sowers
us farmers of dreams.

The world is hungry,
for corn & wheat, yes,
but also for rainbows
& such signs.

I have a dream
another man once said
& his dream feeds us still.

But most walk asleep
to the edge of the cliff
& step on the dark hem of death
but do not honor her.
The dreams of our sleep
are cramped, nightmares of fear
& in our breasts our hearts
shriveled hard like old prunes,
the honey in our blood, dusky vinegar.

It is time we woke screaming
crying the name of our Mother,
seeking one another's arms,
throwing off our betrayal.

Hey there, brother —

hey, sister —

awake!

There is work to be done

to be done in joy

& the time be come for visions
for new dreams

green as new corn,

& the cold metal of our guns & bayonets
yearns for cleansing
in the earth of new fields.

(*Second Coming*, Vol. 14 no. 1, 1986; author's copyright)

Sin pelos en la lengua

Un mundo ancho y ajeno
en una Tierra
cada vez menos ancha
debe ser nuestro.
¿Quiénes somos nosotros?
¿Quiénes somos los otros?
¿Quiénes fijan las fronteras
cuando ni el hambre ni la justicia
saben de tales cosas?
El pan que no se comparte
envenena el alma;
el corazón que no se abre
envenena la vida.
Abajo con las fronteras,
abajo con las banderas,
abajo con el mando de los ricos
y que no haya pobres.

Telling It Like It Is

A world wide & of others
in an Earth
ever less wide
should be ours.
Who are we?
Who are we the others?
Who sets the borders
when neither hunger nor justice
know of such things?
The bread not shared
poisons the soul;
the heart that does not open
poisons life.
Down with borders,
down with flags,
down with the rule of the rich
& let there be no poor.

(*Syndic* no. 2, November, 2010;
author's copyright)



Nominate an Outstanding Woman – or Young Woman – for a County-wide Honor

From the Stanislaus County Commission for Women

Honor the outstanding women in your life with a nomination for a 2015 Stanislaus County Commission for Women Outstanding Women Award.

Nominations are being accepted for Outstanding Women including the categories of Women of History, Living Pioneers and Young Women (high school seniors to age 24 which includes a \$500 cash scholarship).

Nominate women who have made a meaningful contribution to the quality of life for all women and children. Nominate a trailblazer who began an important program or took on a challenging cause, a woman who has been first to achieve a significant accomplishment in her field, who has been an inspirational role model, a woman representative in government who stands up for the issues of women and children.

Nomination forms are available at all Stanislaus County Libraries, by via email at scw01@gmail.com or by download from the web www.StanislausWomen.org

Nominations must be postmarked or arrive by email **no later than January 19, 2015**. Awards will be presented on Saturday, March 14, 2015.

The Stanislaus County Commission for Women is an independent, non-governmental organization to promote within the community an awareness of issues that concern women.

Information: Marian Martino, marian@martinographics.com (209) 484-2775.

Thank you for the Holiday Gift Bags For Prison

By DAVID HETLAND

More than a hundred volunteers, representing 18 different church, student, and community organizations, recently gathered in Merced to assemble gift packets for the 3,800 inmates at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla.

The prison's Inmate Family Council, an advisory committee of family members and loved ones of inmates, is appreciative of the ongoing support of Modesto Peace/Life Center members who faithfully collect "goodies" throughout the year for the gift bags. These include travel/sample sizes of soap, shampoo, conditioner, skin/body lotion, toothpaste, tissue, as well as individually wrapped toothbrushes, combs (no rat tail), small notepads, and unused greeting cards with envelopes. For many of the inmates, these small tokens of love and concern are the only remembrance they receive during the holidays.

The Council is already collecting items for next year's gift bags, which will require donations of an estimated 100,000 items – a huge endeavor! Please continue to collect the needed products and bring them to the Peace/Life Center Office (call ahead to ensure the office is open).

For more information, contact Shelly (521-6304) or Dave (388-1608).



The Hero and Militarization

I question the logic of those who so freely use the word "hero" to describe various persons. In television sports, there are far too many "great" plays, such that after while "greatness" is devalued in the same way that "heroic" acts are devalued when, all too often, mundane behaviors are characterized as heroic. Tony Orlando described an event where he sang, "Tie A Yellow Ribbon" to a crowd of 70,000 at a college football game while five hundred and eighty Viet Nam victims of torture in the Hanoi Hilton sat on the field listening. He spoke of their endurance of horrible torture and called them heroes, which they were, and then proceeded to describe anyone who signed up for military service and put on a uniform as a "hero" for agreeing to "take a bullet" for his fellow Americans.

The logic of such statements is in sharp contradiction to reality and to my logic and yet I understand why such statements are made. If I am young, I may join simply because I too want to be viewed as a "hero." It may truly be my only chance to be called such. If every man or woman who joins the service and puts on a military uniform is a "hero" such as those who fought and died in World War II, in Viet Nam, Korea, or any other war, does that not cheapen what those true heroes did. Is the soldier who joins and then becomes a computer pounding desk jockey who is bored, who hates his place in the service and all that is connected with it and cannot wait to get out a "hero" in the same sense as those who flew into Pakistan to kill Bin Laden? They may both have worn the same uniform, but that most likely will be as close as they ever get to one another in terms of their service and true heroism.

I find America's current worship of the military and war to be discomfiting. Our sports events have become militarized by fly-overs of military jets, parachuting military onto playing surfaces, service members unrolling huge American flags across the fields of play before games, military end zone messages, soldiers singing the national anthem at many sports events, most of which are televised, members of the military singing "God Bless America" in the 7th inning stretch of baseball games, players wearing camouflage on their uniforms, and the huge proliferation of digital war games for PlayStation and Xbox that create millions of young and not so young players who may get the wrong impressions about real war. Are they training to be the next generation of those who direct "predator" or "reaper" drones in mechanized warfare that sees humans as simply "targets" on a screen similar to the ones they have been killing in their games? I am greatly disturbed by the acceptance of unending wars and the willingness of those who are our so called "leaders" to strongly advocate for new wars.

I am also disturbed that my grandson informs me that he and his fellow classmates in his junior high P.E. class are required by his teacher to perform military training acts such as climbing on their bellies as if under fire by enemy combatants. In addition, I wonder why some of the competitions that require climbing on the belly in mud and water, through tubes of corrugated iron, under barbed wire, and over barriers as in military training have become popular.

Please do not jump to the conclusion that I am some kind of muddle-brained pacifist, I am not. Neither am I unpatriotic. I value the protection afforded by the military and those who provide it. I simply ask questions that I think need to be asked, yet have not seen addressed in any of the media. They may have been addressed there, but I have not seen any. I am in favor of a public discussion/debate about the militarization of these events.

Mike Killingsworth

Modesto

Thank you to the Modesto Peace Center

I wanted to personally thank you for your donation of beautiful books. They are such a blessing! Ms. Chiavetta personally hand selected which books go to which students so you can be assured that the students should be able to read them!

May Peace, Joy & Blessings never leave you. Thank you for thinking of my beautiful students this holiday season.

Peace,

Sue McHann, Principal Wilson School

Ed note: This letter refers to school books that were collected at our annual Holiday Fest held on December 13, 2014.

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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Drones and Discrimination: Kick the Habit

By KATHY KELLY

On December 10, International Human Rights Day, federal Magistrate Matt Whitworth sentenced me to three months in prison for having crossed the line at a military base that wages drone warfare. The punishment for our attempt to speak on behalf of trapped and desperate people, abroad, will be an opportunity to speak with people trapped by prisons and impoverishment here in the U.S.

Our trial was based on a trespass charge incurred on June 1, 2014. Georgia Walker and I were immediately arrested when we stepped onto Missouri's Whiteman Air Force where pilots fly weaponized drones over Afghanistan and other countries. We carried a loaf of bread and a letter for Brig Gen. Glen D. Van Herck. In court, we testified that we hadn't acted with criminal intent but had, rather, exercised our First Amendment right (and responsibility) to assemble peaceably for redress of grievance.

A group of Afghan friends had entrusted me with a simple message, their grievance, which they couldn't personally deliver: please stop killing us.

I knew that people I've lived with, striving to end wars even as their communities were bombed by drone aircraft, would understand the symbolism of asking to break bread with the base commander. Judge Whitworth said he understood that we oppose war, but he could recommend over 100 better ways to make our point that wouldn't be breaking the law.

The prosecution recommended the maximum six month sentence. "Ms. Kelly needs to be rehabilitated," said an earnest young military lawyer. The judge paged through a four page summary of past convictions and agreed that I hadn't yet learned not to break the law.

What I've learned from past experiences in prison is that the criminal justice system uses prison as a weapon against defendants who often have next to no resources to defend themselves. A prosecutor can threaten a defendant with an onerously long prison sentence along with heavy fines if the defendant doesn't agree to plea bargain.

In his article "Why Innocent People Plead Guilty," Jed S. Rakoff * draws attention to the institution of plea bargaining which now ensures that less than 3% of federal cases go to trial at all. "Of the 2.2 million U.S. people now in prison," Rakoff writes, "well over 2 million are there as a result of plea bargains dictated by the government's prosecutors, who effectively dictate the sentence as well."

"In 2012, the average sentence for federal narcotics defendants who entered into any kind of plea bargain was five years and four months," Rakoff writes, "while the average sentence for defendants who went to trial was sixteen years."

It's one thing to read about the shameful racism and discrimination of the U.S. criminal justice system. It's quite another to sit next to a woman who is facing ten or more

years in prison, isolated from children she has not held in years, and to learn from her about the circumstances that led to her imprisonment.

Many women prisoners, unable to find decent jobs in the regular economy, turn to the underground economy. Distant relatives of mine knew plenty about such an economy several generations ago. They couldn't get work, as Irish immigrants, and so they got into the bootlegging business when alcohol was prohibited. But no one sent them to prison for 10 years if they were caught.

Women prisoners may feel waves of guilt, remorse, defiance, and despair. In spite of facing extremely harsh punishment, harsh emotions, and traumatic isolation, most of the women I've met in prison have shown extraordinary strength of character. When I was in Pekin Prison, we would routinely see young men, shackled and handcuffed, shuffling off of the bus to spend their first day in their medium-high security prison next door. The median sentence there was 27 years. We knew they'd be old men, many of them grandfathers, by the time they walked out again.

The U.S. is the undisputed world leader in incarceration, as it is the world leader in military dominance. Only one in 28 of drone victims are the intended, guilty or innocent, targets. One third of women in prison worldwide, are, at this moment, in U.S. prisons. The crimes that most threaten the safety and livelihood of people in the U.S. of course remain the crimes of the powerful, of the corporations that taint our skies with carbon and acid rainfall, peddle weapons around an already suffering globe, shut down factories and whole economies in



pursuit of quick wealth, and send our young people to war.

Chief Executive Officers of major corporations that produce products inimical to human survival will most likely never be charged much less convicted of any crime. I don't want to see them jailed. I do want to see them rehabilitated

Each time I've left a U.S. prison, I've felt as though I was leaving the scene of a crime. When I return to the U.S. from sites of our war making, abroad, I feel the same way. Emerging back into the regular world seems tantamount to accepting a contract, pledging to forget the punishments we visit on impoverished people. I'm invited to forget about the people still

trapped inside nightmare worlds we have made for them.

On January 23, 2015, when I report to whichever prison the Bureau of Prisons selects, I'll have a short time to reconnect with the reality endured by incarcerated people. It's not the rehabilitation the prosecutor and judge had in mind, but it will help me be a more empathic and mindful abolitionist, intent on ending all wars.

Kathy Kelly (Kathy@vcnv.org) co-coordinates Voices for Creative Nonviolence; www.vcnv.org

* Ed. note: Jed S. Rakoff is a United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York. Read his article at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/nov/20/why-innocent-people-plead-guilty/>

Voices for Creative Nonviolence | 1249 W Argyle Street #2 - Chicago, IL 60640 | Phone: (773) 878-3815 | email: info@vcnv.org

Observe Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday on January 19

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

- Martin Luther King, Jr., (1929-68)

Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.

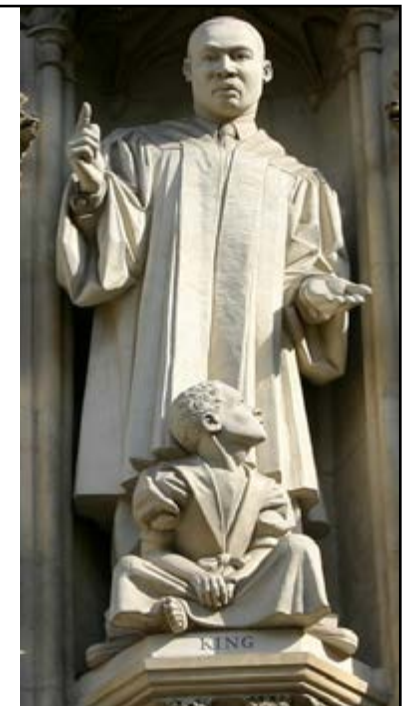
Since 1986, the third Monday in January has been a federal holiday in observance of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., Baptist minister, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and civil rights leader dedicated to nonviolence. This is a day to honor King's principles, perhaps best exemplified by his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize until 2014, when Malala Yousafzai, of Pakistan, was selected at the age of 17 years old.

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

Hear his Dream speech at: <http://freedomring.stanford.edu/?view=Speech>



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.pjnsj.org>). Info: James Walsh, jwprod1956@clearwire.net

JANUARY

- 11 SUN: Sonora's MLK Birthday Celebration: Speaker Clayborne Carson.** 2 pm, Sonora High School Auditorium (see article, pg 2).
- 11 SUN: Sunday Afternoons at CBS presents A Capsule of Irving Berlin:** His Life, Music and Influence on the American Musical Theater. 3 pm 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Dinner following concert. Tickets: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 571-6060. Individual tickets \$15; seniors and students \$20; adults, \$7; children; \$12 groups of 15 or with prior arrangement. Individual tickets at the door. Dinner tickets \$10; children \$5. RSVP for dinner reservations, 571-6060.
- 15 THURS: John McCutcheon** Concert (See article, page 1).
- 18 SUN: The Modesto Film Society** presents *Auntie Mame*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/331>
- 21 WED: Film Night at the Center** presents *Harvest of Empire*. Powerful documentary that examines the connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis we face today. Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 p.m. Discussion follows.
- 25 SUN: The Modesto Film Society** presents *Pulp Fiction*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/332>
- 31 SAT: Citizens Climate Lobby:** Modesto Area Group Start Forum. Dr. Harold Hedelman, director, Climate Advocates, Modesto Church of the Brethren Gathering Place, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Contact: Kathy Conrotto, 209 523-5907 or 380-8063; Church office: 209-523-1438. See article "Green Tips, this issue. <http://www.climateadvocates.net>

LOOKING AHEAD

- February 7: Annual MLK Commemoration:** Keynote speaker: Julian Bond (see article, page 2).
- Feb. 7: MoSt's Third Annual Poetry Festival.** St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 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.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday Feb. 21: Modesto Peace/Life Center Annual Mtg. 8:30 am -Noon.

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

March 19: 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

March 20: Peace Essay Contest Awards. Time & place TBA.

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

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.

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

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

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

PFLAG Sonora/Mother Lode, third Tuesdays of January, April, July, and October, 6:30 to 8 pm, 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 Kuti (in back), Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Thursdays 6:30-8 pm. FREE (donations accepted). Info: email RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

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 jocelyncoper@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.

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