



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY, 2016
VOLUME XXIV, NO. 6

Maggie Mejia receives the MLK Legacy award

Submitted by Marianne Villalobos

Each year, the MLK Legacy Award honors an individual or group for their persevering work on behalf of underserved people in our county. The commitment of those honored reflects Dr. King's vision of building the "Beloved Community". The 2016 award was given to Maggie Mejía at the Annual MLK Commemoration on January 23 at Modesto Junior College. Maggie has engaged in the work of social justice for the last fifty years in Stanislaus County and beyond. Her guiding principle can be summed up in two words: "somos familia", we are family. Maggie Mejia was born in Brawley, CA to immigrant parents from Sonora, Mexico and raised in Patterson. She is the eldest of 9 children of Rudy and Librada Avila. Her first language is Spanish and she recalls that her first words

in English were from a well-known cartoon of that time, "Here I come to save the day, Mighty Mouse is on the way." Similarly, the other "MM", Maggie Mejia, can always be relied on to "Save the Day" by organizing a march, backpack drive or ice cream social, helping immigrants complete legal documents, fighting for social justice for minorities, veterans and senior citizens, mentoring students, or chairing fundraising activities too numerous to mention. Maggie's parents always taught her to share what she had with others. When she was a child, the *Mariachi Infantil de Los Niños de Monterrey, Nuevo Leon* (Mexico), a group of 40 orphan children and adult advisors, performed in Patterson. After the performance, the priest who led the group asked the audience for lodging for the night. Maggie's father stood up, his

youngest son in arms, and offered to host the entire group. When the priest remarked that one family could not host all forty, her father responded that the children could not be separated because they were family; "somos familia/we are family". This philosophy, that we are all family, in Stanislaus County and beyond, has informed Maggie's decades of service to others, study, political activity and principled leadership.

Her lifetime work began when she was in high school, when she marched with César Chavez and Dolores Huerta and assisted with organizing the labor movement in West Stanislaus County. She continues to host the Union on their visits to Stanislaus County. In 1980, Maggie joined *Mujeres Latinas de Stanislaus*, serving twice as President and chairing many events and fundraisers. After the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, she helped immigrants searching for loved ones affected by the quake. She turned to Assemblyman Gary Condit who appointed a committee through *Mujeres Latinas*, under her leadership and the Stanislaus County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The Stanislaus County Mexico City Earthquake Relief Fund raised over \$15,000 and delivered 2,000 tons of clothing, shoes and blankets to Mexico City in April 1986. Maggie has served on many local boards, including Haven, United Way, Muir Trail Girl Scouts, King Kennedy Memorial Center Board of Directors, Hispanic Leadership Council, Women's Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Local Post in Turlock, Citizens Committee for International Students, Stanislaus County Commission on Aging, Modesto Entertainment Commission, the Destination Modesto Advisory Committee,



LOVEMODESTO and the Hispanas Organized For Political Equality (HOPE) Leadership Program, based in Los Angeles. Maggie was a founding member of the Latino Community Roundtable (LCR) and served on several Board positions, twice as President since 1997. Under her leadership, LCR has united representatives of many other local agencies in common cause. A few of the many successes of LCR include renaming Fourth Street Park to César E. Chavez Park, The LOVEMODESTO Day of Service, the *Día De Los Muertos* Cultural Celebration and the First Latino Business Expo of Stanislaus County. Maggie has often worked hand-in-hand with local and state elected officials and has gone to Sacramento to testify on district elections and water issues. Through her leadership as president of the LCR, in 2013 the group began the process of convincing cities and school boards in Stanislaus County to

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MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2016
720 13th ST., MODESTO

- 8:30 AM — Coffee and Conversation
- 9:00 AM — Business Meeting:
 - Financial Report
 - Committee Reports
 - Nomination of Board Members
- Discussion:
 - Action plans, ideas and strategies
- 12:00 PM — Adjournment

For 45 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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Sunday Afternoons at CBS presents Grace Lieberman & Friends on Feb. 14, 2016

The Best Time You Can Have on Valentine's Day!

Grace and her supremely talented friends from the Modesto Area have brought us Valentine joy since the turn of the 21st Century. Love songs are on the menu, as well as Grace's hand-done valentines and sing-a-longs, all salted and peppered by Grace's charm and wit. Bring your valentine for a special afternoon. 3 p.m. 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Tickets: \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors & Students; \$7 children. Call (209) 571-6060. Each concert offers a delicious "afternoon tea" at intermission, featuring specialty baked goods, tea, and coffee. Visit <http://sundaysatcbs.com/>

Maggie Mejia

from page 1

switch from at-large to District Elections to bring the County into compliance with the California Voting Rights Act. Currently the majority of City Councils and School Boards now have district elections, thus empowering a more democratic electoral process and preventing potential civil rights law suits. According to friend and mentor, Herlinda González (Patterson), one of Maggie's foremost goals is to ensure the well-being of children. Maggie and her husband Manuel have hosted international students from Mexico, Central America, and the Dominican Republic. She has been advisor for the Hispanic Youth Leadership Council (HYLC) at local high schools as well as MECha and PUENTE at local colleges. Realizing that change comes through empowerment, Maggie has educated high school and college youth in the political process through study of the issues and trips to Sacramento to engage in the process first-hand. Ms. Gonzalez also points out that the work has not always been easy for Maggie. In order to seek institutional change and human rights, she has educated herself in organizational management and the political process, but she has often been one of few women in a field dominated by men. While Maggie has often had to pay the price for this, she has also guided and helped many organizations and individuals. Modesto City Councilmember Tony Madrigal, applauds her support in developing youth leadership in Modesto and throughout the state. She was his mentor when he was student body president at M.J.C. and he says that he carries Maggie's lessons with him to this day. Along with her community service, Maggie is a loving sister, wife to Manuel, her husband of 45 years, mother to Manuel Jr., and "Nana" to Jesse, Aubrey and Lilly. Manuel has steadfastly worked with Maggie in her community activities, providing the food, organizing and setting up for events and functions. To their family and many friends, Manuel and Maggie are known for their open home, abundant meals, generosity and love.

Modesto Garden Club Announces Scholarship Opportunities

The Modesto Garden Club is now accepting applications for six \$1500 scholarships from eligible high school seniors and college students. *Completed applications packets are due by April 6.*

Interested students may email gardenscholarship@gmail.com for application information and forms.

Applicants must have a major related to the Modesto Garden Club mission, be a high school graduating senior or be enrolled or accepted as a full-time student in a community or four year college or university, and be a resident of Stanislaus County or be attending high school or college in Stanislaus County. Applicants will be scored on how their answers relate to the Modesto Garden Club's mission to "educate, impart knowledge and skills of landscape design, flora culture, agriculture, arborvitae, insects, ornamental horticulture and ornithology; to instill the joy of gardening for club members,

school children, senior citizens and the community at large".

Majors might include agronomy, agriculture education, floriculture, horticulture landscape design, botany, biology, forestry, wildlife science, plant pathology/science, urban/rural planning, habitat or forest/systems ecology, environmental concerns, environmental conservation, land management, or allied subjects.

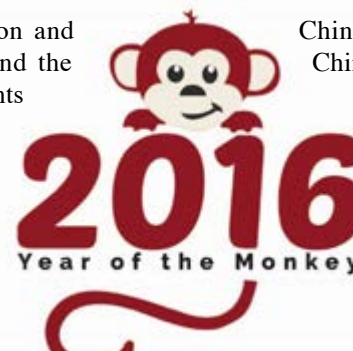
Scholarship funds are generated by the club's annual Spring Garden Tour, this year set for April 16. The Modesto Garden Club was formed in 1924 and now has over 500 members. The club also supports community beautification projects, therapeutic gardens at care facilities, and school gardens.

CONTACT: Maree Hawkins, Modesto Garden Club Scholarship Committee, mareehawkins@comcast.net, 209-529-1517.

Tenth Annual Chinese New Year Celebration

The City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Maddux Youth Center and the Stanislaus Chinese Culture Society presents the Tenth Annual Chinese New Year Celebration on Saturday, February 13, at 2 p.m., at the Senior Citizens Center, 211 Bodem St., Modesto.

Come out to celebrate the "Year of the Monkey" with cultural performances,



Chinese paintings, martial arts demonstrations, Chinese calligraphy, musical entertainment and special performances by local and out-of-town groups. Family-friendly and free for all ages!

Information: contact Bruce Lockard at (209) 341-2951 or blockard@modestogov.com

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Civic Engagement Project's Spring 2016 Film & Lecture Series

Thursday Nights, Forum 110, 7PM, MJC East Campus, 435 College Ave. Modesto.

Open to the Public Free of Charge

The Mask You Live In — Feb 18: This film claims that our boys grow up in a culture with a narrow definition of masculinity that encourages them to disconnect from their emotions and value aggression over compassion. Raising a healthier generation of boys and men, the film suggests, depends largely on recognizing and transforming the cultural messages directed at them.

Merchants of Doubt — Mar 10: *Merchants of Doubt* argues that public response to topics such as smoking and climate change is hampered not by scientific disagreement so much as by the influential power of a small group of paid spokespersons who call science into question for financial gain.

First Generation — Mar 17: This film follows the lives

of four California high school students as they aim to be the first in their families to attend college. In their pursuit of higher education, these students strive to break free from the cycle of income inequality and serve to inspire their families and communities.

Black in America: A Continuing Conversation — Mar 31: This conversation continues last semester's discussion about the difficulties faced by young African-American men, especially given the growing tensions in today's society between the police and communities of color.

The Burden — Apr 14: This documentary claims that America's dependence on fossil fuels not only threatens our environment and our economy but also endangers our armed forces and our national security. The film also suggests that we need to embrace clean energy solutions if America is to continue as a global leader in the twenty-first century.

<https://www.mjc.edu/president/cep/filmandlecture.php>

John McCutcheon recovering, concert set for 2017

By KEN SCHROEDER

Modesto Peace/Life Center benefit concert with John McCutcheon in January had to be canceled because of illness, but we are happy to hear that John is recovering and we are pleased to announce that he will return in concert to Modesto on Tuesday, January 10, 2017. Here's a message from John:

"Many of you have heard that I canceled my Left Coast Tour. It was a sad, but necessary move. The reason given at the time was "because of illness," which is true. I've been feeling "not right" for a couple of months and, after numerous visits to doctors of all sorts, we were told on the day after Christmas that I had a small mass in my upper right lung. The attending physician said he was certain it was cancerous. We began the protocol and, in the process, discovered the mass was not cancerous, but an abscessed strep infection. So we now know that what I have is a treatable nasty lung infection that requires daily IV infusions for 4-6 weeks. I'm told I can expect a complete recovery. Whew!

But in the meantime, travel is verboten, hence all my many gigs beyond the Left Coast Tour, through February, are now cancelled as well. With one exception. I have a local gig on February 12th that does not require travel. I cannot tell you how excited I am about that show!

So it's bad news, followed by good news, as is often the case. I've been overwhelmed by the family and friends who stepped up to help us through this. And there is no one who could not possibly reflect on such an episode. And what I feel is incredible gratitude. I've lived an amazing, blessed life. I've done things I've never dreamt, been places and met people that have altered the course of my life. I have kids and grandkids I adore, and an amazing wife, who quite literally saved my life, fights for my needs through all this, tells me stories, makes me laugh, and makes me feel love that is without measure. Hell, I'm the luckiest guy I know."

Modesto High School's Day of Respect Seeks Community Volunteers

Do you have a fifteen minute personal story about injustice, unfair treatment, bullying, or discrimination? If so, on Wednesday, February 10, Modesto High needs you to tell your story to students at the school's eighteenth Day of Respect, an annual campus-wide program that welcomes close to 100 community volunteers into classrooms in order to replace ignorance with knowledge and intolerance with compassion. For more information or to sign up, contact Sharon Froba, 209-521-7265 or sfroba@comcast.net

Help create a new FM radio station in our region!

The Federal Communications Commission has granted the Modesto Peace/Life Center a license for a full power FM radio station that will broadcast throughout Stanislaus County and beyond. We have two and a half years to get the station on air. It will cost at least \$100,000. As our Mission Statement below says, we want this to be a community-driven station. We need your help.

We need:

- the expertise of people with experience and skill in radio technology, broadcasting, marketing, and programing;
- people who can envision how we might best highlight the diverse issues that affect us in our area;
- people with a pulse on the local music and arts scenes;
- businesses willing to underwrite our programming;
- people with creative ideas and suggestions: and
- enthusiastic people throughout our community who will donate generously toward making this dream a reality.

To help, please contact James Costello, 209-402-9191, or jcostello@igc.org. To donate, send your check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353. Write "Radio Station" in the Memo. For Paypal online, go to <http://peacelifecenter.org/>. Click on "Support us: Donate." The Center is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization; donations are tax-deductible.

FM 95.5 Mission Statement

On Community Radio, FM 95.5, The Modesto Peace/Life Center will promote peace, social justice, and a sustainable environment through nonviolent change. We'll focus on regional issues and local talent, with a lively blend of multicultural music and the arts. We invite broad participation from community groups and local citizens to help us inform, entertain, and stimulate interest and involvement in the betterment of our community.



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The Most Important Thing

By JENIFER WEST

Ok, so, like a lot of folks, I set some lofty goals for 2016. Um, maybe a little too lofty. My resolve not to purchase anything new was sorely tested as a result of another goal, which is really ancillary to the first: Pare down to what is actually needed. Then, a place for everything, and everything in its place. So I relaxed the rule against making new purchases slightly, to accommodate the purchase of boxes, bins, baskets, and other things that will allow us to become better organized. So far, it seems to have been worth it. I'm electing not to consider this little experiment a failure – we'll just call it a necessary minor course correction.

Upcycling update: Haven't been much inspired to upcycle things, but have managed to make a few things from yardage picked up on sale at the end of last year. Looks like I'm about to be rescued, though: Some nice shirts, which formerly belonged to my dear, late father-in-law, made their way to our house recently. They're a bit small for my husband, but a number of them look like good candidates for upcycling. It would be lovely to come up with ways for several of them to perk up my wardrobe! That would certainly be an excellent way to get the upcycling project to a flying start!

The relative success (or failure, depending on one's perspective) of these two things, and countless others, is really measured not in items not purchased, or clothing recycled. In fact, it is the experience of making decisions, putting them into practice, recognizing when slight alterations are needed, and allowing oneself the leeway to adjust – without owning the word 'failure' – that is of value. In other words, it's not so much our experiences, but what we learn from them that is most important. That's what we're all here for, after all! The tricky part is learning not to beat ourselves up when we inevitably make mistakes.

When we stop learning, we stagnate. There is no standing still – one is either moving forward with constantly changing world, or left standing in its aftermath. As the Red Queen said



to Alice, “Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!”

The good news is that any kind of learning ‘counts’. No matter what new thing we’re reading about, or experiencing, we’re making our lives richer – and happier. The only catch is that it must be ‘active’ learning. Watching a fascinating documentary about, say, dung beetles, is ‘passive’ – we’re not really doing anything that will change our lives (except, perhaps, lifting our moods while enjoying a laugh watching the little creatures push their little balls of dung around!). To get real benefit from learning, we must actually *do* something.

It may be as simple as trying a new cooking technique, or as esoteric as trying a new approach to handling a difficult or uncomfortable situation with a friend, family member or coworker.

A friend once told me that whenever she gets a bit down, she takes a class. And no wonder – learning something new requires one’s mental focus – which naturally redirects our minds away from feeling bad, and, actually changes our biochemistry. So learning something new can not only help us obtain a new skill or ability, it can also give us a lift, which doubles the potential value we can get from it!

I may catch a bit of flack for saying this, but one of the biggest time-wasters, and, therefore, barriers to learning, I’ve noticed in the people around me is television. In fact, it appears, to this writer, to be awfully similar to an addiction. Mention turning off the tube for a week, and a lot of folks go into panic mode – and even get defensive! Despite the abysmal quality of most of the programming, most people can’t imagine living without that constant blare in the background. (I suppose it should be obvious, but I’ll admit it here – we don’t own a TV., and haven’t for the 20 years we’ve been together. We do stay aware of what’s going on in the world via internet newsfeeds, which is more than enough for us!)

One last thought on learning: Studies have shown that it can help keep our minds sharp as we age. Even if it didn’t enrich our lives (and the lives of those around us!) in countless ways, continuing to learn and try new things would be well worth doing for this benefit alone!

So, if you’ve set an overly ambitious goal or two for 2016 and are finding it difficult to stay on course, don’t give up! Remember that you’ve already benefitted just by making the effort, and allow yourself the leeway to adjust in whatever way seems appropriate to you – and keep on learning!



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CONNECTIONS
online at:
<http://stanislausconnections.org/>

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Everyone’s opinion matters, and we want to hear yours! Click here:

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1600 G Street
Suite 203
P.O. Box 0142
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95353-0142
DAVID N. ROCKWELL
SHARON E. KELLY
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MICHAEL R. BAUDLER, CPA
DONNA E. FLANDERS, CPA

Office (209) 575-2653
Fax (209) 575-0629

e-mail b_f@modestocpas.com
1120 14th Street, Suite 2
Modesto, CA 95350

Obama's Speech, Translated into Candor

By NORMAN SOLOMON

Here is a condensed version of President Obama's speech from the Oval Office on Sunday night, unofficially translated into plain English:

I kind of realize we can't kill our way out of this conflict with ISIL, but in the short term hopefully we can kill our way out of the danger of a Republican victory in the presidential race next year.

As a practical matter, the current hysteria needs guidance, not a sense of proportion along the lines of what the New York Times just mentioned in passing: The death toll from jihadist terrorism on American soil since the Sept. 11 attacks — 45 people — is about the same as the 48 killed in terrorist attacks motivated by white supremacist and other right-wing extremist ideologies.... And both tolls are tiny compared with the tally of conventional murders, more than 200,000 over the same period.

While I'm urging some gun control, that certainly doesn't apply to the Pentagon. The Joint Chiefs and their underlings have passed all the background checks they need by virtue of getting to put on a uniform of the United States Armed Forces.

As much as we must denounce the use of any guns that point at us, we must continue to laud the brave men and women who point guns for us — and who fire missiles at terrorists and possible terrorists and sometimes unfortunately at wedding parties or misidentified vehicles or teenagers posthumously classified as militants after signature strikes or children who get in the way.

We can't see ourselves in the folks we kill. But I know that we see ourselves with friends and coworkers at a holiday

**We can't see ourselves
in the folks we kill.**

party like the one in San Bernardino. I know we see our kids in the faces of the young people killed in Paris.

Also I know we don't see ourselves in the blameless individuals who have been beheaded by our ally Saudi Arabia, which has executed 150 people this year mostly by cutting off their heads with swords.

Nor should we bother to see ourselves in the people the Saudi government is slaughtering with airstrikes in Yemen on a daily basis. We sell the Saudis many billions of dollars worth of weapons that make the killings in San Bernardino look smaller than puny. But that's the way it goes sometimes.

I gave a lofty major speech a couple of years ago about how a democratic society can't have perpetual war. I like to talk about such sugary ideals; a spoonful helps the doublethink medicine go down.

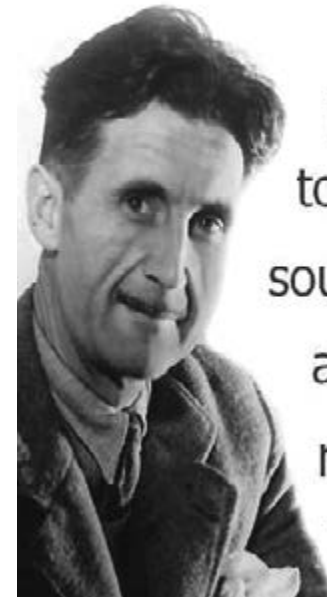
Let me now say a word about what we should not do. We should not be drawn once more into a long and costly ground war in Iraq or Syria. The United States of America has colossal air power — and we're going to use it. No muss, little fuss: except for people under the bombs, now being utilized at such a fast pace that the warhead supply chain is stretched thin.

Yes, we're escalating a bit on the ground too, with hundreds of special operations forces going into Syria despite my numerous public statements — adding up to more than a dozen since August 2013 — that American troops would not be sent to Syria. Likewise we've got several thousand soldiers in Iraq, five years after I solemnly announced that the American combat mission in Iraq has ended.

But here's the main thing: In the Middle East, the USA will be number one in dropping bombs and firing missiles. Lots of them! It's true that we keep making enemies faster than we can possibly kill them, but that's the nature of the beast.

In Afghanistan too. At the end of last year I ceremoniously proclaimed that the longest war in American history is coming to a responsible conclusion and the United States will maintain a limited military presence in Afghanistan. But

**a spoonful helps the
doublethink medicine
go down.**



**Political
language
is designed
to make Lies
sound Truthful
and Murder
respectable**
- George Orwell,

within 10 months I changed course and declared that 5,500 U.S. troops will remain in Afghanistan into 2017.

Midway through this fall — even before the terrorist attacks in Paris — the United States had launched an average of about 50 airstrikes per week in Syria during the previous year, and the New York Times reported that the U.S. military was preparing to intensify airstrikes against the Islamic State on Syrian territory.

And according to official Pentagon figures, the U.S.-led aerial bombing in Iraq has topped 4,500 airstrikes in the last year — approaching an average rate of 100 per week.

Our military will hunt down terrorist plotters where they are plotting against us. In Iraq and Syria, airstrikes are taking out some of the latest ISIL leaders, heavy weapons, oil tankers, infrastructure. I've got to tell you that these actions will defeat ISIL, but I've got to not tell you that the airstrikes will kill a lot of civilians while launching new cycles of what gave rise to ISIL in the first place — inflaming rage and grief while serving as a powerful recruitment tool for people to take up arms against us.

In the name of defeating terrorist forces, our air war has the effect of recruiting for them. Meanwhile, in Syria, our obsession with regime change has propelled us into closely aligning with extremist jihadi fighters. They sure appreciate the large quantities of our weapons that end up in their arsenals.

You don't expect this policy to make a lot of sense, do you?

Norman Solomon is the author of *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death*. He is the executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy and co-founder of RootsAction.org.

http://www.normansolomon.com/norman_solomon/2015/12/obamas-speech-translated-into-candor.html#more

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Political Responsibility in the Nuclear Age

We are living on borrowed time... It is time to end the nuclear weapons era.

By RICHARD FALK, DAVID KRIEGER, ROBERT LANE

Dear fellow citizens:

By their purported test of a hydrogen bomb early in 2016, North Korea reminded the world that nuclear dangers are not an abstraction, but a continuing menace that the governments and peoples of the world ignore at their peril. Even if the test were not of a hydrogen bomb but of a smaller atomic weapon, as many experts suggest, we are still reminded that we live in the Nuclear Age, an age in which accident, miscalculation, insanity or intention could lead to devastating nuclear catastrophe.

What is most notable about the Nuclear Age is that we humans, by our scientific and technological ingenuity, have created the means of our own demise. The world currently is confronted by many threats to human wellbeing, and even civilizational survival, but we focus here on the particular grave dangers posed by nuclear weapons and nuclear war.

Even a relatively small nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan, with each country using 50 Hiroshima-size nuclear weapons on the other side's cities, could result in a nuclear famine killing some two billion of the most vulnerable people on the planet. A nuclear war between the U.S. and Russia could destroy civilization in a single afternoon and send temperatures on Earth plummeting into a new ice age. Such a war could destroy most complex life on the planet. Despite the gravity of such threats, they are being ignored, which is morally reprehensible and politically irresponsible.

We in the United States are in the midst of hotly contested campaigns to determine the candidates of both major political parties in the 2016 presidential faceoff, and yet none of the frontrunners for the nominations have even voiced concern about the nuclear war dangers we face. This is an appalling oversight. It reflects the underlying situation of denial and complacency that disconnects the American people as a whole from the risks of use of nuclear weapons in the years ahead. This menacing disconnect is reinforced by the media, which has failed to challenge the candidates on their approach to this apocalyptic weaponry during the debates and has ignored the issue in their television and print coverage, even to the extent of excluding voices that express concern from their opinion pages. We regard it as a matter of urgency to put these issues back on the radar screen of public awareness.

We are appalled that none of the candidates running for the highest office in the land has yet put forward any plans or strategy to end current threats of nuclear annihilation, none has challenged the planned expenditure of \$1 trillion to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal, and none has made a point of the U.S. being in breach of its nuclear disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In the presidential debates it has been a non-issue, which scandalizes the candidates for not raising the issue in their

nuclear dangers are not an abstraction, but a continuing menace that the governments and peoples of the world ignore at their peril.



many public speeches and the media for not challenging them for failing to do so. As a society, we are out of touch with the most frightening, yet after decades still dangerously mishandled, challenge to the future of humanity.

There are nine countries that currently possess nuclear weapons. Five of these nuclear-armed countries are parties to the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty (U.S., Russia, UK, France and China), and are obligated by that treaty to negotiate in good faith for a cessation of the nuclear arms race and for nuclear disarmament. The other four nuclear-armed countries (Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea) are subject to the same obligations under customary international law. None of the nine nuclear-armed countries has engaged in such negotiations, a reality that should be met with anger and frustration, and not, as is now the case, with indifference. It is not only the United States that is responsible for the current state of denial and indifference. Throughout the world there is a false confidence that, because the Cold War is over and no nuclear weapons have been used since 1945, the nuclear dangers that once frightened and concerned people can now be ignored.

Rather than fulfill their obligations for negotiated nuclear disarmament, the nine nuclear-armed countries all rely upon nuclear deterrence and are engaged in modernization programs that will keep their nuclear arsenals active through the 21st century and perhaps beyond. Unfortunately, nuclear deterrence does not actually provide security to countries with nuclear arsenals. Rather, it is a hypothesis about human behavior, which is unlikely to hold up over time. Nuclear deterrence has come close to failing on numerous occasions

and would clearly be totally ineffective, or worse, against a terrorist group in possession of one or more nuclear weapons, which has no fear of retaliation and may actually welcome it. Further, as the world is now embarking on a renewed nuclear arms race, disturbingly reminiscent of the Cold War, rising risks of confrontations and crises between major states possessing nuclear weapons increase the possibility of use.

As citizens of a nuclear-armed country, we are also targets of nuclear weapons. John F. Kennedy saw clearly that "Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident, or miscalculation, or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us." What President Kennedy vividly expressed more than 50 years ago remains true today, and even more so as the weapons proliferate and as political extremist groups come closer to acquiring these terrible weapons.

Those with power and control over nuclear weapons could turn this planet, unique in all the universe in supporting life, into the charred remains of a Global Hiroshima. Should any political leader or government hold so much power? Should we be content to allow such power to rest in any hands at all?

It is time to end the nuclear weapons era. We are living on borrowed time. The U.S., as the world's most powerful country, must play a leadership role in convening negotiations. For the U.S. to be effective in leading to achieve Nuclear Zero, U.S. citizens must awaken to the need to act and must press our government to act and encourage others elsewhere,

especially in the other eight nuclear-armed countries, to press their governments to act as well. It is not enough to be apathetic, conformist, ignorant or in denial. We all must take action if we want to save humanity and other forms of life from nuclear catastrophe. In this spirit, we are at a stage where we need a robust global solidarity movement that is dedicated to raising awareness of the growing nuclear menace, and the urgent need to act nationally, regionally and globally to reverse the strong militarist currents that are pushing the world ever closer to the nuclear precipice.

Nuclear weapons are the most immediate threat to humanity, but they are not the only technology that could play and is playing havoc with the future of life.

The scale of our technological impact on the environment (primarily fossil fuel extraction and use) is also resulting in global warming and climate chaos, with predicted rises in ocean levels and many other threats – ocean acidification, extreme weather, climate refugees and strife from drought – that will cause massive death and displacement of human and animal populations.

In addition to the technological threats to the human future, many people on the planet now suffer from hunger, disease,

The question before us is whether humankind has the foresight and discipline necessary to forego some superfluous desires, thereby enabling all of us and succeeding generations to live lives worth living.

Wellhead and Tailpipe

By PAUL STREET

Reflections on eco-Orwellianism

This is an age of eco-Orwellian cognitive dissonance. Three years and three months ago, then United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Norway to negotiate increased U.S. access to the Arctic's vast oil reserves. She sailed on a research vessel to see in person the melting of the Arctic under the pressure of anthropogenic global warming (AGW) – an experience she called “sobering.” Back on land, she went straight into a meeting to strategize for increased Arctic oil production with an Exxon Mobil executive and the CEO of Norway Statoil.

A different version of the same absurd, eco-Orwellian drama was acted out in a different Arctic setting by U.S. President Barack Obama this August. Obama went to Alaska to see firsthand the toll that carbon-driven planet-cooking is taking on Arctic frost. Obama's junket north included a speech on climate change that “bordered on the apocalyptic” (New York Times) and argued with seeming passion that “we're not acting fast enough” to heal the earth.

Never mind that just last May Obama cleared the way for the giant climate-changing multinational oil corporation Royal Dutch Shell to begin drilling for fossil fuels in the Arctic Ocean this summer. Shell got approval to drill in the U.S. portion of the Chukchi Sea off the coast of Alaska. Shell's leases are 70 miles out, in a remote, untouched, and pristine area that provides critical habitats for several rare species and large marine mammals. It's a treacherous area characterized by extreme storms, likely to cause massive oil spills. Environmental groups had long warned against the madness of drilling in the area, which holds 22 billion barrels of oil and 93 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The New York Times described Obama's decision as “a devastating blow to environmentalists.” It might have added “and to prospects for a decent future.” According to Times environmental reporter Coral Davenport, speaking on the PBS Newshour last May, the Chukchi Sea announcement had environmental groups “surprised.”

Nobody should have been surprised. The decision came just four months after Obama had opened up a large portion of the southern U.S. Atlantic coast to new deep-water offshore drilling. In late March of 2010, three weeks before the Deepwater Horizon disaster, Obama freed up 167 million acres along the eastern U.S. seaboard for Big Oil extraction.

The president's “drill, baby drill” record ever since has been calamitous. It has greased the skids for the United States' largely fracking-based emergence as the world's leading oil and gas producer in the name of an “all-of-the-above” (nuclear included) energy policy and so-called national energy independence. “Beneath his climate change policies,” Slate's Eric Holthaus recently noted, “Obama is basically running a petrostate.” Consistent with that observation, Obama's faux-green Alaska trip included a call by the president for an increase in U.S. Coast Guard vessels equipped with ice-cutting tools to further America's competitiveness in the international race for the exploration, drilling, and extraction of Arctic oil.



“Beneath his climate change policies,” Slate's Eric Holthaus recently noted, “Obama is basically running a petrostate.”

How is it then that Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Obama, and the petro-statist Democratic Party more broadly are lauded by their “liberal” supporters and denounced by their Republican critics as environmentalist enemies of AGW? Beneath the undeniable contribution of Republican-leaning propaganda from the U.S.

Big Carbon lobby and wishful partisan thinking on the part of Democrats, one key to the absurdity lay in a great cognitive failure that even many smart climate scientists have exhibited: a framing of the excess atmospheric carbon that is heating Mother Earth almost entirely around the sale and combustion of carbon at the expense of serious attention to the exploration, development, and production of fossil fuels. The political culture and even much of the scientific and environmentalist discourse has been obsessed with what British climate change communications strategist George Marshall calls “the tailpipe” of carbon sale and emissions, ignoring the basic point-of-extraction “wellheads” and “mineheads” of AGW.

This over-focus on the back end of humanity's extreme carbon pollution is no small part of “why,” in Marshall's words, “we keep fueling the fire we want to put out.” It is also part of why so many can be fooled into thinking that a militantly petro-capitalist president like Obama is a planet-loving climate change-fighter. Beyond his seemingly heartfelt statements of concern for livable ecology, his calls for people to acknowledge and heed the warnings of climate science, and his support for limited renewable energy production, Obama does, after all, advocate and enforce various and increased “tailpipe” regulations and restrictions on final emissions (Never mind for now that he almost singlehandedly undermined desperate international efforts for binding global carbon emission limits in Copenhagen

in December of 2009.) U.S. truckers bitch about “Obama's” Environmental Protection Agency restrictions on engine emissions as Obama presides over the phenomenal growth of U.S. gas and oil production, leading among other things to a bright light of burning gas that can be seen across the fracking fields of North Dakota from outer space.

The tailpipe/wellhead dissonance is hardly limited to the U.S., of course. As Marshall notes in his chilling book “Don't Even Think About It” (2014), “In England, energy and climate change are combined into one government department leading to simultaneous action to reduce emissions and to boost oil production. One month the minister of Energy and Climate Change brags about the allocations of new licenses to release 20 billion barrels of oil around British coasts. The next month the Minister of Energy and Climate Change announces an ambitious plan for the government to reduce its emissions by 10 percent.” The great British novelist and social critic George Orwell would be impressed.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produces detailed data on nationally aggregated per capita greenhouse gas emissions. This data has been used as the empirical basis for international climate negotiations since the early 1990s. The IPCC compiles no comparable factual record on national fossil fuel production. The head of the body's Science Committee cannot recall a single instance in which it talked about limiting the production of fossil fuels, Marshall reports. It's a seemingly obvious and overriding concern, something that might – in a rational world – have moved to the forefront of public and scientific climate change consciousness after an incident like Deepwater Horizon. We cannot process, sell, and burn the fossil fuels without first finding those fuels and digging and pumping them out of the ground. Thanks to the obsession with tailpipe over wellhead and minehead, it is left to officially marginalized “radical environmentalists” to make the connection between exploration, drilling, and mining on one hand and processing, sale, and actual burning on the other.

The term “radical” is ironic. What could be more conservative than efforts to preserve the world's still vast stock (big enough to push Earth well past livability) of fossil fuels to sustain prospects for decent life? The relentless drive to push oil and gas extraction past the point of no return to decently livable ecology in the outward name of growth and in the hidden pursuit of profit is radical indeed: radically irresponsible and catastrophic.

Paul Street's latest book is *They Rule: The 1% v. Democracy* (Paradigm, 2014)

This content was originally published by teleSUR at

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Wellhead-and-Tailpipe-20151002-0016.html>

Responsibility in the Nuclear Age

from page 6

lack of shelter and lack of education. Every person on the planet has a right to adequate nutrition, health care, housing and education. It is deeply unjust to allow the rich to grow richer while the vast majority of humanity sinks into deeper poverty. It is immoral to spend our resources on modernizing weapons of mass annihilation while large numbers of people continue to suffer from the ravages of poverty.

Doing all we can to move the world to Nuclear Zero, while remaining responsive to other pressing dangers, is our best chance to ensure a benevolent future for our species and its natural surroundings. We can start by changing apathy to empathy, conformity to critical thinking, ignorance to wisdom, denial to recognition, and thought to action in responding to the threats posed by nuclear weapons and the technologies associated with global warming, as well as to the need to address present human suffering arising from war and poverty.

The richer countries are challenged by migrant flows of desperate people that number in the millions and by the realization that as many as a billion people on the planet are chronically hungry and another two billion are malnourished, resulting in widespread growth stunting among children and other maladies. While ridding the world of nuclear weaponry is our primary goal, we are mindful that the institution of war is responsible for chaos and massive casualties, and that we must also challenge the militarist mentality if we are ever to enjoy enduring peace and security on our planet.

The fate of our species is now being tested as never before. The question before us is whether humankind has the foresight and discipline necessary to forego some superfluous desires, mainly curtailing propensities for material luxuries and for domination of our fellow beings, thereby enabling all of us and succeeding generations to live lives worth living. Whether our species will rise to this challenge is uncertain, with current evidence not reassuring.

The time is short and what is at risk is civilization and every small and great thing that each of us loves and treasures on our planet.

The authors are affiliated with the Santa Barbara based Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

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Richard Falk is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Palestinian human rights. An international law and international relations scholar who taught at Princeton University for forty years, since 2002 Falk has lived in Santa Barbara, California, and taught at the local campus of the University of California in Global and International Studies and since 2005 chaired the Board of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

David Krieger is president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (www.wagingpeace.org), an organization that has worked since 1982 to educate and advocate for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Robert B. Laney is an attorney and board member of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2016/01/26/political-responsibility-nuclear-age>

Shell Tops NGO Hate List, Again

Shell wasn't the only oil firm on the list. Nine out of the 20 companies featured on Sigwatch's NGO hate list were energy resource companies.

Despite fierce competition from companies like HSBC, BP and Volkswagen, Shell continues to draw the ire of more NGOs than any other company.

Oil giant Royal Dutch Shell has held the title of most hated company by NGOs, according to a survey released Monday.

For the second year in a row, Shell has angered more NGOs than any other major company, according to the German NGO analyst group Sigwatch.

In 2015, Shell infuriated NGOs with its plans to drill in the Arctic. Those plans were ditched in September, prompting Sigwatch head Robert Blood to suggest the company's standing among NGOs may fare better in 2016.

"Shell has many issues and it won't drop out of the list but we expect them to be way down the list in 2016," he told the U.K.'s Independent.

Shell wasn't the only oil firm on the list. Nine out of the 20 companies featured on Sigwatch's NGO hate list were energy resource companies, including coal miners and oil firms.

Behind Shell, BP was the second most hated company, while Anglo-Australian mining company Rio Tinto came in third.

Three banks made the top ten: Standard Chartered, Barclays and HSBC. Last year HSBC was accused of helping wealthy clients dodge European taxes.

German car manufacturer Volkswagen made its debut on the annual list, drawing the ire of environmentalists in the wake of its emissions scandal.

Blood said the scandal was a shock that tarnished the company's reputation as a "national champion" in Germany.

"Volkswagen is not an oil and gas company. It's not a company that NGOs want to hate, but in this case they had no choice," he said.

Sigwatch's list was the result of a survey of more than 7,000 NGOs.

An executive summary of the Sigwatch report can be found at http://www.sigwatch.com/fileadmin/Free_downloads/SIGWATCH_-_Corporations_NGOs_loved_and_hated_in_2015_FREE.pdf

This content was originally published by teleSUR at:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Shell-Tops-NGO-Hate-List-Again-20160118-0018.html>

For the second year in a row, Shell has angered more NGOs than any other major company.



Modesto-Stanislaus (MoSt) Poetry Festival

Troy Jollimore (right) and Heather Altfeld, both professors at California State University Chico and award winning poets, will facilitate the 4th Annual MoSt Poetry Festival Workshop, February 6 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Modesto from 9:30 to 4 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 St. Paul's Way, Modesto.

The festival will feature workshops, a poetry contest, luncheon, readings and author book tables. The festival is open to all ages, and students are encouraged to attend.

The festival is sponsored by the Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center. President and Modesto Poet Laureate, Gillian

Wegener, will emcee the event.

Visit the MoSt website for information, guidelines for the contest, and registration form.

Registration fee: \$30 for MoSt members; \$35 for others. Includes luncheon and contest fee. MoSt Poetry, P.O. Box 578940, Modesto, CA 95357

For information visit www.mostpoetry.org, or email info@mostpoetry.org

(Watch for Heather's poetry in future **A Gathering of Voices**).

The following Troy Jollimore poems are from *Syllabus of Errors* (Princeton University Press, 2015)."

INVENTORY

Take inventory. Invent a story about the people you have hurt. Begin with yourself. The harm I've done comes on this journey with me. He walks ahead on the trail, or follows a dozen paces behind. At night we stop together. I try not to feel ashamed of him, his decaying robes, his loathsome, unwashed feet, so much like mine. We don't talk much. But two nights ago, the campfire dying between us, I found I could no longer stifle my rage, I wanted to be rid of him so badly, and so I mustered my anger and said, *You only get seven pairs of shoes to carry you through this life, and you've already used up four.* Silence. The call of a whippoorwill in the fields. At last he looked up. *That might be. But know that I'm willing to go barefoot at the end, if that's what it takes.*

ORIOLE

A bend in the river.
A flaw in the surface.
How many continents
has this lone oriole
crossed to come balance
on our sagging clothesline,
and what urgent thing
is he trying to tell us?
That those who could translate
his song are lagging
a thousand miles
behind? Or that those
who can speak both his tongue
and ours have not yet
been born, that we will go
into the ground
and a thousand years pass
before their eyes open,
the wayward atoms
of our nests and tongues
having been dispersed,
reassigned, and repurposed
into their bright,
unforeseeable bodies?

ON BEAUTY

Beauty, some have ventured, is proportional:
the right relative ratio of the actual

against the actual. Others hypothesize
that beauty's roots lie buried in the sexual,

insisting that aesthetics are relational:
the eye of the beholder is the noumenal

perceiving core, where spores of the phenomenal
sprout into lit-screen images. The visual

is permeated, down to the foundational,
with lust, with longing. Say it: we are animals,

which does not mean that we must all be criminals,
but only that desire is constitutional,

that we are fixed to perpetrate the species—
I meant *perpetuate*—as if our duty

were coupled with our terror. As if beauty
itself were but a syllabus of errors.

POSSESSION

Is there anything anywhere in this world
that is free from possession, that is not owned
by anyone? If there is, I want it.

I have cleared a space for it
in the corner of my bedroom. I will put it
there, and let everyone know that I have it,

and envy will fill them as poured tea fills
a cup. *Why did I not think to make
it mine?*, they will ask themselves, and they

will receive no answer. So they will come
to admire it, bringing their envy with them
like an offering. And it will feel as if there

is light inside me, I will feel the way
the gods feel, for the envy of others make us
divine. I just need to figure out what

this thing is and where I might find it. The things
I have found thus far are already labeled
and claimed. Tell me, where is the unattached thing?

THE SMALL RAIN

I have decided that today's small rain—
that drowsy sizzle in the frowzy trees,
which should begin, if I'm not wrong, at five past three—
will be dedicated to you

And I hope you'll take that yellow Scrunchie from your
hair
and walk out from your house into that downy shower
wearing that disheveled lemon sundress I've been aching
to see you wear

and just stand there

thinking of me as you do



Troy Jollimore: Poet, author and workshop co-leader for the 4th Annual MoSt Poetry Festival Feb. 6

Troy Jollimore's most recent collection of poetry, *Syllabus of Errors*, was chosen by the *New York Times* as one of the "best poetry books of 2015." His previous poetry books are *At Lake Scugog* and *Tom Thomson in Purgatory*, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award in poetry for 2006. He is also the author of two philosophical works: *Love's Vision* and *On Loyalty*. He has been the recipient of fellowships from the Bread Loaf Writers Contest, the Stanford Humanities Center, and the Guggenheim Foundation.



E-cigarette ads reach nearly 7 in 10 middle and high-school students



More than 18 million youth see e-cigarette ads; many ads use themes from cigarette ads that appeal to youth

From the Centers for Disease Control

About 7 in 10 middle and high school students – more than 18 million young people – see e-cigarette advertising in stores, online, in newspapers and magazines, or on television and in movies, according to a new CDC *Vital Signs* report.

E-cigarette ads use many of the same themes – independence, rebellion, and sex – used to sell cigarettes and other conventional tobacco products. Advertising of tobacco products has been shown to cause youth to start using those products. The unrestricted marketing of e-cigarettes and dramatic increases in their use by youth could reverse decades of progress in preventing tobacco use among youth.

“The same advertising tactics the tobacco industry used years ago to get kids addicted to nicotine are now being used to entice a new generation of young people to use e-cigarettes,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.

“I hope all can agree that kids should not use e-cigarettes.”

Data from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) show 68.9 percent of middle and high school students see e-cigarettes ads from one or more media sources. More youth see e-cigarette ads in retail stores (54.8 percent) than online (39.8 percent), in TV/movies (36.5 percent), or in newspapers and magazines (30.4 percent).

E-cigarettes typically deliver nicotine, which at a young age may cause lasting harm to brain development, promote addiction, and lead to sustained tobacco use. In 2014, e-cigarettes became the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, surpassing conventional cigarettes. During 2011 to 2014, current e-cigarette use among high school students soared from 1.5 percent to 13.4 percent, and among middle school students from 0.6 percent to 3.9 percent. Spending on e-cigarette advertising rose from \$6.4 million in 2011 to an estimated \$115 million in 2014.

CDC works 24/7 protecting America’s health, safety and security. Whether diseases start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, stem from human error or deliberate attack, CDC is committed to respond to America’s most pressing health challenges.

Green Tips for a Green Planet: A Chocolate Lover’s Statement on What It Means to Be Green

I’m Here to Save the Planet Chocolate!

By CANDY KLASCHUS, Co-Chair of the Sierra Club Yokuts Chapter

When the Yokuts group has tabling at various events, we hand out buttons that read “I’m here to save the planet!” Well, I have a small problem with that glib statement, well-intentioned though it may be: I am not going to “save” the planet. The earth has survived for billions of years and has gone through more changes than we can possibly even know about, much less fully understand. In reality, if we are being honest, what we are trying to do is save ourselves, and other forms of life, from being so seriously harmed by the pollution of our air, water, and the earth itself so that we can no longer live in conditions on Earth. In addition we now are facing the very serious reality of global climate change. Yes, climate change is real and yes, human activities are the problem.

That brings me back to my headline. Perhaps you have been cruising along not really being too concerned. Your life is still good. Sure, you’ve had to figure out how to use less water but hey, it’s kind of fun, isn’t it? Like a game? Well, people, I’m here to tell you, this has gotten SERIOUS: the production of that most heavenly of foods (and for some of us it is a food group), chocolate, is in jeopardy.

A story on National Public Radio’s *Morning Edition* on Tuesday, December 1st, got my attention: “As Big Food Feels Threat of Climate Change, Companies Speak Up.” The reporter interviews a scientist who explains something every farmer, rancher, and gardener here in the San Joaquin Valley, and elsewhere, already knows: “It’s very clear that a changing climate will have a profound effect on agriculture,” according to geographer Molly Brown of the University of Maryland. The story moves on to what for me was the big point: Mars Inc. which makes among other foods my favor-

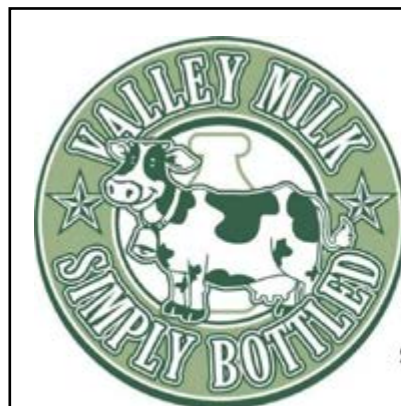
ite candy, M&M’s, is worried if the climate in West Africa becomes too dry, it will have a bad effect on cocoa farmers; their trees need a moist climate.

Of course, Mars Inc. admits it will find other sources for their cocoa, but interestingly, they anticipated this problem and in 2009 set a goal to reduce the company’s greenhouse gas emissions. They report emissions have been cut them by twenty-five percent. Their goal is to be carbon-neutral by 2040. General Mills and Unilever have also begun following similar guidelines. As I kept scrolling around on the topic of climate change, I was very impressed with a site from The Yale Project on Climate Change Communication <http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication/>. Select “Yale

Climate Opinion Maps” if you want a fairly troubling and at times contradictory picture of what Americans believe about climate change and its short-and long-term effects. See <http://environment.yale.edu/poe/v2014/>

So: keep up the good fight. Of course, no single person can do it—we all need to be on board with this one. It’s a big one, perhaps THE big one, because if things don’t change, there won’t be any other one. Save chocolate—and ourselves.

Editor’s note: As a chocolate lover and the editor of “Green Tips for a Green Planet,” I wholly endorse Candy’s interesting perspective on Climate Change and thank her for sharing her thoughts with our readers. — *Tina Arnpole Driskill*



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The New Face of Hunger: Statistics Underestimate the Food Problem

By **FRANCES MOORE LAPPE**

Today, 800 million of us are considered “hungry,” but we produce enough calories to feed us all. Rather than a lack of food, we’re dealing with a lack of democracy.

Soon after I wrote *Diet for a Small Planet*, my sound bite became: “Hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food but by a scarcity of democracy.” I argued that democracy means everyone has a voice that is heard. In our just-released book, *World Hunger: 10 Myths*, Joseph Collins and I share stories of citizens, including the world’s poorest, stepping up to create such democracies. Writing the book shook me up a lot. It called me to commit with new urgency and hope to focus on hunger’s root solution—what I call “living democracy”—and to help to strengthen the citizens’ movements necessary to bring it about.

When I wrote *Diet for a Small Planet* 45 years ago, scary headlines told us that “too little food and too many people” make famine inevitable. I discovered that there was more than enough food for all of us—but we’ve created food systems that actively turn plenty into the experience of scarcity.

Now, 800 million are counted as “hungry,” while we produce about 40 percent more food per person than we did when I first sat furiously adding up the numbers. Daily per capita calories available stand at almost 2,900, well above what’s necessary.

So here we are, with continuing hunger alongside vast abundance and waste.

United Nations agencies tied to the Millennial Development Goals (MDG) celebrated in 2015 that the world came mighty close to the MDG target of cutting the share of hungry people in so-called developing countries by half, compared to 1990.

Few appreciate, however, that the official hunger measure captures only annual calorie deficiencies. A person could experience extreme hunger between harvests, for example, and still not register in this official total.

What I didn’t foresee when I began this journey, however, was hunger’s new face: a growing disconnect between food and nutrition that requires a profound rethinking of hunger.

In the United States, about 40 percent of the calories our children eat are nutritionally empty. The impact of a similar disconnect in regions of vast hunger is startling: A doctor in a rural Indian clinic told me of a major change over the last few decades. “My patients get enough calories,” he explained, “but now 60 percent suffer diabetes and heart conditions.”

The Lancet says that from 1990 to 2010, unhealthy eating patterns outpaced dietary improvements in most parts of the world. Now, “most of the key causes” of noncommunicable diseases are diet-related and predicted by 2020 to account for nearly 75 percent of all deaths worldwide.

Given the widening disconnect between calorie intake and nutrition, the official measure is an increasingly inadequate indicator of nutritional well-being. So let’s look at two other indicators of the crisis.

About 1 in 4 of the world’s children under age 5 is stunted, according to the World Health Organization, typically resulting in lifelong health problems. Causes include too little food and nutritionally poor food for pregnant women and children, and lack of clean water necessary to absorb needed nutrients.

A second telling measure: Two billion of us are deficient

in at least one essential nutrient—a deficit often causing great harm. Vitamin A deficiency, for example, means blindness for up to half a million children each year, and iron deficiency is linked to 1 in 5 maternal deaths.

Thus we propose a radical reframing of the crisis: At least a quarter of the world’s population is suffering what we call “nutritional deprivation,” a huge jump from the official 1-in-9 hunger estimate based on calories alone.

As motivating as this shocking reality is for me, equally so are social movements reconnecting farming and nutrition—moving to biodiverse farming and eschewing processed foods. In southern India, I met poor women farmers of the Deccan Development Society who beamed with pride and good health as they described their journey from dependence on nearly nutritionless polished rice to food security via plots

as small as 1 acre on which they cultivate as many as 20 crops.

Facing the suffering of nutritional deprivation, we can take heart from courageous people in movements across the world who are creating genuine democracy from the village up. It’s the living democracy to which I want to devote the rest of my life.

Frances Moore Lappe wrote this article for How to Create a Culture of Good Health, the Winter 2016 issue of YES! Magazine. Frances is the author or co-author of 18 books, including the groundbreaking bestseller Diet for a Small Planet. She and her daughter, Anna Lappe, lead the Small Planet Institute. Lappe is a YES! contributing editor.

From <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/good-health/the-new-face-of-hunger-how-statistics-underestimate-the-food-problem-20160119>

Politics of Fear Devouring Human Rights

By **NADIA PRUPIS, staff writer**

The politics of fear has consumed the world.

Fear of terrorism and fear of refugees, which have grown alongside ongoing global conflicts, fueled many of the biggest human rights developments—and failings—worldwide in 2015, including in the U.S. and Europe, according to a new report released Wednesday by Human Rights Watch (HRW).

The influx of refugees fleeing violence, war, and poverty at home prompted numerous Western governments to restrict borders and roll back human rights within their own countries in “misguided efforts to protect their security,” the report (pdf) states. Meanwhile, authoritarian governments in conflict zones embarked on “the most intense crackdown on independent groups in recent times.”

Together, these policies have created a climate in which all citizens are at risk.

“Fear of terrorist attacks and mass refugee flows are driving many Western governments to roll back human rights protections,” HRW’s executive director Kenneth Roth wrote in his keynote essay introducing the group’s 26th annual human rights review. “These backward steps threaten the rights of all without any demonstrated effectiveness in protecting ordinary people.”

Roth explained:

Fear stood behind many of the big human rights developments of the past year. Fear of being killed or tortured in Syria and other zones of conflict and repression drove millions from their homes. Fear of what an influx of asylum seekers could mean for their societies led many governments in Europe and elsewhere to close the gates. Fear of mounting terrorist attacks moved some political leaders to curtail rights and scapegoat refugees or Muslims. And fear of their people holding them to account led various autocrats to pursue an unprecedented global crackdown on the ability of those people to band together and make their voices heard.

In the U.S. and Europe, xenophobia became mainstream, creating a “currency” of “blatant Islamophobia and shameless demonizing of refugees,” Roth said.

That has fueled efforts to weaken encryption and increase surveillance, along with the adoption of new laws targeting government watchdogs and activists. There’s the

Cybersecurity Act in the U.S., the Investigatory Powers Bill in the UK, or France’s three-month state of emergency in response to the attacks in Paris last November.

On Tuesday, French President Francois Hollande sought to extend the state of emergency by an additional three months.

But it was not just privacy rights and asylum protections that faced a crackdown in 2015. Elsewhere, gender and sexuality increasingly came under fire. Transgender people were subjected to a growing amount of discriminatory laws that blocked their access to health care and free expression. And one in three girls was forced into child marriage by age 18, while one in nine were wed by 15—a trend that cannot be reversed without “sustained political commitment to address social and cultural norms around girls’ sexuality,” say HRW researchers Neela Ghoshal and Kyle Knight.

Lastly, the report details the over-incarceration of minors, from those serving life sentences in prison to those detained for skipping school or attempting to cross borders.

Imprisonment of minors can include anything from institutionalizing mentally disabled children to detaining migrants, says HRW’s Michael Bochenek. But all instances share one thing in common: they violate international standards.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates there are more than one million children currently behind bars around the world.

The report details the ongoing human rights abuses in 90 countries total, as well as the responses of bodies like the United Nations and other international advocacy organizations.

Despite these ongoing crises, the report highlights the tangible progress made by intrepid activists and organizations, such as the democratic elections in Myanmar that brought human rights leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy to power in November, or the legalization of same-sex marriage in the U.S., Ireland, and Mexico.

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From <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/01/27/politics-fear-devouring-human-rights-worldwide>

12 CALENDAR



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

ACTIONS FOR PEACE Sonora - Stockton

SONORA: Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

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

FEBRUARY

ONGOING: Modesto Area Partners in Science, Fridays, 7:30 pm, Sierra Hall 132, MJC West Campus except where noted; <http://murov.info/MAPS-spring.pdf>. **Feb 26: Aging and Chronic Disease - a View from the Aging Side.** Brian Kennedy - Biologist, CEO and President of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging. <http://murov.info/kennedy.pdf>. MJC East Campus Auditorium. **March 25: Can Desalination Solve California's Water Problems?** Tom Luster, California Coastal Commission; <http://murov.info/luster.pdf>. **April 15: Everything You Wanted to Know about Climate Change But Were Afraid to Ask.** Daniel Kammen (UCB) and Linda Rudolph (Public Health Institute), <http://murov.info/climate.pdf>. 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center.

MJC SCIENCE COLLOQUIUM, 3 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays, Science 115, West Campus, 2201 Blue Gum Ave. FREE. Campus parking: \$2.00. **Feb. 3:** Peter Dreke, Tuolumne River Trust. **Feb. 10:** Darwin Day Talk: Julia Sankey, Ph.D., CSU Stanislaus, "Giant, tusk-toothed salmon, Galapagos-sized tortoises, and other extinct wildlife of Central California." **Feb. 17:** William Wong, Engineering Division Manager, "Modesto's Precious Water Supply." **Feb. 24:** William Wong, "Modesto's Water Reuse Program." Mar 2: Bobby Hutchison, MJC Biologist, "Our Viral Planet: Evolution and Biodiversity of Viruses." **Mar 9:** "MJC Zoology Students: How are animals around the world faring."

3 WED: Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGIL on Homelessness. McHenry & J St., 4:00-5:00 pm

14 SUN: Sunday Afternoons at CBS presents Grace Lieberman & Friends. 3 pm 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Tickets: \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors & Students; \$7 children. Call (209) 571-6060. Visit <http://sundaysatcbs.com/>

17 WED: Film Night at the Center. TBA.

21 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *The Manchurian Candidate*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/516#>

LOOKING AHEAD

Friday, March 18: Peace Essay Contest Awards Reception. Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center, MJC West Campus, 7 PM. Rev. Darcy Baxter, Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County will MC.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email modestovineyard@gmail.com; All Welcome.

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

Weekly mindfulness meditation and dharma talk, 9:00 am-10:30 am, 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/>

Food Addicts Anonymous In Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

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 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

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

Unity Tai Ji Qi Gong (A Journey Within) - First United Methodist Church Multipurpose Rm - 6

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.

pm - Wednesdays - freewill offering. Michele, 209 602-3162.

Merced LGBT Community Center offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org - 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

Merced Full Spectrum meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.lgbtmerced.org/> Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

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 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

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. Jana Lynn Community Rm., 500 N. 9th St., 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 the Red Event Center, 921 8th St., Modesto. 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

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.

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. 7:30-9:30 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 Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of the month, 11:30 AM- 1:30 PM. Info: Kathy Haynes, 209-250-9961; 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