



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

A MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER PUBLICATION

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Action on Racism: A Statement of the Modesto Peace/Life Center

June 17, 2020

A rare moment in American history is upon us, an awakening. Millions of people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds throughout our country are crying out, No More! No More! to the excessive violence of unwarranted police practices or the out-of-control actions of some police officers; No More! to a legal justice system that disproportionately and unjustly targets people of color; No More! to the racism that has divided us for too long, a poison infecting the very soul of our nation. We must not squander this moment. Let's turn our outrage into a force for long-needed change. Black Lives Matter. Let's turn the brutal death of George Floyd, and so many Black lives before and after him, into an enduring legacy of fairness, respect, and equal opportunity for everyone.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center believes in the power of nonviolence to produce lasting change.

In fighting injustice, we oppose unjust actions and harmful policies. We insist those who support or commit them be held accountable.

Trusting in the power of truth, we commit to listen and learn the facts of a reality as best we can and then act to bring about the necessary change.

Dedicated to equality, we seek to dismantle institutional policies and practices that are barriers to fairness and justice. We seek to build bridges to a better future for our community, country, and world by treating everyone with respect.

Transforming prejudice, systemic racism, white supremacy, and violence will take years. But now is the moment to join hands and hearts together on a path to real change. The widespread and all too frequent inhumane treatment of Blacks and people of color must be faced and dealt with. Our focus must no longer be confined solely to the actions and accountability of individuals.

We need to imagine beyond the current model of law enforcement to a system that more effectively protects and serves our community's well-being and public safety. Toward that end, in support of Black Lives Matter, we will join the effort of the local chapters of the NAACP and the ACLU to develop and promote a Citizens Review Board and other initiatives. In addition, we will support and participate with other organizations' efforts to root out racial injustice related to health care, education, housing and homelessness, the environment, and economic development.

This dialogue and honest cooperation will enrich our community, work toward justice, and help us heal the wounds of divisiveness that affect each of us.



Award-winning Singer/Songwriter Patty Castillo Davis: A Voice for Social Justice

By TOM PORTWOOD

MAMA award-winning singer/songwriter Patty Castillo Davis is quick to admit that, even as a little girl, she was all about the words and the music and the beat as she sat in front of the television watching Nancy Sinatra power through the lyrics of "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'." "I loved Nancy, and I wanted those white boots, and that blonde mop top – I wanted to be her," Ms. Castillo Davis recalls, chuckling. "I knew I wanted to be a singer and make up my own songs. But when I saw Buffy Sainte-Marie in San Pedro, that's when I really identified with a singer because she looked like me. I just stood there and was mesmerized by her. That was transformational."

Born and raised in Modesto, Patty Castillo Davis feels a strong connection to the Central Valley where her parents met and fell in love. "I'm very thankful that my parents come from eclectic backgrounds. My dad is a Mexican-American from Corpus Christi, Texas and my mother was born in the Valley. My father is from a migrant family and worked through much of the heartland of the Valley on ranches and farms, and he's told me a lot of stories. There are so many opportunities for music and musicians here. I'm not sure I would find that elsewhere, which is another reason why I feel I'm where I'm supposed to be and feel so connected."

The music brought into the house in her childhood was eclectic as well – Hank Williams, the Supremes, her dad's Tejano music, Carole King, Peter, Paul and Mary, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Aretha Franklin, among others – percolated up as influences on Ms. Castillo Davis through those early years, nudging her closer at every turn to her dream



of becoming a singer. "All those singers made me love music all the more, and I would try and emulate them," she remembers.

But another singer was destined to provide an even more profound impact on the aspiring singer and her music. "As I got older, and as I realized I wanted to be a performing artist, I didn't think there was a place for me, until I listened to Linda Ronstadt. I had been listening to Linda all along, but now she gave me permission to be an artist, including singing in Spanish, and singing songs by men written for men, and not changing lyrics."

As Ms. Castillo's Davis passion for music began flowering, an episode occurring during her high school days had another lasting effect on her. "I worked on my school newspaper, as the editorial editor, and we got word one day that there was going to be a cross burn-

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In Union There is Strength

By General James Mattis, former Secretary of State
June 3, 2020

I have watched this week's unfolding events, angry and appalled. The words "Equal Justice Under Law" are carved in the pediment of the United States Supreme Court. This is precisely what protesters are rightly demanding. It is a whole-some and unifying demand—one that all of us should be able to get behind. We must not be distracted by a small number of lawbreakers. The protests are defined by tens of thousands of people of conscience who are insisting that we live up to our values—our values as people and our values as a nation.

When I joined the military, some 50 years ago, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution. Never did I dream that troops taking that same oath would be ordered under any circumstance to violate the Constitutional rights of their fellow citizens—much less to provide a bizarre photo op for the elected commander-in-chief, with military leadership standing alongside.

We must reject any thinking of our cities as a "battlespace" that our uniformed military is called upon to "dominate." At home, we should use our military only when requested to do so, on very rare occasions, by state governors. Militarizing our response, as we witnessed in Washington, D.C., sets up a conflict—a false conflict—between the military and civilian society. It erodes the moral ground that ensures a trusted bond between men and women in uniform and the society they are sworn to protect, and of which they themselves are a part. Keeping public order rests with civilian state and local leaders who best understand their communities and are answerable to them.

James Madison wrote in Federalist 14 that "America united with a handful of troops, or without a single soldier, exhibits a more forbidding posture to foreign ambition than America disunited, with a hundred thousand veterans ready

for combat." We do not need to militarize our response to protests. We need to unite around a common purpose. And it starts by guaranteeing that all of us are equal before the law.

Instructions given by the military departments to our troops before the Normandy invasion reminded soldiers that "The Nazi slogan for destroying us... was 'Divide and Conquer.' Our American answer is 'In Union there is Strength.'" We must summon that unity to surmount this crisis—confident that we are better than our politics.

Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people—does not even pretend to try. Instead he tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership. We can unite without him, drawing on the strengths inherent in our civil society. This will not be easy, as the past few days have shown, but we owe it to our fellow citizens; to past generations that bled to defend our promise; and to our children.

We can come through this trying time stronger, and with a renewed sense of purpose and respect for one another. The pandemic has shown us that it is not only our troops who are willing to offer the ultimate sacrifice for the safety of the community. Americans in hospitals, grocery stores, post offices, and elsewhere have put their lives on the line in order to serve their fellow citizens and their country. We know that we are better than the abuse of executive authority that we witnessed in Lafayette Square. We must reject and hold accountable those in office who would make a mockery of our Constitution. At the same time, we must remember Lincoln's "better angels," and listen to them, as we work to unite.

Only by adopting a new path—which means, in truth, returning to the original path of our founding ideals—will we again be a country admired and respected at home and abroad.

National network of watchdog groups Opposes funding for nuclear weapons test prep: Calls proposal "dangerously destabilizing" and "absolutely unacceptable."

From Tri-Valley CAREs, June 25, 2020

Today, three-dozen nuclear watchdog organizations sent an urgent message to Congress declaring resumption of nuclear weapons testing by the United States "absolutely unacceptable" and "dangerously destabilizing."

The letter, from the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability to the Chairs, Ranking Members and Member offices of committees dealing with the National Nuclear Security Administration's Fiscal Year 2021 budget, noted the June 23rd release of the full text of the Senate National Defense Authorization Act and its SEC. 3167, deeming that "not less than \$10,000,000 shall be made available to carry out projects related to reducing the time required to execute a nuclear test if necessary."

The letter states: "ANA unequivocally declares that resumption of nuclear testing at any yield is absolutely unacceptable. Even a hint of resumed nuclear testing by the U.S. could be dangerously destabilizing. If it were to occur, it would lead to testing by other states, likely including China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. It would accelerate the growing nuclear arms race, damage prospects for future nuclear arms control negotiations at the very moment when global arms control is gasping for air, and undermine, even fatally, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is already under great stress."

John Burroughs, executive director of Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, added: "Nuclear testing would be a very hard blow to international restraints - both formal and informal - on arms racing, proliferation and the threatened use or even the use of nuclear weapons."

Marylia Kelley, ANA President and executive director of Tri-Valley CAREs told Congress: "We speak with one voice in urging you in the strongest possible terms to block funding or other initiatives that lead toward a possible return to nuclear weapons testing by the United States. In particular, the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization and Appropriations Acts should neither authorize nor appropriate funds that speed preparations to potentially resume such testing."

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability represents three-dozen local and national organizations addressing policy, safety and cleanup issues across the nuclear weapons complex. Member groups live and work around sites in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex.

The ANA letter concludes: "Nuclear testing is a charred and bitter bridge to the past, not the forward path we desire toward a more stable and healthy future."

The ANA letter is available [here](http://trivalleycares.org/new/ANA-N-Testing-Ltr-FINAL.pdf). <http://trivalleycares.org/new/ANA-N-Testing-Ltr-FINAL.pdf>

Peace/Life Center looking for volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center needs volunteers to assist with projects, events, our radio project (radio knowledge, skills needed), fundraising, and administrative activities. No experience necessary. Experience in social media, Word, Excel, or other special skills are desired for some volunteer positions. We need volunteers for a few hours per week, or an ongoing commitment.

For more information, contact our volunteer/outreach coordinators: Susan Bower or Jocelyn Cooper at the Peace Life Center (209) 529-5750.

Hiroshima Remembrances

MPLC at Legion Park

Join the Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck at Legion Park, Modesto on Thursday, August 6th at 6:00 PM. Bring food, drinks to share as we converse and rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. Bring your own table service.

Social distancing guidelines will be followed. Please wear a mask.

The evening will conclude with a candlelight vigil on the banks of the Tuolumne River.

Tri-Valley CAREs

Annual Tri-Valley CAREs Hiroshima event at Lawrence Livermore Lab on Thursday, August 6. Speakers include Daniel Ellsberg, 8 am. Details forthcoming. Visit Tri-Valley CAREs, for information, <http://www.trivalleycares.org/>

Be informed!

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

Please, take your knee off our necks so we can breathe

By **LTGEN VINCENT R. STEWART, USMC (Ret.)**

I do not believe I can make you understand how the slow motion, horrifying, nonchalant murder of a black man has impacted me personally and saddened me for our country. The images invade my every thought and action and has convinced me that I can no longer be silent.

I am by all accounts a successful American who has truly lived the American dream. I am a first generation American who rose to the top of my profession. Some will look at my situation and say it is easy to achieve the American dream if you just work hard enough. Hard work is certainly a key ingredient to success, but sometimes there are simply too many barriers that hard work simply won't overcome. For many people of color these barriers are reflected in emotions of fear, anger, isolation, contempt, resentment, despair and even hatred. What I often hear is that things are better than they were. But I also often hear that I just don't understand the anger, frustration and despair from the black community. So, let me try to explain from the perspective of a successful American.

I am going to present some of my experiences over the last 50 years for those who make up the privileged class, and I ask the reader to close their eyes and try to capture the emotion they would feel if this had been their own experience. I use the word "privilege" advisably because most won't think that they are a part of that class.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of coming to America from Jamaica and becoming a minority at that moment, separate and unequal and having that feeling on the first day of elementary school. I didn't feel that even if constitutionally able, I could aspire to be the leader of my country or lead a major cooperation, or own my own business . . . No role models, no opportunity, no real future beyond manual low skill labor.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of a high school student being stopped and searched nearly every time I left my apartment—and for a simple reason—the color of my skin. I was never accused of anything; it was a simple stop and search of a young man just like so many others.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain from the first time I was called a nigger in anger and later playing on the same football team with the individual who called me a nigger. I knew what was in his heart but we were teammates and we never spoke of the incident.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain I experienced working as a door to door encyclopedia salesman (yes—this was a thing before Google) when I was greeted by a man on his porch and informed he would have shot me had I walked on his porch a month or so earlier, but he didn't because he was now a Christian. I offered a hearty praise God and departed as quickly as my legs could move without running. It wasn't long before the local Sherriff picked me up, for my safety and took me to his "office." Later that evening the Sheriff who had been hosting me until my manager would pick me up, offered to show me the house that a black family had planned on moving in, which somehow burned to the ground the night before their planned move in. Needless to say, I declined the invitation.



It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of having a college roommate who was hostile and outwardly racist—we ended that relationship with blows being struck.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of being described as the best black officer in a unit, never able to be described as the best officer in the unit; never the first choice for visible prominent assignments in spite of a record of performance that was superior to my colleagues.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of looking around an executive level board room and realizing that you are the only person of color in the room; block checked, we have one and that's all we need to have achieved diversity. Shame we couldn't get a black female, we could have checked two blocks.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain when your child begins to inquire about the requirements for joining a local swim club and is told there are no black people on the swim team and black people can't swim. The person who told her this laughed hysterically while telling this to a child.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain when your son is stopped in a car with three white friends. They had all been drinking to include the driver, who was white. The officers stated they had something special for my son. They took the three white friends from the car and released them. The three white friends were released and my son got to spend the night in jail.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain when your child's friend tells your son that they were not allowed to play with niggers.

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of trying to convince a member of Congress that I had earned my position as the director of an agency; that it wasn't a gratuitous appointment because "you must be close to the President" (President Obama at the time).

It's hard for me to explain and help you understand the pain of instant surveillance when you enter a store because you are obviously a shoplifter or being stopped for driving while black or being ignored in a store because obviously you can't afford the merchandise. And I could go on. Just imagine, these are the experiences of someone who volun-

teered to defend the nation for over three decades and rose to become a Lieutenant General. Now imagine the experiences of those who are unable escape generational poverty, their pain, and their anguish.

Few people of privilege have experienced what I've outlined above but every person of color can recognize almost every example I've described and have survived under these conditions every day, every month, every year of their lives. Surely there must be a long-term psychological impact of this sort of systemic experience.

The emotions, the obstacles, the many challenges to overcome in our society did not stop me from being successful but, I didn't do it alone. I stood on the shoulders of the pioneers who broke through barriers at great sacrifice. Men like the Montford Point Marines who fought for the right to fight for liberty, freedom, and democracy paving the way for folks like me.

I was mentored and inspired by men like Generals Colin Powell, Cliff Stanley and Walt Gaskin. These men broke barriers that facilitated my success. I can't begin to imagine their stories and what they endured to react the pinnacle of their profession.

But the men who had the greatest impact on my career were three white men of privilege LtGen (ret) Bob "Rusty" Blackman, GENs (Ret) Jim Amos and Joe Dunford. These men saw something in me and did more than mentor me; they sponsored me, advocated for me, and spoke up on my behalf. They did more than extend a hand to pull me up. They lifted and carried me to the top of my profession. These men were in positions that allowed them to carry me; they were able to use their levers of power and influence to elevate me to the top of my profession. Where would I have landed without the effort of these men?

This begs the question: Who are you lifting up and helping to get across the finish line? Platitudes are nice. But this country needs action. If you are in a position of power and privilege, I challenge you to mentor and advocate for people that don't look like you.

I can't stop believing in the promise of America, because if the dream is not possible here, it's not possible anywhere.

In his book "Democracy in America", Alexis de Tocqueville wrote "I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers – and it was not there . . . in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there . . . in her rich mines and her vast world commerce – and it was not there . . . in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution – and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great."

We must prove to a large part of our own population that we are good. As a person who has had incredible success in this country, I am directly appealing to those in positions of power and privilege to recognize the experiences of your fellow Americans who do not look like you, and to take real, specific actions to uplift others.

A Magic Apple

Division IV - 1st Place Winner Peace Essay Contest

Landen Sales

Independent Study



“Who will feed the kids this weekend?” Missy Hammerstrom found herself asking this question when she realized that there were many children in her hometown of Louisville, Kentucky going to bed hungry (Blessings in a

Backpack). One day she was having lunch at an elementary school and a young girl asked for her apple. Missy asked her if she was still hungry after lunch, but the little girl replied that the apple was for dinner. This saddened Missy. Determined to help this girl as well as other children, that night Missy purchased several backpacks and filled them with food. The following morning she donated them to the school. Missy worked tirelessly to bring peace to her community by feeding hungry children.

Missy saw a problem that needed to be fixed. One hungry little girl and the gift of an apple led to the beginning of Blessings in a Backpack. In 2005 she started this organization in her garage by packing food for local kids in her town. Now, fourteen years later, it is a national organization that has grown dramatically. Blessings in a Backpack sends 87,300 kids home with food every weekend. Forty-five other states have joined this mission to feed starving children (Blessings in a Backpack).

Feeding hungry children contributes to creating a more peaceful and just world. Children should not have to go to school hungry or worry about where their next meal will



BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

come from. By feeding the hungry children and giving them needed nourishment students' grades improved. Creating a fair and healthy learning environment has been an added benefit. Thanks to Missy, many families have felt loved and supported with each bag of food. She has changed lives for the better and has shown countless children that their lives matter.

All that Missy has accomplished has inspired me to also make a difference in my community. I volunteered with a group of children for her organization. We met in a barn and were placed at our own stations. We filled hundreds of boxes with food. It was a nice feeling knowing I was helping children who needed food in my area. My eyes have been opened to see there is a need for more people to step up and help children that are hungry.

Missy fulfilled her purpose here on Earth. She died in 2010 knowing that she brought peace and justice to her hometown and also her country! Countless lives have been changed from all that Missy has accomplished. She has shown the world that we can make a difference in any community we live in. We should all be inspired to sacrifice as Missy did. Her life leaves a legacy of bringing peace to hungry families, one backpack at a time.

Works Cited

Blessings in a Backpack. Blessings in a Backpack, 2019, <https://www.blessingsinabackpack.org>. Accessed 23 October 2019.

Online Conversation: Who Killed Berta Cáceres?

From the School of the Americas Watch

Join us on **Saturday, July 11, 2020 at 4pm EDT/1pm PDT** for an online conversation with Nina Lakhani, author of the recently released book *'Who Killed Berta Cáceres?: Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender's Battle for the Planet.'* To join us, please [register here](#).

'Who Killed Berta Cáceres?' paints a picture of Berta's extraordinary life, investigates her murder, and puts both into their broader and necessary context. In the book, Lakhani examines the role of US-backed special forces, militarization, and the use of counterinsurgency, interweaving this analysis with anecdotes from Berta's life. This pays a fitting tribute to Berta Cáceres herself, who had a remarkable ability to analyze structural oppression and global and regional policies and make them relevant to people's lives.

In this online conversation with journalist and author Nina Lakhani and Brigitte Gynther of School of the Americas



SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS WATCH

MEMORIA Y RESISTENCIA: CLOSE THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

Watch (SOAW), we will discuss 'Who Killed Berta Cáceres?' and the themes it touches on, including the role of US militarization and counterinsurgency. In addition to Nina's presentation, we will devote significant time to Q & A and discussion. *You are invited to submit questions ahead of time or during the event itself.* To submit questions ahead of time, put them in the registration form or write to Brigitte@soaw.org.

Save the date for Saturday, July 11, 2020 at 4pm EDT/1pm PDT and register here to join us for this important conversation!

You are invited to read one or more of the following resources before the event (though doing so is not a requirement!):

Excerpt from the book 'Who Killed Berta Cáceres?' (Published in *The Guardian*.)

'The remarkable life and legacy of Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres,' which has another excerpt from the book. (Published in *Salon*.)

'Who Killed Berta Cáceres: Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender's Battle of the Planet.' The book is available in Hardcopy and as an eBook from [Verso Books](#).

Overview of the Honduran legal cases for the murder of [Berta Cáceres](#).

Love Art & Music?
Want to help people in your community grow and prosper through music?

At Modesto Sound we empower youth with real-world job skills to create music and artistic media. This benefits everyone!

Consider joining our monthly board meetings where decisions are made on things such as outreach for our artistic media programs funded by individual grants and ones received from large organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council.

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Why

- Network in the community
- Help others
- Have fun

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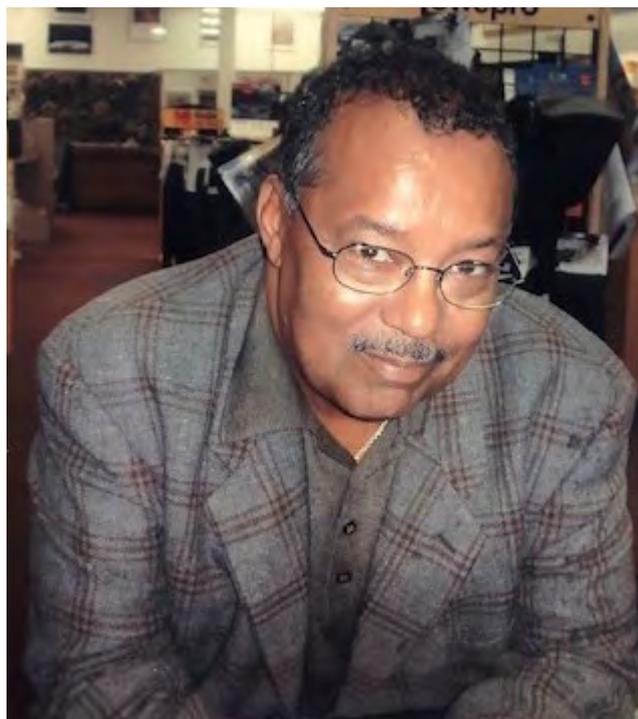
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IN MEMORIAM

Benjamin Edward Fitzpatrick, Jr.

April 7, 1942 – May 29, 2020

Generous, long-time supporter of the Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration.

George Floyd, May 25, 2020

Resident of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, died at the age of 46 while in the custody of Minneapolis police officers. Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, grew up in Houston, Texas. At the time of his death, he worked as a security guard at Conga Latin Bistro.

Breonna Taylor

June 5, 1993 - March 13, 2020

Shot to death in a police drug raid to the wrong house.

Rayshard Brooks

January 31, 1993 – June 13, 2020

Shot to death by Atlanta Police.

~ ~ ~

And many other men, women and children of color



A memorial was created outside of a market in Minneapolis to honor George Floyd shortly after his death. Photo: munshots on Unsplash



Racism is a public health crisis. We must confront it

By SARAH VOGEL, Vice President, Environmental Defense Fund Health

The last several weeks have seen an outpouring of anger, sadness, and demands for justice. While the COVID-19 crisis threatens health and economic stability globally, racism and injustice persist like a deadly plague across our country. At EDF, **we are demanding** not only justice, but reform and equity, to end the long history of abuse arising from the same cause: racism.

This moment must be a turning point.

We know far too well that Black Americans are disproportionately impacted by toxic pollution and suffer the health impacts—from **air pollution** that causes heart and lung diseases to **lead in water** and housing that harms children's brain development. Communities of color are more likely to be surrounded by freeways, live adjacent to industrial facilities and Superfund sites, to be un- or underinsured, to work in high-risk, low paying jobs, and to suffer from the stress and trauma of racism. All of these conditions have real biological impacts, the cumulative effects of which contribute to health inequities.

COVID-19 has magnified these long-standing health disparities. From Louisiana to New York City to Detroit to the Bay Area, communities of color are suffering far more from this disease and dying in alarming numbers.

For far too long these health inequities have persisted. EDF has worked since our founding to protect the public from toxic chemicals and pollution, but we haven't done nearly enough to improve the lives of those most impacted.

We know that we must change how we do our work and who we do our work with and for. We are committed to that change.

As we stop, listen and learn, we want to share with you some resources on environmental health and justice.

Foundational writing about environmental justice: A landmark 1987 report from the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice that found "three out of every five Black and Hispanic Americans live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites." See also the 20-year update to the report.

The Principles of Environmental Justice: 17 principles developed in 1991 by members of the first People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

Robert Bullard's seminal 1993 book, "Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots." Bullard is a key leader in this movement, often described as the father of environmental justice.

Breath to the People: A 2020 report from the Environmental Integrity Project and United Church of Christ that found over one third of toxic air pollution emissions across the country come from just 100 facilities—the "The Toxic 100," that have at least 250 people living within 1 mile.

The Political Determinants of Health: A book from Daniel Dawes on the roots of health inequities. Dawes is the Director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine.

Videos:

Peggy Shepard, co-founder and executive director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice as well as EDF Board Member, takes to the TEDx stage to describe environmental justice and "sacrifice zones."

A Brief History of Environmental Justice: 3-minute back-grounder from the investigative journalists at ProPublica.

EPA's 2013 video series for the 20th anniversary of President Clinton's signing of Executive Order 12898, the first federal action on environmental justice in the country. See conversations with Mildred McClain (Executive Director, The Harambee House/ Citizens for Environmental Justice), Dr. Beverly Wright (Executive Director, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice), Reggie Harris (EPA Region 3 Environmental Justice Coordinator), and more.

Recent news articles connecting racial equity and environmental justice:

Climate scientist Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's Washington Post op-ed, "I'm a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet"

Gizmodo: [Pollution is Racial Violence](#)

NBC: [Why 'I can't breathe' is resonating with environmental justice activists](#)

Beyond Police Reform: Why We Must Transform Pervasive Systems of Economic and Carceral Injustice

In a nation that says it “cannot breathe,” we must reach deep down for fundamental change.

By **Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II and Saru Jayaraman**

This piece is a commentary, part of [The Appeal's](#) collection of opinion and analysis.

Since video emerged of George Floyd crying, “I can’t breathe” while Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin choked him to death with his knee, the world has erupted in public protests challenging systemic racism. While the vast majority of those marching across the country—black, white, brown, Native and Asian; gay, straight and trans—have been nonviolent in their public outcry, instances of looting and vandalism have elicited calls for “law and order” from President Trump and his Administration. After calling on law enforcement to “dominate” during a news conference, Trump walked through a park that had been cleared of non-violent protesters by tear gas and rubber bullets and posed triumphantly with a Bible in his hand.

Just as Southern politicians during the civil rights movement tried to turn public attention from the demand for equal justice to concerns about “law and order” and so-called traditional religious values, Trump and his enablers seem determined in their resolve to shift the nation’s focus away from the systemic injustices that deeply divide our society.

The United States, past and present, is built upon a foundation of laws and institutions designed to exploit the labor of Black people as much as possible while constraining their liberty.

But it is no coincidence that George Floyd was Black, nor that he was an unemployed restaurant worker. Just as Black Americans are the majority of the victims of police violence, Black and brown people make up a disproportionate percentage of low-wage service workers who have been disproportionately impacted as US unemployment numbers have risen past 40 million during the pandemic. For Black Americans, unemployment insurance is sadly a lot like the police — supposedly put in place to help people, but in reality often causing widespread and unchecked harm.

The United States, past and present, is built upon a foundation of laws and institutions designed to exploit the labor of Black people as much as possible while constraining their liberty. In fact, labor and liberty have long been opposing polarities in the American project. When the Emancipation Proclamation supposedly freed Black Americans in 1863, two institutions were immediately put in place to ensure

big corporations could continue profiting off of free Black labor — the prison industrial complex and the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers. Industries, especially the restaurant industry, that resented suddenly having to pay Black workers, embraced the idea of workers being paid through customer tips and eventually won a carve out in the nation’s first minimum wage laws creating a sub-minimum wage for restaurant workers that remains in effect today. The federal sub-minimum wage for restaurant workers is \$2.13 an hour. Tips are supposed to make up the difference, but don’t — and so in addition to customers inadequately subsidizing restaurant owners, our tax dollars do too, as restaurant workers rely on food stamps at twice the rate of other industries.

Meanwhile, the history of policing in the United States is also deeply tied to the exploitation of Black workers. Early on, policing expanded to protect the interests of white slave owners in quelling slave strikes and uprisings. In the wake of emancipation, laws were enacted across the United States implicitly criminalizing freed Blacks, who once incarcerated were then hired out to corporations through convict leasing programs. In fact, anti-loitering laws used by many local police forces as a justification for cracking down on protesters have their origins in these Jim Crow-era regulations. Meanwhile, through convict leasing, penal systems were paid, but the incarcerated workers were not. And like the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers and loitering laws, a version of convict leasing remains

Indeed the exploitation of Black and low-wage workers in the United States was so patently unjust that at the turn of the last century that, even in the face of repressive policing, workers threatened to revolt. Which led to the creation of unemployment insurance as yet another way to mislead and manipulate workers into low-wage or no-wage work. Unemployment insurance was designed to relieve the pressure workers were putting on America’s brand of exploitative capitalism, not as a release valve for the pressure that capitalism was actually putting on workers. In fact, unemployment insurance has always been hard to qualify for and inadequate, forcing Americans to often work in low-wage jobs in order to feed their families and save their homes.

During an unprecedented economic crisis, with unemployment rates surpassing those during the Great Depression, an analysis conducted by One Fair Wage shows that, on average, states are rejecting 44% of unemployment claims. This statistic is more like 60% for tipped service workers, who are being told that their subminimum wage plus tips is too little to meet minimum thresholds to qualify for benefits. And now, hundreds of thousands of tipped workers are being asked to return to work for the tipped workers’ subminimum wage at a time when tips have dramatically declined — according to some employers, by as much as 75%. The system seems ripe for another such potential revolt by workers — and the correct response from Congress would be to act boldly to resolve historical structural inequities through much-needed universal policies rather than relief programs that perpetuate

the problem — a Paycheck Guarantee rather than feeding a broken unemployment insurance system; universal health care; universal health and safety protections, paid leave and hazard pay for all workers; and, of course, One Fair Wage — a full livable minimum wage for all workers with tips on top. Meanwhile, states, including New York and many others, should pass policies like One Fair Wage now to address structural and racial inequities and to help build momentum toward Congress doing so as well.

If the last Great Depression led to the passage of important laws, like the minimum wage, that left some workers out, this Great Depression should similarly put forward bold universal policy but also put equity at its center. As protesters said then, we need to say now: It’s time to fight, not starve.

While we don’t yet know all the sources of disruption and distraction within the protests that have swept the nation, their impetus is clear. Four police officers abused their office to choke the life out of George Floyd. Millions of Americans who saw the video immediately responded by taking the streets to demand an end to the systemic racism that has trampled too many for far too long. Yes, we must radically transform policing in America. But we cannot stop there. We must transform the pervasive systems of economic and carceral injustice that are choking our common life. American democracy cannot breathe. Only by acting together can we save our common life.

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Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II is national president and senior lecturer of Repairers of the Breach. His latest book is *The Third Reconstruction: How A Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*. Follow him on Twitter: @RevDrBarber.

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The Appeal <https://theappeal.org/>: “The Appeal is a non-profit media organization that produces original journalism about criminal justice that is focused on the most significant drivers of mass incarceration, which occur at the state and local level.”

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Racism and Slavery

By JOAQUIN ZALDIVAR

The blatant killing of George Floyd has rekindled the long dormant malaise of racism that has haunted our country since its inception. For years this evil has been smoldering, mostly dormant, being swept under the rug whenever someone's words or actions brought out the embarrassing subject. Denial and lack of acknowledgment have been the rule up until now. The smoldering malaise or vague feeling the something is wrong has erupted once again and will continue until it has been dealt with and we evolve to eliminate the ancient fear of another fellow human being of another skin color or a different physical appearance. We are at a critical moment, a dangerous opportunity, to right a wrong or continue to have "law and order" as our President has asked us to do, dealing with a symptom of our problem rather than the cause.

Where did this evil racism originate? Racism is used to justify political, economic or social domination by one particular race. Our nation was built upon a foundation based on slavery, racism, and bigotry. Last summer I visited Monticello in Virginia. From a hill, as far as the eye could see, most of the beautiful, green rolling hills surrounding the estate was land grabbed by Thomas Jefferson's greedy and often violent ancestors. Among his distant neighbors were George Washington, James Madison and James Monroe. In fact, seven of our first twelve presidents were from Virginia, and three quarters of them were from the South, plantation owners, "New World Lords of the Manor." What else did they have in common? They were all slave owners. They needed a cheap source of labor to grow the tobacco, sugar cane and later cotton that made them extremely wealthy. Much of the wealth and power in the Americas came from the fortunes made from growing and providing a highly addictive alkaloid of the tobacco plant — nicotine. Sugar cane was also grown to make rum, a popular intoxicant of the time, and to sweeten the very bland diet that most poor people endured.

The slave owning Founding Fathers promulgated the institution of slavery. By 1800, approximately one fifth or 20% of the population were slaves. Slavery has existed throughout the world since time immemorial whenever a need existed for cheap labor. The Sumerians were the first known

people to use slaves. Among the ancient Greeks, it has been estimated, slaves comprised 90% of the population. During the Roman Empire slaves made up about 70% of the population, consisting of people conquered in war, raids, trade and debtors who became indentured servants. The slave trade had been dominated by Arabian countries in the Mediterranean area. With the rise of navies and international commerce, the Western Europeans became the greatest slave traders in history. The English Adventure Trading Company had used the labor of black slaves to establish the sugar cane industry in the West Indies during the seventeenth century. The American plantation system in the British colonies in North America soon had slaves working in the tobacco fields. The profits were unprecedented. Soon other so-called trading companies were established to exploit other people and resources around the world. The profits on both sides of the Atlantic resulted in the building of many great fortunes and manor homes in England. African slaves were worth five times as much in the West Indies as they were in the Mediterranean and thus, they were crammed into ships such that even if a fifth of them died on the journey, the trading companies still made a profit.

Slaves became valuable assets and such valuable property had to be protected. Many slaves naturally rebelled or tried to run away. Rebellions were feared. Cruel military force was used to crush these rebellions such as that of Nat Turner in 1831. To deal with runaways, however, a new role emerged. In the absence of legal authority, armed citizens became the law, acting often as both judge and jury to maintain what they and our President call "law and order." Lynching, named for a vigilante named William Lynch, became commonplace. Such abuse has been going on for 400 years. Gregory and Travis McMichael who hunted down Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia recently were acting in the vigilante tradition. These vigilantes morphed into today's police force, where some members are still acting as vigilantes today. It has been a tradition to keep Black people down in our country. It was "scientifically" justified. Darwin's work led some people to the idea that the darker races were the "white man's burden." It has largely been covered up by the police unions and the legal justice system. Today with the modern video technology, police brutality beginning with Rodney King in the 1990's through today's George Floyd murder, we can no longer deny

such brutality. During this crisis we must use this dangerous opportunity to go beyond denial and to use words to find a remedy for this evil.

Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
Cause you find its kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

— Langston Hughes

American Heartbreak

I am the American heartbreak—
The rock on which Freedom
Stumped its toe—
The great mistake
That Jamestown made
Long ago.

— Langston Hughes



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Green Tips for a Green Planet: COVID-19 or No COVID-19 - Go hyper-local, grow your own food, share the fruits of your labor

By, **KEITH HIGHLET, Guest Green Tips writer, Native Modestan, local activist**

COVID-19 is igniting emotions over countless concerns about the economy, human rights, equality, and the environment. I am led to ask, “What single thing can we do to potentially address all of these issues at once? How we can we act locally to help our families, friends, neighbors, coworkers and ourselves long past the immediate health crisis?”

We can grow our own – food, that is. If you’re thinking of changing up anything still in your yard during this COVID-19 ‘reset’, consider adding some food-producing vegetation. It could bear fruit for your own future and for everyone around you. Going hyper-local is the ultimate environmentally responsible thing to do and living in the greater Modesto/Stanislaus area is a natural place to do it.

I’m fortunate to live in a home with plenty of yard space. I’ve long maintained a small herb garden as well as some inherited citrus trees. My little ‘urban farm’ often grows more than my family can eat, so I deliver the extras to my coworkers when I harvest the winter citrus fruits – lemons, grapefruit, and oranges. I am sure many others in the area do the same.

Always wanting to add more to the abundance, COVID-19

inspired my family to add an apple, pear, plum, peach, nectarine, and fig tree, plus new citrus and grapes vines adorning a tall trellis. Many of the trees are dwarf-sized and planted in pots. In addition we are growing vegetable garden favorites - tomatoes, squash, lettuce and zucchini.

A full family affair, my mom long wanted to get her designated vegetable planter reconfigured. She had an aging almond tree that needed removal, which was replaced with new dwarf citrus trees, and my sisters signed on as well. One sister, leading the grow-your-own parade, was already in the process of transforming her backyard into an oasis of potted planters. I helped furnish some of the soil and dwarf trees to fill these up. She’s really diggin’ it. Another sister took up my extra of my grape vines and placed them in a large planter by her pool. We’re all in this together.

The cool part about growing food in this region is that much of it can be done with drip irrigation; it’s easy to stay water-wise if you don’t have proper irrigation in place already. I’m not anti-sprinkler though if that is what is needed for your situation.

I know that planting certain vegetation to help propagate bugs and bees has been in vogue for some time – and we have

some plants in the yard for that purpose too – but the even higher calling would be planting edibles. If you don’t have a large yard space, a variety of fruits and vegetables can be grown in large pots on a patio, and some completely in shade.

With our global food chain system under stress, the time is ripe for this to happen. It has become a bit of a luxury to have fresh fruit and vegetables in our own yard now, especially considering how difficult it has become to find certain items at grocery stores lately, as we search behind masks and face-shields in public for the time being.

I’m not ditching shopping for many fresh foods at local stores or farmer’s markets which continue to provide produce. I simply don’t have the time or expertise to cultivate.

Gardening from my experience is good for the soul, and it’s a chance to be outdoors doing something useful. Growing food is just all the more productive. It’s educational too; my kids are active participants, and they benefit greatly as we share in the process.

Growing one’s own food cuts across all identity divides – race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, and nationality. None of that matters here. Nobody is prevented from watering some seeds in a pot of soil. Almost anyone can do it.

Save Del Puerto Canyon!

By **DAVID KELLER, Save Del Puerto Canyon Vice President**

Save Del Puerto Canyon is a grass-roots community organization started by Patterson educator, Shivaugn Alves in early 2020 to study, educate and advocate for the preservation of Del Puerto Canyon.

Our primary objective is to oppose and defeat a large agricultural dam that would inundate Del Puerto Canyon. If proponents are successful, this monstrosity would sit hundreds of feet looming above the City of Patterson. It would represent a perennial, ominous threat to lives and property of some 30,000 residents and business park employees. According to recent maps, there is a one in ten thousand chance the dam would fail and drown the City of Patterson with flood waters up to 15-feet deep. No escape would be possible in this catastrophic scenario.

Del Puerto Canyon is home to important archeological sites, including a prehistoric bedrock milling station. Because of its pristine character, this site qualifies as eligible to be listed on both National and State registers of Historic places. Northern Valley Yokuts called the canyon home and sacred tribal sites would be destroyed by the project. Del Puerto Canyon contains prime habitat for many special avian and terrestrial species including the federally listed endangered species, the San Joaquin Valley Kit Fox. It is also home to federal and state threatened and vulnerable species such as the Tiger Salamander, Red Legged Frog, and the California Golden Eagle.

The proponents and primary beneficiaries of damming Del Puerto Canyon are the San Joaquin River Exchange Partners. Based in Los Banos, the water authority oversees one of the

largest irrigation districts in the world. They would be entitled to 75% of water deliveries much of which is destined as far south as Fresno County. Water to the project would be sourced from the already depleted San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta, then delivered into the dam via the Delta Mendota Canal. To a lesser extent, Patterson’s Del Puerto Water District would benefit. Traveling south on Interstate 5, powerful motives become apparent. An international exchange of California water for boundless almond plantings.

Like frenzied Water Buffalo stampeding over a cliff, proponents have trampled through nuanced environmental processes, avoiding a truthful vetting of the project’s ruinous consequences. Most glaring is the helter-skelter treatment of fair process and public outreach to Patterson’s migrant farm worker community. Migrant farm laborers have been inseparably linked and woven into the community of Patterson for over 100 years. The children of migrant farm workers attend local schools. They purchase homes to raise their families. They are members and leaders of our churches and are fundamental to the vitality of our local economy.

In spite of trading back-breaking labor for dreams of a better life, migrant farm workers and their families are ignored and marginalized by project proponents and elected representatives. Public meeting notices and literature were not translated into Spanish. Spanish speaking interpreters have not been provided at public meetings.

Despite the persistent clamor of scores of citizens, the Patterson City Council has not seen fit to take a sobering look at the project. They remain silent. They refuse to agendize the project, hold public hearings, receive public testimony and ultimately, take a position.

Most disappointingly, in an era where President Trump remains unrestrained in gutting environmental protections, it is disheartening that our Congressman, Josh Harder provides the spark for this project with taxpayer dollars. He continues to be a leading advocate to dam Del Puerto Canyon.

Save Del Puerto Canyon and our partners will have limited time to file legal challenges in both Stanislaus Superior and Federal District Courts once the proponents have delivered their final environmental studies. These reports are expected sometime this year, so time is of the essence to show your support to Save Del Puerto Canyon.

Please visit our website at www.savedelpuertocanyon.org. Contribute to our GoFundMe Site or join the cause by signing our petition, contacting and writing letters to your elected representatives and newspapers.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/463664377903706/>
<https://pattersonprogressivealliance.wordpress.com/savedelpuertocanyon@gmail.com>

Draft Environmental Impact Report: <https://delpuerto-canyonreservoir.com/assets/pdf/reports/Del-Puerto-Canyon-Reservoir-Draft-EIR.pdf>

Our group is partnered with local, state, and national environmental groups: Friends of the River, Center for Biological Diversity, The Sierra Club, Save Mount Diablo, The Nature Conservancy, California Native Plant Society, Central Sierra Audubon Society, Sacramento River Council, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Fly Fishers International-Northern California Council, Fly Fishers-Davis California, Save California Salmon, California Water Impact Network, North Coast Rivers Alliance, Southern California Watershed Alliance, California Water Research and the Valley Improvement Project.

Proust in Poetry

Channeling Proust

Channeling Proust - at Musée Carnavalet, Paris
 Good morning, friends. Early as though it may be.
 I'm in my bedroom, where you might expect to find me,
 writing the night away, for you to later read.

Two Madeleines

Two madeleines,
 from the same batch,
 Balancing an act
 on a fulcrum of great knowledge

Which is dark and which is light?
 In which shall we take a bite? Which is right?
 If only I had a proper bedpost
 upon which to hang something tonight

Ben Joseph here actually prefers these –
 Yes, the ones dipped in dark, not fair, xocolatl
 Now from a Chocolatier you may find housed tidily
 Inside that famous Congo Brussels – square

That cocoa hue only looks like tar
 For it's been transported the world through
 Thanks to you, oil: by plane, train, and automobile –
 Always afar
 But days do change
 And a new one is not far
 Surely now, you can tell,
 I should get some sleep – for tomorrow

Oh, but that light madeleine
 You appear so simple and sweet
 I'll dream of you
 And in time we'll soon meet

The Big Five Computationalists

Bill only appears to be soft because of the micro size.
 Zuck's hormonal platform is for us to mind-FB each other.
 Each time we engage, WE use IT, and IT uses US.
 Special thanks to distanced Larry and Sergey for providing
 us with a handy research tool. Although thanks may not be
 the correct term. Math rules. It's a numbers game.
 Mr. Jobs, we're still eating from your forbidden fruit.
 Bezos? Well, there goes every thing. Everything.

A Type

Mind knows.

A philosopher knows some, but not all.

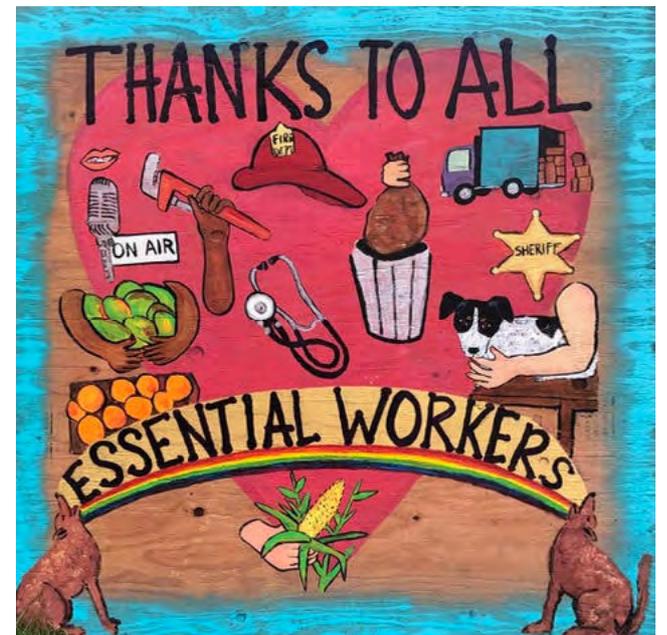
We must try to say things we wish not to regret.

Actions may speak louder than words, but words still
 matter.

I may type on a tablet.

Endurance

time lasts
 yes, and it
 marches on
 and on and on
 anon
 there's just no
 turning back
 the clock
 on time



Art by Vickisa, Point Reyes Station CA



KEITH HIGHMET: Native Modestan, LGBTQ-
 Environmental-Human Rights-Local Government
 Activist, and Now - Poet



“Glad to meet ya, Rosie!”

By ELAINE GORMAN

A sunny and warm winter day in late February seemed perfect for our next car-free adventure. Since Rosie the Riveter/ WWII Home Front National Historical Park has been on my “list” for many years, but I haven’t relished driving to the Bay Area, I researched rail/bike options. A senior Amtrak ticket from Modesto is around \$17 (one way), quite a bargain for the 2 hour ride.

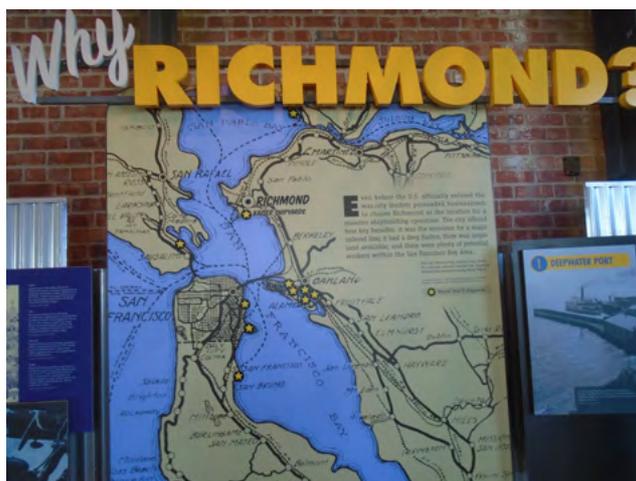
While waiting on the platform with my bike, I struck up a conversation with Curtis, a volunteer host for Amtrak. He was dressed to the nines in an official Amtrak uniform. Curtis had a wealth of train lore and info to share with me, and since the train was 20 min. late, it was fun to chat with him. When the northwest bound 8:03 AM San Joaquin arrived, I had to heft the bike up to the baggage car at the end, then locate Randy on board.

Grabbing my customary cup of Joe, we soon picked up Paul in Stockton. We had plenty of room to spread out in the car and enjoyed the views as we travelled through the Delta, and then to the SF Bay.

Hopping off the train in Richmond, we cycled on city streets about 3 miles to Lucretia Edwards Park on Marina Bay. We read the interpretive plaques about the various shipyards while standing in the “footprints” of shipyard workers, looking across the bay.

At the adjacent Rosie the Riveter Visitor Center (free admission!), we locked up our bikes and spent about an hour looking at the exhibits and displays and watched a short film about the importance of Richmond in the war effort and the diverse WWII work force. Women in particular played an integral role. People from all over the US moved to Richmond, and other cities along the Bay, looking for job opportunities and a better life. One of the quotes that impressed me the most was “Hitler was the one who got us out of the white folks’ kitchen.”

San Francisco gal pal Lynne showed up, so the four of us wandered next door to the former Ford assembly plant to enjoy lunch at Assemble Restaurant. The weather was sunny and warm as we cycled south along the SF Bay Trail. It is a dedicated paved bike/walking trail that hugs the shoreline. We passed by the Richmond Marina, parks, Rosie the Riveter Memorial, wildlife areas, and interpretive plaques. There seemed to be hordes of people out enjoying the day, even though it was mid-week. The views across the bay were



Left: Randall Brown. Right: Paul Plathe

spectacular.

The trail is under construction at Golden Gate Fields race track, so Paul and I turned around to investigate other areas of Richmond, while Randy continued south towards Berkeley. Using Paul’s magic phone for navigation, we rode on surface streets and the Lillie Mae Jones Trail/community garden to Atchison Village. This government-funded subdivision was built in 1941 for defense industry workers in the Kaiser shipyards. It is now a mutual home corporation, and has a central park, winding streets, and an office/community center. We chatted with one of the residents, who seemed very happy to live there, and we visited the office.

With an hour left before we needed to board the 5:55 PM return train, we located a Mexican restaurant and had tacos



and beverages. Randy met up with us at the station which was crowded with commuters, and the train was mostly full. I was happy to find a comfy seat as my own seat was fairly sore from our 15-20 mile ride. It grew dark as we headed southeast to the Valley.

Back in Modesto, I tossed my bike in the back of the Prius and headed home to dinner. Another fun, interesting, and beautiful day, mostly spent outdoors, and without relying on our automobiles.

<http://www.rosietheriveter.org/visit-discover/park-sites/wartime-housing-atchison-village>

<https://baytrail.org>

<https://www.nps.gov/rori/index.htm>

Listen to Local Programming at KCBP 95.5 FM

Alert: Chris Murphy is coming to KCBP! Stay tuned!

Arts of the San Joaquin Valley - Mondays, 8:00pm; Tuesdays 9:00 am & Wednesdays 8:00 pm. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp> and on Spotify

Women of the Valley - 8:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays 9:00am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

The Peril and the Promise - Wednesdays 9:30 pm; Saturdays 2:30 pm; Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp-peril>

Modesto Sound - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) Season 1 - Wednesdays 11:30am, & Sundays 11:00am & 5:30pm

Modesto Area Music Show – Mondays 5:00pm Fridays 9:00pm & Saturdays 6:00pm

Where We Were – Fascinating local history with Felton Daniels. Monday & Thursdays 9am. Friday 8:30pm; Sunday at 11:00am.

Freak Radio with Christian E. Boyett, 6pm Thursdays. Replays Saturdays, 9pm & Tuesdays 11pm.

Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

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Democracy Now! - 7:00pm

Flashpoint Magazine - 10:00pm



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How Much Does California Spend on Law Enforcement, the Criminal Legal System, and Incarceration?

By **SCOTT GRAVES** and **CHRIS HOENE**,
California Budget & Policy Center

Recent acts of police brutality against Black Americans and greater public outcry over the continued abuse and deaths of people across Black communities have amplified calls for defunding, abolishing, and reimagining local policing. This also comes with growing awareness that police violence has disproportionately fatal consequences for Black men and women, and Black transgender women in particular. The calls to action involve significantly transforming the mission and structure of local law enforcement, divesting from local law enforcement in its current forms, and reinvesting the freed-up funding into community-building capacities that would also seek to end racial profiling and police brutality against Black people and other people of color.

What's more, over-policing of communities of color along with harsh state sentencing laws and local district attorneys' power to inequitably and unjustly pursue criminal charges continue to drive California's over-reliance on incarceration as well as the disparate treatment of people of color in the justice system. This leaves Black, Latinx, undocumented Californians, and many other families of color beholden to an overly harsh and unfair criminal justice system that

has spanned generations and leaves these families unable to provide or build economic security for their households.

As calls for restructuring and reforming local policing and reducing incarceration intensify, what is at stake in terms of state and local spending in California? Data from the Department of Finance and the State Controller's Office show that:

California's 482 cities and 58 counties spent more than \$20 billion from all revenue sources on city police and county sheriff's departments as recently as 2017-18 (the most recent statewide data available). Cities spend nearly three times more on police than on housing and community development. Counties spend more of their general revenue on sheriff's departments than on social services by a substantial margin.

The financial outlay goes beyond local law enforcement. The state of California and its cities and counties spend roughly \$50 billion annually on local law enforcement, the criminal legal system, and incarceration in state prisons and county jails. In comparison, this spending is about three times what California spends from its General Fund on higher education (community colleges, CSU, and UC) and is roughly equivalent to state General Fund support for K-12 education.

The negative effects of prioritizing spending on systems of punishment and incarceration fall disproportionately on Black Californians and other people of color. For instance, Black and Latinx Californians are incarcerated at much higher rates than other Californians and are overrepresented in state prisons.

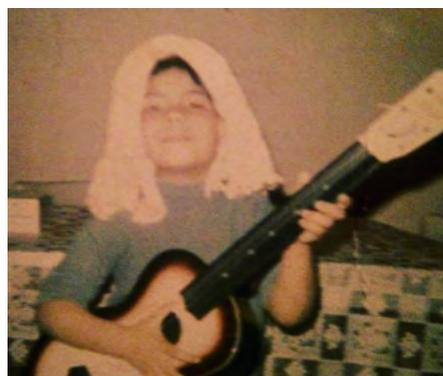
Budgets are about values. As state and local leaders craft their budgets for the upcoming fiscal year, they also can address recent and longstanding patterns of police brutality against Black people and other people of color. This should include asking whether spending approximately \$50 billion per year on law enforcement, the criminal legal system, and incarceration accurately reflects our state's values.

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

California Budget & Policy Center, 1107 9th Street, Suite 310, Sacramento, CA 95814. (916) 444-0500. Contact@calbudgetcenter.org

Patty Castillo Davis: A Voice for Social Justice

continued from page 1



ing in Ceres. This would have been in 1981. I begged my parents to let me go and see what was happening, and then to write about it, but they would have none of it. But my parents planted the

seeds in me to fight for social justice. The fact that I'm living in Ceres now and we're still talking about racism at the level we are is really shocking. It's very telling how deeply rooted racism is and how we think we've made so many strides toward equality, but, in reality, we haven't come very far at all."

That passion for social justice - and an equally deep empathy for others and their struggles - runs like a river through all of Ms. Castillo Davis' stirring music. "My music is very transparent," she explains. "If anyone listens to my music, they can pretty much know who I am and the experiences I've had in my life. It's almost too personal at times. I write a lot about women's issues, about domestic violence, not because I've experienced that trauma but I know a lot of people who have. A lot of times I write a song because it's very freeing, and because I'm trying to educate. I have a song called 'Music and my Horse,' (<https://www.facebook.com/pcenterprises/videos/2788987898039485/>) and it tells a stark story about domestic violence, but when I play it with my band people are dancing to it. But if they listen to it later, maybe they'll reexamine it then, and think about the lyrics."

A two-time winner of the Modesto Area Music Association's Awards, (first time for Best Unplugged/Singer Songwriter; second time for Best Americana Band) Ms. Castillo Davis and her Patty Castillo Davis Band are much beloved and sought after throughout our area. Backed by three excellent musicians (Joe Barretta, guitar, David Rogers, drums, and Tim Allen, bass and keyboards), she wanted to make a definite statement when she chose the name of the group. "I believe that women can fill a venue, and that women can be the headliners for bands. I made it my mission to do those things, and to speak about the gender gap," Ms. Castillo Davis points out. "The band is very focused on my influences and original music. The gentlemen are the perfect fit because they know me and what my music means. I don't have to tell them what to do - they just know. That's why we work so well together as a band."

Whether it's organizing a coat drive during the holidays for the clients of Interfaith Ministries of Modesto or pitching in where she can with women's shelters, or working closely with Peer Recovery Art Project to help end the stigma of mental illness, Ms. Castillo Davis is there for the community. People know they can count on her. Not surprisingly, the Stanislaus County Commission for Women recognized her as one of Stanislaus County's Outstanding Women in 2019. "That award was very special to me because music is not always appreciated in that way. But I love to use music to bridge gaps and help people."

Of course, the current nationwide movement protesting against systemic racism and oppression in the wake of the police killings of George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks has been much on Ms. Castillo Davis' mind of late: "These terribly sad stories where a person of color has died at the hands of the police are so jarring - but rather than being sad for a

day or a short period of time, there's something about this that has caught fire, that has everyone seeing themselves, that has everyone saying let's examine our conscious and figure out where we are, We're just so tired. We just want to empower each other and put people on our shoulders, and lift them up that ladder where we are supposed to be in the first place. That place where we all belong."

Patty Castillo Davis can be seen regularly at the Modesto Certified Farmers Market. She performs with both the Patty Castillo Davis Band, and a Gathering of the Vibes (with Steve Ashman, Claudia Streeter, Gary Nelson, and the members of her other band).





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

JULY/AUGUST 2020

Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., Science Community Center, Rm. 115, MJC West Campus. Free; \$2 parking fee. MJC IS CLOSED.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science). Free, engaging community science programs. Fridays, 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. MJC IS CLOSED.

VIRTUAL FILMS are available at the State Theatre! Visit <https://thestate.org/virtual-screenings/>

WED: VIGIL: NO VIGIL in July & August McHenry & J St., 4:00-5:00 pm.

LOOKING AHEAD

6 AUG THURS: Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck at Legion Park, 6:00 PM. Bring food, drinks to share as we converse and rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. Bring your own table service. Social distancing guidelines will be followed. Please wear a mask. The evening concludes with a candlelight vigil on the banks of the Tuolumne River.

6 AUG THURS: Tri-Valley CAREs Hiroshima event at Lawrence Livermore Lab. Speakers include Daniel Ellsberg. 8 am. Details forthcoming. Visit Tri-Valley CAREs, for information, <http://www.trivalleycares.org/>

REGULAR MEETINGS

CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.

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.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

MONDAYS

Suicide Loss Support Group: Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, andrews6863@charter.net.

Monday Morning Funstrummers Beginner Ukulele Lessons. Modesto Senior Center. 10:45am to Noon. Free Scenic and Bodem.

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.

Silver & Gold Support group for our senior LGBT communities' unique concerns and experiences. Come to a group that will understand and accept you where you are. For LGBT folks over 50 yrs. old. Every Monday at 3 pm to 4 pm at the various locations in Modesto. Information: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: stevencullen@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAYS

Teen Tuesdays every week from June-August, 2-5 pm., Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St. Peer Support, Games & movies. Safe space for teens to socialize, work together on projects, and learn about LGBTQ history. Each week will be a little different as we want YOU (youths) to guide the direction this group will go!" Info: Maggie Strong, Political Activist Director/ GSA Liaison, mstrong@mopride.org, 209-284-0999.

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am - 11 am

NAACP Meeting, King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; email: naacp.branch1048@gmail.com

Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/24765549018387/>

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.

Tuesday Evening Funstrummers Ukulele Jam. Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., Donation. 209-505-3216, www.funstrummers.com.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

WEDNESDAYS

Ongoing meditation class based on Qi Gong Principals. Practice a 3 Step Guided Meditation Process I have been doing for over a decade. Fun and Easy. JOIN ME! Donations accepted but optional. Call 209.495.6608 or email Orlando Arreygue, CMT RYT, orlando@arreygue.com

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: merced-board@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/>

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: Anne, 521-6977.

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

THURSDAYS

CA10 Progressive Coalition Monthly Meeting, third Thursdays. Inclusive group of progressive activists to share resources, ideas, and information in order to support all the

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), 4:00-5:00 pm. CANCELLED. Info: 529-5750.

MEDIA: Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the "Voice of the Valley" also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

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

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace/Life Center. Meetings TBA.

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

great organizing work happening in the Valley! Feel free to invite trusted allies. Meet-up and social hour: 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. Meeting: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Follow group on Facebook. Info: Tim Robertson, tim@nvlf.org

Laughter Yoga, Every other Thursday at The Bird's Nest, 422 15th St., Modesto. The dates are February & March 7th & 21st, April 4th & 18th, May 2nd & 16th. 5:30pm-6:30pm. \$15.00 per class. To register, call or text Nicole, 209-765-8006 or visit www.nicoleottman.com

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am - 11 am

IMCV Grupo de Meditación en Español, cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172.

LGBTQ+ Collaborative Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless noted. Evening meeting, 1pm to 2 pm, Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: John Aguirre at cell/text - (559) 280-3864/ e-mail: jpmadest@gmail.com

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, Postponed until further notice. <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 - 5:00 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>

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

Game Night and Potluck, third Friday of each month. For 21+ only. Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto. 7 pm to 10 pm. Info: John Aguirre, (559) 280-3864; jpmadest@gmail.com

Friday Morning Funstrummers Band Rehearsal. Donation 9:15am to Noon. College Avenue United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 209-505-3216, www.funstrummers.com.

Latino Emergency Council (LEC) 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Conclio, 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: 300-4253. 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, 3rd Fridays at noon, 1314 H St., Modesto 95354. Questions? Yamilet Valladolid, yamiletv@hotmail.com

SATURDAY

12-Step/Buddhist Meeting starts with a 30-minute meditation and then open discussion. Held monthly every second Saturday, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto at the UUFSC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

Free Community Drum Circle every third Saturday, 3 pm, Deva Café, 1202 J. St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. <https://drum-love.com/>

Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. @Friends Coming of Age., 1203 Tully Rd., Ste. B., Modesto. Saturdays 8-9 am. FREE (donations accepted). Info: RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

Divine Feminine Gathering. Join us for a time of ritual, song and conversation as women come together to celebrate one another and the Divine among us and within us. 3rd Saturday of the month, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Stockton, CA. Contact Rev. Erin King, 209-815-0763, orkingenne@gmail.com

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabe Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of every month. Info: Kathy Haynes (209) 250-9961 or email kathyhaynesSEG@gmail.com

ONGOING

Great Valley Museum of Natural History: Classes for children. Museum exhibits and store open Tues. to Fri., 9 am to 4:30 pm. Info: 575-6196. Call for info about classes.

A.r.t.s. Educational Resource Center: All things recycled free arts materials for teachers, scout leaders, childcare, artists for their projects. Open M - F 8 to 4:30, 917 Oakdale Rd. Modesto, Media Center behind Ross Store. Volunteers needed. Info: 567-4516.

Central Valley Democratic Club. Monthly meetings: Modesto, Patterson, and Oakdale. For more information, call Neil Hudson, 847-0540.

Childrens Story Hours Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, WiggleWorms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Preschool StoryTime, Cuentos en español. Times vary. Info: http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtm

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. 630 Kearney Ave, Modesto. Mon-Sat., 9:00 AM - 6:00 pm. Closed Sunday. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org>

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.