



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
PEACE/LIFE
CENTER
PUBLICATION

MARCH, 2019
VOLUME XXVII, NO. 7

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson to speak at the 25th MLK Commemoration



The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration invites you to our 25th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration on Saturday, March 30, 2019. Dynamic lecturer, teacher and

author, **Dr. Michael Eric Dyson**, will be our speaker at Modesto Junior College's Performing Arts & Media Center, 435 College Ave. at 7:00 p.m.

Although Martin Luther King, Jr. died 51 years ago, his vision still uplifts and transforms countless people throughout the world. To keep that vision fresh and provocative locally, for the last twenty-four years a committee of community groups—the Modesto Peace/Life Center, the City of Modesto, Modesto Junior College, and California State University, Stanislaus have offered our community an inspiring Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration.

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Georgetown University sociology professor, ordained Baptist minister, New York Times contributing opinion writer, came from humble roots in Detroit to his present place as a world class intellectual, author of 19 books, and a prominent leader.

Dr. Dyson's honors include an American Book Award and two NAACP Image Awards. Ebony magazine cited him as one of the 100 most influential African Americans, and as

one of the 150 most powerful blacks in the nation. His 1994 book *Making Malcolm: The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X*, was named one of the most important African American books of the 20th century.

Dyson's latest book, *What Truth Sounds Like: RFK, James Baldwin and Our Unfinished Conversation About Race in America*, has been called "an incisive look at the roles of politicians, artists, intellectuals, and activists in confronting racial injustice and effecting change," and an "eloquent response to an urgent and still-unresolved dilemma."

ACTION: Help us bring Dr. Michael Eric Dyson to Modesto for the 25th Anniversary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration! This free event is wholly supported by donations like yours.



Sponsors at press time: City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College; Modesto Teachers Association; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Ed Fitzpatrick, Valley Lexus; College Ave. United Church of Christ; Rockwell, Kelly, Duarte & Urstoeger, LLP; Double Tree by Hilton. Moece Federal Credit Union; West Modesto King-Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative. *Sponsors needed!* Contact Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org to donate or co-sponsor.

Fallow Me to Water? Not Likely

By **ERIC CAINE**, *The Valley Citizen*

For the better part of thirty years, Modesto's Vance Kennedy has been trying to tell people we don't have enough water. Now in his mid-nineties, Kennedy is a retired hydrologist who received the highest possible service award from the Environmental Protection Agency when he was with the United States Geological Survey.

In an announcement bound to foment even more than the usual furor over water issues, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) just gave an official seal of approval to Kennedy's long-held claim. But the PPIC's conclusion—that we need to retire at least 500,000 acres of farmland to balance our water needs—is bound to result in howls of outrage up and down the San Joaquin Valley.

Nonetheless, the evidence couldn't be more obvious that we've gone beyond our limits in water consumption. First and foremost, consider groundwater. The new state requirement that we achieve sustainable groundwater basins by 2040 is ludicrous on

its face. The only groundwater basin in the entire San Joaquin Valley that isn't critically overdrafted is in Stanislaus County, and that aquifer has been in steady decline ever since the county's eastern foothills were planted in thousands of acres of almond orchards.

The PPIC is absolutely correct that we need to fallow hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland to achieve sustainability, but which farmers will take the hit? As it is, we send millions of acre feet of precious surface water south to corporate farmers who long ago tapped all the local surface and groundwater and continue to demand even more.

continued page 10

Modesto Peace/Life Center ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, March 16, 2019
720 13th ST., MODESTO

8:00 AM
Coffee and Conversation

8:30 AM
Business Meeting:
• Financial Report
• Committee Reports
• Nomination of Board Members

Discussion:
• Action plans, ideas and strategies

11:30 AM
Adjournment

For 49 years the Modesto Peace/Life Center has been a place for people concerned about peace, justice, equality, and a sustainable environment. Join us!

The Modesto Peace/Life Center invites you to THE PEACE ESSAY CONTEST AWARDS CEREMONY

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center
Modesto Junior College
West Campus

2201 Blue Gum Ave, Modesto

Top winners will read their essays!

READERS!

Sign-up for our e-edition!

Get the latest e-edition of Stanislaus Connections delivered right into your email box!

Can enlarge text to read more easily! Print out if desired!

To sign-up, send your email address to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org
If you do not have Adobe Reader, download it free from <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL	2
PEACE ESSAYS	3
PEACE ESSAY WINNER.	4
GREEN TIPS	5
CRISIS/PILGRIMAGE	6-7

COSTS OF WAR	8
GATHERING OF VOICES.	9
OPPORTUNITIES.	10
SUPPORTING DISASTER	11
CALENDAR	12

Modesto RecFest

Have Fun at Modesto RecFest

Join the Tuolumne River Trust for a variety of FREE family-friendly recreation opportunities in Legion Park in and along the Tuolumne River on Saturday, March 16 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Activities include: Paddling, Bike Rides, Fun Runs, Orienteering, Nature Walks, Fishing, Kite Flying, Disc Golf, Community Restoration Project, and More!

Bring your bikes, kites, fishing poles, and/or canoes – or use ours – and join in the fun! All activities will have two options: a guided tour or training at a specific time and meeting place, as well as on-going self-guided options. Details about each activity will be available at the registration table.

Snacks provided. Picnic lunches encouraged.

We need your help! If you would like to volunteer, please fill out this short form: <https://goo.gl/forms/arMbu-c0IzFQ6dkd13>

Event entrance, parking, registration and general information will be located at 1200 Tioga Drive. For a parking map, please click here.

Information: Meg Gonzalez, meg@tuolumne.org, (209) 236-0330.



Haven Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®

“You can’t really understand another person’s experience until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes”

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® events ask men to literally walk one mile in women’s high-heeled shoes. It’s not easy but it’s a playful opportunity to rally support in our community and raise awareness about the causes, effects, and remedies for sexual assault and domestic violence. This year we are extending the invitation, to walk, to the women of Stanislaus County. Registration for women will include event T-shirt, and swag bag, but not heels. As these are reserved for our male participants. Register by March 17th to be guaranteed a shirt and shoes.

April 6, 2019: Day of the Event
Check In (In front of Gallo Center, 1000 I St., Modesto) at 8:00 a.m.

Event Programming starts at 9:00 a.m.
After Party (Greens on Tenth) immediately after walk.
Register at <https://www.havenwalkamile.org/>
Questions: Contact: Joshua: (209) 524-4331, Hours: M - F 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Walk A Mile In Her Shoes®, presented by Mercedes Benz of Modesto and Modesto Subaru. To sponsor, visit <https://www.havenwalkamile.org/sponsors>

Haven Women’s Center of Stanislaus, 618 13th St., Modesto, CA 95354, info@havenwcs.org or 209-524-4331.



Transcend Transverse Conference

When: Friday, April 5, 2019

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location: CSU Stanislaus, Mary Stuart Rogers Building, 130. Parking: Lot 11.

This year’s focus is on transgender older adults and aging, diversity and intersectionality. The conference will feature a keynote speaker, panelists, workshops and vendors focused on providing knowledge and support for our older trans community.

The event is open to professionals, community leaders and community members who care about creating a safe and accepting environment for our trans community.

Details and Online Registration at <https://www.csustan.edu/transcend-transverse>

Be informed!

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

Come & Hear DR. MICHAEL ERIC DYSON!



Author, Teacher, Activist

SATURDAY, March 30, 2019

25th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration

Performing Arts & Media Center
Modesto Junior College, East Campus
435 College Ave., Modesto

- 6:00 p.m. - Doors Open
- 7:00 p.m. - Free program



City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College; Modesto Teachers Association; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Ed Fitzpatrick, Valley Lexus; College Ave. United Church of Christ; Rockwell, Kelly, Duarte & Urstoeger, LLP; Double Tree by Hilton. *Sponsors needed!* Contact Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org to donate or co-sponsor.



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

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.

2019 Peace Essay Contest Winners, Finalists and School Winners

Division I (grades 11 & 12)			
Award	Name	School	Teacher
1 st Place	Makensi Turner	Peter Johansen HS	Nicole Evans
2 nd Place	Ashish Thakur	Modesto HS	Kerry Castellani
3 rd Place	Molly Howard	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
Hon Men *	Jessie Lawrence	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Hon Men	Mary Frey	Our Lady, Good Counsel	Michelle Frey
Hon Men	Marcos Martinez	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Finalist *	Cheyenne Gonzales	Patterson HS	Valerie Jamieson
Finalist *	Kylia Bishop Thompson	Oakdale Charter	Jeannette Ves'sells
Finalist	Cecilia Alvarez	Central Catholic HS	Susan Dillon
Finalist	Michelle Borges	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Finalist	Kendra Boyd	Oakdale Charter	Jeannette Ves'sells
Finalist	Clara den Dulk	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Finalist	Claire Dieker	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Finalist	Emily Fife	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Finalist	Clarissa Madrigal	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
Finalist	Daisy Perez	Peter Johansen HS	Nicole Evans
Finalist	Karla Perez	Patterson HS	Valerie Jamieson
Finalist	Emily Quillen	Hughson HS	Karalee Ruelas
Finalist	Maryam Sabri	Whitmore Charter HS	Kelly Hayes
Finalist	Zoe Zuidema	Peter Johansen HS	Jason Hightman

Division II (grades 9 & 10)			
Award	Name	School	Teacher
1 st Place	Emily Swehla	Independent Study	Susan Janis
2 nd Place *	Paola Campos	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
3 rd Place	Reza Banankhah	Independent Study	Susan Janis
Hon Men	Carson Carranza	Modesto HS	Kerry Castellani
Hon Men	Simranjit Kaur Hundal	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Hon Men	Maymuna Sabri	Whitmore Charter HS	Virginia Aguilera
Finalist	Breana Bravo	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Destinee Cox	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Areli Delgado	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Isabella Dvarte	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Samantha Espinoza	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Isabel Gutierrez	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Ahtziri Martinez	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Zaida Martinez	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Virginia Moore	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Aileen Padilla	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Joshua Resurreccion	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Jose Sanchez	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Karanjot Singh	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
Finalist	Ximena Soltero	Central Valley HS	Megan Oliveria
SW	Drake Heffington	Oakdale Charter	Jeannette Ves'sells

Division III (grades 7 & 8)			
Award	Name	School	Teacher
1 st Place *	Stella Whittler	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
2 nd Place	Francis Evans	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
3 rd Place	Caleb Coston	Independent Study	Susan Janis
Hon Men	Jonah Bird	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Hon Men	Elise Hayden	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Hon Men	Brooklynn Scott	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist *	Athena Envieh	Turlock Jr HS	Denise Nulph
Finalist *	Micah Kakuno	Oakdale Jr HS	Dee Hawksworth
Finalist *	Audrey Kellert	Prescott Jr. High	Maia Tobin
Finalist *	Carly Kolsky	Hickman Charter Elem	Tracy Kline & Bret Bergthold
Finalist *	Angelina Lucca	Sacred Heart , Turlock	Elaine Magni
Finalist	Lauren Bowman	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist	Breanna Guillermo	Oakdale Jr HS	Dee Hawksworth
Finalist	Brooke Hayden	Oakdale Jr HS	Dee Hawksworth
Finalist	Alphia Jeevan	Oakdale Jr HS	Dee Hawksworth
Finalist	Katelyn Kang	Prescott Jr. High	Maia Tobin
Finalist	Cole Kirschner	Oakdale Jr HS	Dee Hawksworth
Finalist	Catherine Mullins	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist	Irina Putinsev	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist	Spencer von Savoye	Oakdale Jr HS	Dee Hawksworth
SW	Norah O'Campo	Hickman Middle School	Michelle Blaze

Division IV (grades 5 & 6)			
Award	Name	School	Teacher
1 st Place *	Andrew Swehla	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
2 nd Place	Connor Swearingen	Independent Study	Susan Janis
3 rd Place	Claire Park	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Hon Men *	Erin Leamy	John Fremont OP	Levi Hanzel-Sello
Hon Men *	Sabrina Toor	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
Hon Men	Rylee Hull	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist	Kayvan Banankhah	Independent Study	Susan Janis
Finalist	Noah Bird	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist	Naseeb Deol	Agnes Baptist Elem	Michelle Danner
Finalist	Kaveri Gupta	Agnes Baptist Elem	Michelle Danner
Finalist	Leena Gupta	Agnes Baptist Elem	Michelle Danner
Finalist	Mihir Mathai	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
Finalist	Jacob Miller	Agnes Baptist Elem	Michelle Danner
Finalist	Aliyah Mim	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
Finalist	Aaryan Mistry	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
Finalist	Mason Raposa	Agnes Baptist Elem	Michelle Danner
Finalist	Justina Shehata	Agnes Baptist Elem	Toni David
Finalist	Quinn Swearingen	Independent Study	Susan Janis
Finalist	Isabella Verdugo	Hart Ransom Acad Chtr	Susan Janis
Finalist	Landyn Wetzel	Agnes Baptist Elem	Michelle Danner
SW	Bobby Nieto	Hickman Middle School	Michelle Blaze
SW	Gabriel Racela	Daniel J. Savage MS	Kari Paulsen
SW	Payton Topie	Valley Home Elem	Debbie Stewart
SW	Courtney Wilson	Somerset MS	Denise Argain

Hon Men = Honorable Mention

* SW = School Winner, recognized for the top essay from a school that has submitted 10 or more essays in the Division

Send Any name corrections to david.tucker@stanfordalumni.org

Hon Men = Honorable Mention

* SW = School Winner, recognized for the top essay from a school that has submitted 10 or more essays in the Division

The 32nd annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the
 Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th Street, Modesto 529-5750 peaceessay@juno.com
 Co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts



Division I 1st Place Winner 2019 Peace Essay Contest

California: My Home

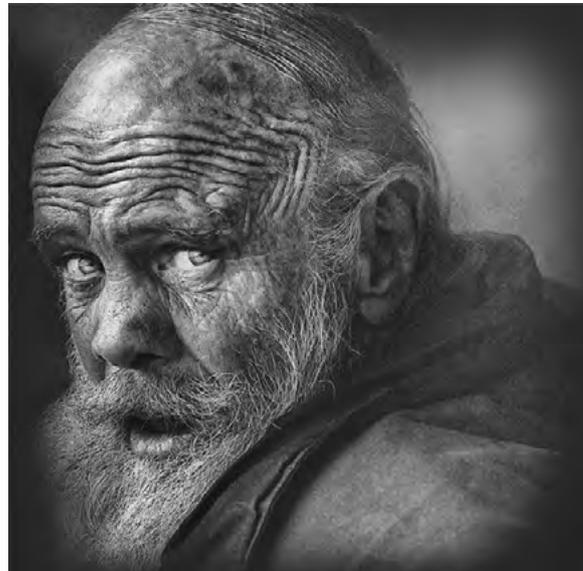
Makens Turner
Peter Johansen HS, Nicole Evans, Teacher

California is a state which many people find themselves proud to reside in. Growing up in this state has taught me in ways that wouldn't have been possible had I lived somewhere which was less ethnically diverse. I've been shown completely new languages and cultures which I find beautiful. Going to school with people of such varying ethnic backgrounds has shown me, on a small scale, how unique the human condition is. People live in completely different ways from one another. With such vast differences between them, it can seem hard to connect with someone when you know nothing about their culture. In the same sense, this variety has also brought me closer to people who are different from me. I now have a deeper understanding of how others live. This state has taught me compassion and respect for others. I've been shown time and time again that we are all connected and have similarities, even if, at first, it may seem unlikely. I am truly thankful that I live in a state which has inspired me to learn more about other cultures and peoples.

California, like any state, is not without its problems. A major issue facing California is the ever-increasing homeless population. The number of homeless people jumped to 14% between 2016 and 2017, according to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report. When compared to the data taken over the last seven years, which set the increase at only 9%, this number is truly shocking. California has the third highest homeless population in the country. This has been caused, in part, by the lack of affordable housing. In larger cities, where homeless populations tend to increase the fastest, the cost of housing is almost unimaginable. According to the Huffington Post, the average person in Los Angeles needs to make \$74,371 annually in order to live comfortably in the city. The

median income for people living in Los Angeles is only \$48,682. This means that a large portion of the population is unable to afford basic necessities. When looking at this data, it isn't hard to see why so many people are left homeless. Without money left over after rent and food, many people in larger cities do not have adequate savings. This means any accident could easily be catastrophic to their lives.

The task of tackling homelessness seems daunting only because the issue needs to be handled in several different ways to truly be effective. First, the current homeless population needs to be helped. The creation of no cost housing specifically designed for vulnerable homeless people is a possible solution. This would provide safety for the most at-risk groups of homeless people, such as: women with young children, the disabled - both physically and mentally - and the elderly. As it would be unrealistic to provide housing for the entire homeless population at once, the people who are most threatened by homelessness should be helped first. In these housing developments, there should be qualified therapists present to provide support and aid. There should also be professionals to teach skills which will allow people to enter the workforce and become productive members of this society. In addition to helping the most at-risk sector of the homeless population, there needs to be increased aid available for those who are not in imminent danger due to homelessness. There should be help centers created in neighborhoods with a disproportionately high homeless population. These centers would provide much needed food and clothing under the condition that the homeless person receive free help from the same therapists and professionals assigned to the housing units. In addition to this, the centers would provide access to job opportunities in the community. Not only would the centers provide aid for the homeless, they also would have the potential to help the people with low incomes struggling economically.



Without money left over after rent and food, many people in larger cities do not have adequate savings. This means any accident could easily be catastrophic to their lives.

To prevent future homelessness, the state of California needs to start taking action now. Recently, the state decided not to repeal the Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which limits rent control in the state. Repealing this act would have allowed for California to provide more available affordable housing options for its residences. In addition to an act like this, there should be increased legislature like this to ensure affordable housing to Californians. This could be in the form of the creation of apartments or neighborhoods which would be permanently sold and marketed as affordable. These houses would only be available to those who are truly in need of a low-cost housing alternative. These housing developments would be paid for partially from a tax on the people of California. By always having affordable housing, people who become unable to afford their current living situation will have an alternative to homelessness. These improvements would greatly

benefit the entirety of California, not just those who suffer from homelessness. By decreasing the number of homeless people and increasing affordable housing, more Californians would be able to live successful lives and have the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful state we live in. By helping homeless people back into the folds of society, an eventual boost to the workforce would occur. This boost would help the economy and help fund other needed improvements to our state. An investment in the homeless population would be one which would positively affect our future.

By working to improve the quality of life in our state, California could effectively improve the quality of life for the rest of the world. This state could prove to other nations the possibility of successfully helping others while also keeping economic security. If this is shown, other nations would look to California as a model for success. We can show the world how to implement basic acts of human kindness on a large scale. The innovative actions California is willing to make in order to form a better society is one of the many reasons that make me proud to live in this amazing state.

Works Cited

Chiland, Elijah. "Costa Hawkins, California's Rent Control Law, Explained." *Curbed LA*, Curbed LA, 7 Aug. 2018, la.curbed.com/2018/1/12/16883276/rent-control-california-costa-hawkins-explained.
Nichols, Chris "Has California's Homeless Population 'Skyrocketed'?" *Politifact California*, 27 Mar. 2018, <https://www.politifact.com/california/statements/2018/mar/27/travis-allen/has-californias-homeless-population-skyrocketed-an/>.
Rae, David. "How Much to Live 'Comfortably' in Los Angeles? The Standard of Moolah." *The Huffington Post*, The Huffington Post.com, 7 Dec. 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-rae/the-standard-of-moolah-in_b_10457784.html

Work with Musicians!
Learn Job Skills!
Join us at The Job Circle.

Audio Technician Course
* LIVE Sound
* Recording Bands
* Producing, Mastering
* Electronics, ProTools
Hands-On Learning

Modesto Sound
LIVE
Recording | LIVE Sound
Education

New classes every 8 weeks.
Space is limited, call now!

ModestoSound.org
209-573-0533

stanislaus
CONNECTIONS

is published monthly except in August
by the Modesto Peace/Life Center
720 13th St., Modesto, CA 95354.
Open by appointment.
Mailing address: P.O. Box 134,
Modesto, CA 95353
209-529-5750

Science & Human Rights Coalition: 2019 Student Essay Competition

Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to participate in the [AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Essay Competition](#).

This essay competition was created to inspire students to explore connections between human rights and science, engineering and the health professions. Students may write on any topic at the intersection of science and/or technology with human rights.

Read the [Rules and Regulations](#)

What you need to know

Submissions should be written in the form of an analytical or critical paper that raises thought-provoking questions. For example, potential essay topics might include: the applications of a scientific approach or a new technology to address specific human rights concerns; an analysis of synergies between human rights obligations and the social responsibilities of scientists, engineers and/or health professionals; or the ways in which full implementation of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress may influence realization of other human rights. These examples are only provided to spark ideas: students are encouraged to write essays that reflect their own ideas, interests, and insights.

Prizes will be awarded in the following categories: 1) Undergraduate student and 2) Graduate student.

The winning students will be recognized at the October 2019 Science and Human Rights Conference presented by the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition. Winners of the competition will receive a year of membership in AAAS and a one-year subscription to *Science*, as well as a travel stipend to attend the Coalition's meeting, generously provided by the [AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund for Science, Education, and Human Rights](#). Students who receive prizes will be asked to support AAAS stewardship of the Sessler Fund by providing feedback about their experience in the competition. The winning essays will be considered for publication by the AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program.

How to Enter

Submit your essay through the essay competition website which will be open **1 April 2019 through 30 April 2019**.

The essay may be submitted in either Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format. Read the rules and regulations at <https://www.aaas.org/shr2019essay>



Green Tips: Union of Concerned Scientists calls for action

By **TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL**

The Union of Concerned Scientists calls environmental, scientific and political activists to “fight back and win,” as the new Congress trail blazes” a path forward to blunt, and even reverse, the Trump administration’s assault on science.”

Dr. Jacob Carter, lead author of the UCS report “[The State of Science in the Trump Era](#),” who has worked for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) during the Obama administration, explains why federal science matters to the general public, and sounds the call to action as a UCS scientist who analyzes government use and abuse of science for the UCS Center for Science and Democracy.

Scientists have heretofore been the go-to authorities to gather knowledge through a multi-disciplinary effort “to cure diseases, deter violent crime, or adapt to a rapidly changing environment.”

Sadly, “federal policies which have protected public health and the environment” through many administrations, such as The Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Consumer Product Safety Act and the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, have been under attack, and the current administration has undermined the process that guarantees scientific consideration when government formulates such policies.

Furthermore science-based air, water, chemical and species protections have been diminished, restrictions have been placed “on what science federal agencies can use when crafting policies,” political pressure has intensified on federal scientists, and “unqualified and conflicted individuals” have been appointed “to lead key science agencies” while numerous positions remain vacant.

The UCS asserts “American lives depend on federal science and the enforcement of science-based laws.” It warns that “disbanding scientific advisory panels on particulate

Union of Concerned Scientists Science for a Healthy Planet and Safer World

matter and ground-level ozone will put more people at risk of asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease and lung cancer.

UCS also takes a stand against the recent Trump administration decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty with Russia entered into by Ronald Reagan, which has prompted the Smith-Warren No First Use Act, a one sentence measure stating, “It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.”

The UCS report makes a number of recommendations for Congress, most important of which is to pass a scientific integrity law that defends federal science from political interference. This law should include provisions that:

- ensure scientists’ rights to review and ensure the accuracy of public materials that rely on their work or use their name.
- prohibit political appointees and communications staff from editing scientific content of official documents.
- ensure scientists’ rights to publicly express personal views.

[These] recommendations carve out a path Congress can take to stop the administration from sidelining science, but continued and sustained public engagement is also required. It is up to the general public to let elected officials know that their constituents care about science-based policymaking and ask them to step up their efforts to hold executive branch agencies accountable.”



ACTION! It is the organization’s hope that “UCS members and supporters will work with us, because there is a lot that we all can do to turn the tide.” Visit <https://www.ucsusa.org/>

Help for upgrading to a cleaner burning device

From the **San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District**

Today [February 28] marks the end of the Valley’s 16th residential wood burning season. The Check Before You Burn Program takes place each winter from November through February and is designed to minimize the build-up of harmful fine particle pollution. Despite record-breaking wildfires at the beginning of the season, the remainder of the season was among the cleanest in recorded history.

Regional high-pressure systems often cause pollutants to become trapped in the bowl-shaped San Joaquin Valley, creating high concentrations of PM2.5 (fine particulate matter pollution) that build up very quickly at ground level, resulting in poor air quality. During a period of particularly poor dispersion, November’s Camp Fire generated some of the most significant smoke impacts ever experienced in the Valley. However, frequent winter storms immediately following the Camp Fire, combined with favorable weather patterns, a high level of cooperation by Valley residents and the use of much cleaner wood, pellet & natural gas devices, made possible by the District’s Burn Cleaner Program, all played pivotal roles in the vast improvement to wintertime air quality this season.

“District incentives have helped hundreds of our residents invest in cleaner devices,” said Samir Sheikh, the District’s executive director and air pollution control officer. “Such investments by the public along with those by Valley stakeholders, and a variety of other emission-reduction strategies, have resulted in cleaner air for every San Joaquin Valley resident.”

Residents interested in upgrading from an open-hearth fireplace or older wood stove, to a cleaner device, are encouraged to take advantage of the District’s Burn Cleaner incentive program, which provides \$1,000 for certified wood/pellet inserts, freestanding stoves or natural gas inserts. Low income residents are eligible for \$2,500 to purchase such devices. An additional \$500 is also available toward installation costs when choosing a natural gas device over wood or pellet. Visit www.valleyair.org/burncleaner for program guidelines.

The District issues a daily wood-burning declaration, based on the air quality forecast for each county with one of three specific designations: “No Burning for All,” “No Burning Unless Registered,” or “No Restrictions, Burning Discouraged.” While no formal burning restrictions will be in place from now until November 1, 2019, the District discourages all residential wood burning.

Additionally, March through October is a great time to get clean burning devices registered ahead of next year’s wood burning season. Visit www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration for details.



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

The Real Border Crisis

President Trump's policies targeting asylum seekers created a humanitarian crisis. It won't be solved by a wall.

By **AMRIT CHENG, Communications Strategist, ACLU**

On Jan. 8, Donald Trump gave the first Oval Office address of his presidency in which he warned of a “growing humanitarian and security crisis at our Southern border.” Since then, he’s threatened to declare a national emergency, described the border as a “major” and “massive” crisis, and even called the situation “an invasion.” For 34 days — the longest-running shut down in history — the president refused to reopen the federal government unless Congress gave him \$5.7 billion to build more border walls, record funding to jail an unprecedented 52,000 immigrants per day, and a wishlist of unconscionable legal changes specifically targeting the most vulnerable immigrants, including children seeking asylum.

I recently traveled to Tijuana, Mexico, with Lee Gelernt, lead attorney in the ACLU’s challenge to the Trump administration’s asylum ban, which tried to disqualify people from seeking asylum if they enter the United States at any place other than an official port of entry. The ACLU first successfully blocked the ban on Nov. 9, 2018. We were there to meet with Al Otro Lado, a California-based organization that provides legal services to migrants and refugees in Tijuana and is a plaintiff in our lawsuit.

Customs and Border Protection is one of the world’s largest law enforcement organizations, but it claims it doesn’t have “capacity” to process more than a handful of asylum seekers at a time. For context, CBP processes around 100,000 travelers at the San Ysidro Port of Entry each day, but it has only been accepting between 20-80 asylum seekers per day. As a result, there are around 5,100 people stuck in dangerous conditions in Tijuana who want to seek asylum or other protections in the U.S. but are facing an expected waiting time of up to 12 weeks or longer.

Our visit made one thing clear: The humanitarian crisis at the border is one created by President Trump’s own policies which target asylum seekers, and it won’t be solved by a wall.

What’s more, the president seems intent on making the situation worse. On Thursday, it was reported that the administration plans to turn back asylum-seekers from the border, forcing them to wait in Mexico while their asylum cases are decided in the U.S.

Here are three very real problems we observed at the border, all made worse by the Trump administration’s anti-asylum policies.

Dangerous Conditions in Tijuana

Our trip began at the San Ysidro port of entry at the California-Mexico border. We met Erika Pinheiro, the litigation and policy director for Al Otro Lado, on the Mexican side and went to a shelter run by a nonprofit organization called the Border Angels.

The shelter was small and dimly lit with rain leaking through the ceiling. The walls were closely lined with gray slab bunkbeds, and there was a hotplate in the corner by the window for cooking food. There were around 30 people stay-



ing there, although Erika said she’d seen as many as 80 on previous occasions. We also visited a “family shelter,” housed in a garage-like space with a concrete floor and corrugated metal roof. Around 50 small camping-style tents filled the space, where families slept.

Most of the shelters in Tijuana are run by churches and nongovernmental organizations, although there are around 2,000 migrants staying in a large government-run refugee camp called El Barretal, which is inside of an abandoned night club, about a 30-minute drive — or more than three hours on foot — from the San Ysidro border crossing. Thousands of migrants were previously staying at a large sports complex called Benito Juarez, which was much closer to San Ysidro.

The Mexican government says that Benito Juarez was closed because of heavy rains flooding the field, but many believe that they were moved to El Barretal, which is in a dangerous neighborhood, to make it harder for migrants to reach the border crossing.

Unsanitary conditions plague all the shelters. Nicole Ramos, border rights project director at Al Otro Lado, reported “squalid conditions” at Benito Juarez, with “many migrants, including pregnant women and children, sleeping in the dirt with only plastic sheeting to protect them from the elements.”

Many people crowded out of the shelters are forced to stay in tent encampments out on the street. At one such encampment, one man called out to me, gesturing to a small tent on the sidewalk and said, “Esta es mi casa,” — “This is my house.”

In addition to dealing with inadequate shelter, asylum seekers have also become targets for organized crime. In December, two Honduran teenagers were killed after leaving a youth shelter to travel to Benito Juarez.

Before that, 20 migrants were kidnapped outside Benito Juarez and transported to Sonora, Mexico, where they were forced to clean blood and biological waste from a warehouse, as reported by Al Otro Lado. After several days, they escaped through a window and attempted to return to Tijuana. Many

of them, however, were recaptured, and the kidnappers began extorting money from their families for their release.

Metering and Illegal Turnbacks

The waiting times for asylum processing have increased, but not because border crossings are at an all-time high, as Trump has claimed.

Customs and Border Protection has been illegally turning asylum seekers away at ports of entry — an administration practice that is the subject of a lawsuit by Al Otro Lado and partners. Under both American and international law, people have the legal right to seek asylum and other forms of protection at the U.S. border. When someone expresses a desire to apply for asylum or a fear of returning to their country of origin, CBP is required to provide that person with an opportunity to seek protection, as mandated by the Immigration and Nationality Act. CBP officers are not authorized to evaluate the individual’s asylum claims themselves or to turn people away. That responsibility belongs to asylum officers with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and, in some cases, immigration judges.

The ACLU’s Border Rights Center has documented instances of CBP stationing agents mid-bridge between the U.S. and Mexico at the border crossing over the Rio Grande in Texas and preventing people trying to seek asylum from approaching.

The administration has also been limiting the number of asylum seekers who are allowed to enter the U.S. each day — a tactic called “metering.” In the past, people were able to

present themselves at a port of entry and begin the asylum process without delay. However, the Trump administration’s metering practice has created a huge backlog where thousands of people are now being forced to wait for months at the border, unable to access a port of entry to make an asylum claim.

“La Lista”

In place of proper and orderly access to the U.S. port of entry, a different system has arisen on the Mexican side of the

The humanitarian crisis at the border is one created by President Trump’s own policies which target asylum seekers, and it won’t be solved by a wall.

Customs and Border Protection has been illegally turning asylum seekers away at ports of entry — an administration practice that is the subject of a lawsuit by Al Otro Lado and partners.

Border Crisis continued

border in Tijuana: “la lista,” or the list, which is managed in part by a self-organized committee of asylum seekers. Each night, Mexican immigration officers lock the notebook in a safe and then return it to the list managers the next morning. Handwritten in a notebook, this list keeps track of who is next in line to apply for asylum in the United States.

Every morning, people gather in El Chaparral plaza, which sits at the base of the pedestrian bridge between Tijuana and the San Ysidro Port of Entry in California, to listen for their names. At some point in the day, U.S. border officials tell Grupos Beta, an arm of Mexican immigration services, how many people they will process that day. The Mexican agency then relays that information to the list managers.

Among other things, the list itself is not without bias. Erika and Nicole have seen instances in which the list managers refused to include asylum seekers who were transgender, gay, or Black.

The list also explicitly leaves out a very vulnerable population: unaccompanied minor children, who are being not allowed to put their names on the list at all. Grupos Beta has told list managers that they cannot include children who do not have a parent or guardian present. Al Otro Lado, who regularly represents unaccompanied minors, has seen Mexican agents take unaccompanied children into custody when they try to get a number on the list or approach the port of entry directly.

“Esta es mi casa,” — “This is my house.”

Al Otro Lado has documented over 100 unaccompanied children stuck in Tijuana who wish to apply for asylum in the United States. Several of the children are LGBT and have faced severe persecution. Others have been forced to engage in child labor or have had families targeted for violence, also putting their lives at risk.

The final stop of our visit was to a youth shelter for children who made the journey to the border alone. The walls are painted bright orange. Inside around 50 youths, almost all boys and just a few girls, ranging from the ages of 12 to 17, were gathered in the common space to meet with us. The majority of children had traveled from Honduras, but there were also some from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Erika and another lawyer introduced themselves, letting the group know that later in the week attorneys would be visiting the shelter to consult with them individually on their cases.

The majority of the kids wanted to seek asylum, but when Erika asked how many had a number on the list, only one hand went up.

In an address on Jan. 19, President Trump decried the “humanitarian and security crisis,” with children being exploited by drug cartels and migrants in need of medical care. None of these problems can be fixed by a wall.

If he truly wants to find solutions, he needs to end his policies that target asylum seekers.

See photos at https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/real-border-crisis?ms_aff=NAT&initms_aff=NAT&ms=190128_immigrant-rights_defunddhs&initms=190128_immigrantrights_defunddhs&ms_chan=eml&initms_chan=eml

Equity on The Mall

Equity on the Mall is an annual day of democracy in action to close the divide between the San Joaquin Valley residents and policymakers. Organized by the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund, The Center at Sierra Health Foundation and community partners, Equity on the Mall includes a powerful program at the west steps of the Capitol with remarks by elected representatives and community leaders, music, spoken word and an equity platform on some of the most pressing issues impacting communities in the San Joaquin Valley. The Valley is Rising!

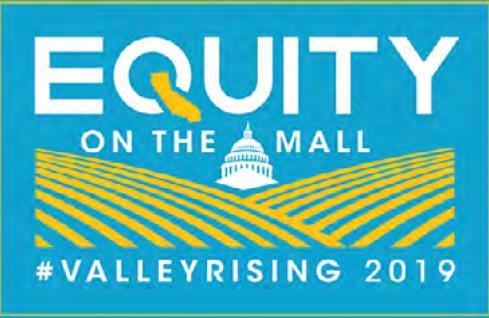
Teachers and Students—We Need YOU at Equity on the Mall 2019! Many students in the San Joaquin Valley have never visited their State Capitol in Sacramento. Equity on the Mall is an ideal opportunity for students and their teachers to visit the Capitol to experience this powerful day of democracy together! Come join our rally on the west steps of the Capitol to hear from your policymakers and community leaders about the issues that matter to you. Be a part of this growing movement by raising your voices to call on our state leaders to step up and be bold in supporting the San Joaquin Valley.

After the rally, tour the historic Capitol building and attend our annual briefing with state leaders. Equity on the Mall will be an experience you and your students will never forget!

WHEN: March 6 – 9 A.M. To 3:30 P.M.

WHERE: California State Capitol

REGISTER ONLINE NOW!



JOIN US AT THE STATE CAPITOL
with other Valley residents and leaders
to stand in unity for immigrants, children,
youth, women, families, LGBTQ
and vulnerable communities.

FREE TRANSPORTATION • FREE FOOD • FREE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

**WEDNESDAY
MARCH 6, 2019**

CALIFORNIA STATE CAPITOL • SACRAMENTO
9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY HEALTH FUND THE CENTER Register now at:
EQUITYONTHEMALL.ORG

The Pilgrimage of Hope

Pilgrimage of Hope: May 4-20, 2019

You are invited to join the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin in its 2019 Pilgrimage of Hope. This pilgrimage is a visible witness of our standing in solidarity with and raising awareness of the plight of immigrants and refugees in the Central Valley. Our hope and intention in this walk are to raise awareness of the struggles our sister and brother immigrants and refugees face daily, while also raising money to support Legal Defense Funds throughout the Valley.

The Pilgrimage of Hope begins on May 4, 2019 at the Episcopal cathedral in Fresno and will conclude on the Day of the Immigrant in Sacramento on May 20, 2019. This will involve sixteen consecutive days of walking, praying, and reflecting.

We invite you to join us in any way you are able:

- Walk with us
- Pray with us
- Share our journey with your friends
- Follow us on Facebook (EDSJ: A Safe Place for All God's People)
- Join us in Sacramento on May 20, 2019.

Please consider making a financial contribution to help us make this pilgrimage possible. To contribute, visit <https://www.thepilgrimageofhope.org/about.html>

Information: The Rev. Canon Anna Carmichael, anna@diosanjoaquin.org, 541-400-9844.

Love Music?
Want to help kids 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.

Consider joining our monthly board meetings where decisions are made on things such as the best way to serve the community with grants received from the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council.

Since 2005 Modesto Sound

- Recorded 685 artists
- Trained 248 youth on audio and job skills
- Held hundreds of concerts

Where: Media Building on the corner of Santa Barbara and Yosemite Boulevard (110 Santa Barbara Avenue, Modesto)

When: The second Tuesday of every month 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Get a warm welcome from Janet Seay, Executive Director of Modesto Sound, who welcomes your ideas! No RSVP required. It's OK to just show up.

Why

- Network in the music industry
- Great for the resume
- Help others

More Information
209-573-0533 janet@modestosound.org



The Costs of War

The Costs of War Project is a team of 35 scholars, legal experts, human rights practitioners, and physicians, which began its work in 2011. We use research and a public website to facilitate debate about the costs of the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the related violence in Pakistan and Syria. There are many hidden or unacknowledged costs of the United States' decision to respond to the 9/11 attacks with military force. We aim to foster democratic discussion of these wars by providing the fullest possible account of their human, economic, and political costs, and to foster better informed public policies.

Some of the Costs of War Project's main findings include:

- Over 480,000 people have died due to direct war violence, including armed forces on all sides of the conflicts, contractors, civilians, journalists, and humanitarian workers.
- It is likely that many times more have died indirectly in these wars, due to malnutrition, damaged infrastructure, and environmental degradation.
- 244,000 civilians have been killed in direct violence by all parties to these conflicts.
- Over 6,950 US soldiers have died in the wars.
- We do not know the full extent of how many US service members returning from these wars became injured or ill while deployed.
- Many deaths and injuries among US contractors have not been reported as required by law, but it is likely that at



COSTS OF WAR

least 7,800 have been killed.

- 21 million Afghan, Iraqi, Pakistani, and Syrian people are living as war refugees and internally displaced persons, in grossly inadequate conditions.
- The US government is conducting counter-terror activities in 76 countries, vastly expanding the counter terror war across the globe.
- The wars have been accompanied by erosions in civil liberties and human rights at home and abroad.
- The human and economic costs of these wars will continue for decades with some costs, such as the financial costs of US veterans' care, not peaking until mid-century.
- US government funding of reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan has totaled over \$170 billion. Most of those funds have gone towards arming security forces in both countries. Much of the money allocated to humanitarian relief and rebuilding civil society has been lost to fraud, waste, and abuse.
- The cost of the Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria wars totals about \$5.9 trillion. This does not include future interest costs on borrowing for the wars, which will add an estimated \$8 trillion in the next 40 years.
- The ripple effects on the US economy have also been significant, including job loss and interest rate increases.
- Both Iraq and Afghanistan continue to rank extremely low in global studies of political freedom.
- Women in Iraq and Afghanistan are excluded from political power and experience high rates of unemployment and war widowhood.
- Compelling alternatives to war were scarcely considered in the aftermath of 9/11 or in the discussion about war against Iraq. Some of those alternatives are still available to the US.

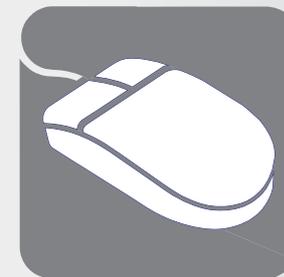
From Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs
111 Thayer St., Brown University, Box 1970, Providence,
RI 02912-1970, costsofwar@brown.edu

Spike Lee: "...let's all be on the right side of history..."

"The word today is irony. The date, the 24th. The month of February, which happens to be the shortest month of the year, which also happens to be Black History month. The year, 2019; the year, 1619. History, her story. 1619, 2019, 400 years. Four hundred years, our ancestors were stolen from Africa and brought to Jamestown, Virginia, to be enslaved. Our ancestors worked the land from morning to night.

My grandmother [unintelligible] lived to be 100 years young, who was a Spelman College graduate, even though her mother was a slave. My grandma, who saved 50 years of Social Security checks to put her first grandchild, she called me "Spikey poo," put me through Morehouse College and NYU Film. NYU! Before the world tonight, I can praise our ancestors who helped build this country into what it was today along with the genocide of its native people. If we all connect with our ancestors, we will have love wisdom, and regain our humanity. It will be a powerful moment. The 2020 presidential election is around the corner! Let's all mobilize, let's all be on the right side of history. Make the moral choice between love versus hate. Let's do the right thing! You know I had to get that in there."

Spike Lee won the Oscar for best adapted screenplay for BlacKkKlansman.



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

Modesto Sound LIVE
Recording | LIVE Sound | Education

Modesto Sound proudly presents the California Audio Roots Project!
Sponsors and partners include:

KCBP RADIO.ORG
CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY
STREAMING

Friends OF THE MODESTO LIBRARY

MSR
MARY STUART ROGERS FOUNDATION

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL
A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

Local Public Radio
FM 104.9
The Best Local Bands
www.KGIG.Org

FM 93.3
KPHD
Independent Radio For Independent Minds

MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER

FM 93.3
KPHD
Independent Radio for Independent Minds

The Law Office of
PATRICIA MELUGIN COUSINS
Attorney At Law

P.O. Box 520
Ceres, CA 95307

Phone: (209) 538-9795
FAX: (209) 538-0227

Email: pmcousins@aim.com

LAW OFFICES OF
ROCKWELL, KELLY & DUARTE, LLP

1600 G Street
Suite 203

DAVID N. ROCKWELL
SHARON E. KELLY
JEFFREY DUARTE
MARKUS URSTOEGER
Attorneys/Abogados

P.O. Box 0142
Modesto, CA
95353-0142

(209) 521-2552
FAX (209) 526-7898



Poet: Ingrid Keriotis

Ingrid Keriotis taught at Modesto Junior College for thirteen years. Her first book of poetry, *It Started with the Wild Horses*, is available from Finishing Line Press at www.finishinglinepress.com. When it comes to writing poetry, she believes in Richard Hugo's advice: "You owe reality nothing and the truth about your feelings everything."

Empathy

Can the wildness in all of us
that sometimes shouts or scorns
show itself instead
in ecstatic love

for rain-washed leaves,
great grey mountains on the horizon,
every child's gaze?

Wildness is ours
when we grasp each other in night-time
fervor,
when we surrender our bodies,
let them drop slowly
into dreams.

Once asleep, I travel roads I'll never see,
search for oil-streaked birds
by a sullied sea, crouch with mothers
in darkness beneath the mahogany trees
of another continent.

Close your eyes.
Be awake in another's body for a moment,
feel her blood as it circles
through intricate veins.
Look: when it falls, it blooms
red, just like yours.

Remedial

He wrote about what it felt like
when her fist hit the skin of his face.
The girl beside him described
how her stepfather had pushed
in spite of her resistance
and one young man said his mother
called him every bad name he had ever
heard
and some that were new.

These people
were supposed to have been parents,
parenting.

I had expected to teach the topic sentence,
the use of a transitional phrase,
how to write an essay so smooth
it could flow logically
to a natural end.

When I left for home,
I could not bear
to carry my bag beside me
so instead I hugged it close,
desperate to keep their stories
out of the rain.

Up Late Reading Wendell Berry

I can't sleep. Why not start being alive
right now at 12:30 a.m.
with Berry's wood drake and wild things,
his day-blind stars and still water?

And I'm up late with
all the times I've kissed you
all the grassy hills I've wandered
days of soaking rain
coming from an open palm of sky,
the utter allure of an egret
hunting in the marsh
at the side of a busy highway.

And how about this?
That the sun hasn't disappeared for good
that a page of words can feel
like a lover with a soft mouth

That a book can open everything
when just a minute ago
you were alone
in all the world.

The Orchard

"You went from parched to overflow in the
blink of an eye." -Anne Lamott
Like wood catching fire
on a bed of smoke,
almond blossoms suddenly appear
and every time I foolishly think
I can capture the moment.

This is what stuns me most
as I stand at the roadside:
that each year I think it will be different.

That I might be able to hold that sight
full in my chest:
the sun and breeze, even the wild impulse
to climb on top of my car for the best view
and the mad dash across a two-lane
highway
with my camera.

Rising up from green valley and grey
trunk,
the precise blur of thousands of white
petals
pulses in me,
the full catastrophe of spring.

Fallow Me to Water



Meanwhile, farmers everywhere keep pumping groundwater whenever drought conditions reduce their deliveries of surface water. Who will stop them? And in many places, groundwater is the only source of water for farms.

The mystery of how AG behemoths in the southern San Joaquin Valley keep farming can be answered with the age-old adage that “water flows uphill toward money and

power.” Though they have no historic northern California water rights, the money and power they’ve accumulated have enabled corporate giants like J.G. Boswell and Stewart and Lynda Resnick’s Wonderful company to keep farming long after they’ve overdrafted the resources in their own regions; Resnick alone uses 400,000 acre feet of water per year, about two-thirds the consumption of the entire city of Los Angeles.

The Resnicks have cornered the market on high value pistachios, in part because much of the soil in the southern San Joaquin Valley where they farm is too salty for almonds; pistachios are more salt resistant.

In fact, the southern San Joaquin Valley seems like the most likely place to fallow land for many reasons, not the least of which are the depleted groundwater supplies (which have resulted in tremendous land subsidence), the accumulation of salts in the soil, the lack of historic water rights, and the mounting effects of global warming.

However, the southern Valley is also where there are very high concentrations of money and power. Those realities are usually enough to defy reason, Mother Nature, and the commonweal.

Another factor in the water balance equation is the number of people in the Valley who lack safe drinking water. Ironically, many of them are poor farmworkers who live in towns where the water, “looks like piss and smells like egg.”

Newly elected Governor Gavin Newsom has made bring-

Operation 9-2-99 Clean-Up

By CHRIS GUPTILL

I would like to thank everyone who came out and participated in our latest river cleanup on February 16th. This was our 48th clean up event and we were able to completely clean Bellenita Park, the Tuolumne River, and the Carpenter Bridge area. Sixty-five volunteers filled a 40 cubic yard dumpster, removed 5 tons of trash and debris, 5 tires, 5 shopping carts, and did an outstanding job of returning this entire area to a state the community can be proud of and can recreate along. Here are some during and after photos from the cleanup and here is a story that Fox 40 came out and did about the cleanup. We had a ton of Davis high students, The Enochs Environmental Club, and the CCC crew from Stockton that joined us once again.

Check out the totals from our 48 cleanups. Here is a brand new wayfinding map of the Tuolumne River Regional Park and the Dry Creek and Tuolumne Riverside Trails that runs along the our park, creek, and river for hiking, biking, running, and paddling. It is a great place to recreate both in and along the Tuolumne River and it is open to recreation.

Special thanks Phil McKay with DFW Natural Resource Volunteer Program, Lt. Stanfield with MPD for the officer

ing safe water to all Valley citizens a priority, but that will entail costs for infrastructure and battles over who has superior water rights.

Another complicating element is the need to restore the collapsing ecosystems in both the Valley and the San Joaquin Delta. Over 95% of the Valley’s historic wetlands have been destroyed, and the Delta is increasingly damaged by intrusion of salt water as more and more water gets diverted south, most of it from the Sacramento River. In an average year, water diverted south from the Delta amounts to 5.1 million acre feet.

Ironically, wetlands are nature’s way of mitigating the effects of flooding and also important sources of groundwater recharge; it makes sense to restore them for those reasons alone. But bringing back wetlands will also mean retiring farmland, and unless they’re very well compensated, farmers will take to the courts before giving up their lucrative returns from nuts and vines.

Ultimately, the obvious need to fallow farmland and balance our water needs will almost certainly be adjudicated in the courts, where the wealthy and powerful have tremendous advantages. Balancing the scales of justice would require widespread public support for a sustainable future, not just for farming in the San Joaquin Valley but also for an environment that has been severely damaged by unsustainable demands on water.

Whether the people of the San Joaquin Valley will rise to the challenge of protecting their own water remains to be seen. A major reason for the current dire situation has been the failure of Valley citizens to take on their responsibilities for ensuring public resources are subject to wise use policies. And unless the public does get involved, we can expect water to flow uphill, in an ongoing tragedy of the commons.

From *The Valley Citizen*.



from page 1

NVLF Grassroots Advocacy Training

By TIM ROBERTSON

Now that progressive activists in the Central Valley have helped win elections at every level of government, it’s time to get to work holding our elected officials accountable and giving them the support they need to pursue and pass real progressive policies!

From school boards and city councils, to the state legislature and US Congress, our opponents are working to prevent us from translating our electoral wins into progressive outcomes. That’s why it’s so important that we continue to mobilize around the issues that matter most to us, like access to health care, good schools, and fair wages. United, we can engage with our elected officials in a thoughtful and productive manner to help secure the outcomes that people deserve.

Grassroots Advocacy is the process by which we organize community members to engage their elected officials to advocate (“lobby”) for one or more issues. To do so effectively, we need a shared understanding of the political process and our role in it as activists. That’s why the North Valley Labor Federation and Working America are partnering to host an introductory training on the nuts and bolts of grassroots advocacy!

What: NVLF Grassroots Advocacy Training

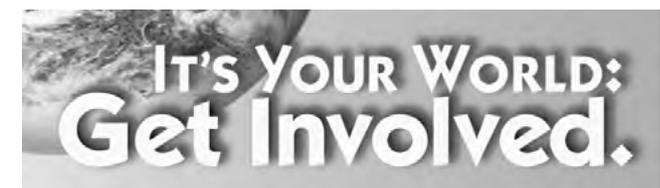
When: Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 6PM-8PM

Where: NVLF, 417 7th St., Modesto.

Who: All interested union members and progressive activists.

Join North Valley Labor Federation Executive Director Tim Robertson, California Labor Federation Policy Coordinator Sara Flocks, and Working America’s Fran Schreiber for a fun, useful, and interactive presentation on how to organize grassroots energy into real policy outcomes. We’ll discuss meaningful organizing strategies for grassroots advocacy, compare local governments with our state and federal legislatures, and present some real-world policies we can support!

ACTION: This event is open to the whole progressive community. Please RSVP by clicking this link: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/central-valley-grassroots-advocacy-training/>





Mistlin Gallery
Central California Art Association

**March: Young@Art Student Exhibition
plus "Arts Are Instrumental" project.**

1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369
Tues. - Thurs. 11:30-5, Fri. 11:30-8, Saturday 12-4
www.ccaagallery.org

Study: Illness and Medical Bills Cited as Significant Contributors to Bankruptcy

From Physicians for A National Health Plan

Researchers found no evidence that the ACA reduced the proportion of bankruptcies driven by medical problems; insurance offered little protection to middle-class Americans.

Medical problems contributed to 66.5% of all bankruptcies, a figure that is virtually unchanged since before the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), according to a [study](#) published yesterday as an editorial in the *American Journal of Public Health*. The findings indicate that 530,000 families suffer bankruptcies each year that are linked to illness or medical bills.

The study, carried out by a team of two doctors, two lawyers, and a sociologist from the Consumer Bankruptcy Project (CBP), surveyed a random sample of 910 Americans who filed for personal bankruptcy between 2013 and 2016, and abstracted the court records of their bankruptcy filings. The study, which is one component of the CBP's ongoing bankruptcy research, provides the only national data on medical contributors to bankruptcy since the 2010 passage of the ACA. Bankruptcy debtors reported that medical bills contributed to 58.5% of bankruptcies, while illness-related income loss contributed to 44.3%; many debtors cited both of these medical issues.

These figures are similar to findings from the CBP's medical bankruptcy surveys in 2001 and 2007, which were authored by three researchers in the current study (Himmelstein, Thorne, and Woolhandler), and then-Harvard law professor Elizabeth Warren. As in those earlier studies, many debtors cited multiple contributors to their financial woes.

The current study found no evidence that the ACA reduced the proportion of bankruptcies driven by medical problems: 65.5% of debtors cited a medical contributor to their bankruptcy in the period prior to the ACA's implementation as compared to 67.5% in the three years after the law came into

effect. The responses also did not differ depending on whether the respondent resided in a state that had accepted ACA's Medicaid expansion. The researchers noted that bankruptcy is most common among middle-class Americans, who have faced increasing copayments and deductibles in recent years despite the ACA. The poor, who were most helped by the ACA, less frequently seek formal bankruptcy relief because they have few assets (such as a home) to protect and face particular difficulty in securing the legal help needed to navigate formal bankruptcy proceedings.

Relative to other bankruptcy filers, people who identified a medical contributor were in worse health and were two to three times more likely to skip needed medical care and medications.

Dr. David Himmelstein, the lead author of the study, a Distinguished Professor at the City University of New York's (CUNY) Hunter College and Lecturer at Harvard Medical School commented: "Unless you're Bill Gates, you're just one serious illness away from bankruptcy. For middle-class Americans, health insurance offers little protection. Most of us have policies with so many loopholes, copayments and deductibles that illness can put you in the poorhouse. And even the best job-based health insurance often vanishes when prolonged illness causes job loss – just when families need it most. Private health insurance is a defective product, akin to an umbrella that melts in the rain."

In the article, the authors note that "medical bills frequently cause financial hardship, and the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau reported that they were by far the most



common cause of unpaid bills sent to collection agencies in 2014, accounting for more than half of all such debts."

The study's senior author Dr. Steffie Woolhandler, an internist in the South Bronx, Distinguished Professor at CUNY/Hunter College and Lecturer in Medicine at Harvard commented: "The ACA was a step forward, but 29 million remain uncovered, and the epidemic of under-insurance is out of control. We need to move ahead from the ACA to a single-payer, Medicare for All system that assures first-dollar coverage for everyone.

But the Trump administration and Republicans in several states are taking us in reverse: cutting Medicaid, threatening to gut protections for the more than 61 million Americans with pre-existing conditions, and allowing insurers to peddle stripped-down policies that offer no real protection."

Study co-author Robert M. Lawless, the Max L. Rowe Professor of Law at the University of Illinois College of Law noted: "In the Supreme Court's words, bankruptcy is a fresh start for the 'honest but unfortunate debtor.' Our study shows that for many bankruptcy debtors, the misfortune continues to come from the way we pay for health care. Bankruptcy may provide a fresh start, but it comes at a high financial and emotional cost for those who file. Filing for bankruptcy can stop the financial bleeding that the health care system imposes but curing that system's ills is the only lasting solution."

Physicians for a National Health Program is a single-issue organization advocating a universal, comprehensive single-payer national health program. PNHP has more than 21,000 members and chapters across the United States.

[Physicians for a National Health Program](#)

Fellowships & Youth Leadership Academy

Applications are now being accepted for eight **one-year journalism fellowships** with the **Carter Center's Mental Health Program**. These fellowships aim to enhance public understanding and reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with mental health and substance use conditions through balanced and accurate reporting. Each U.S. fellow is awarded a \$10,000 stipend and provided with a required expense-paid trip to The Carter Center in September 2019 and in fall 2020. Apply by April 10 [here](#).

Wired magazine is offering several fellowships based in San Francisco, including for reporting and for video production. You have until March 6 to apply for any of the roles. Go [here](#) for info.

Also, in the Bay Area, but hiring remote too, is **Medium**, which is seeking editors on topics related to soon-to-launch publications, including tech, health, general interest, cryptocurrency, design and politics. Learn more [here](#).

The King Center is accepting Nominations and Applications for its Summer Youth Leadership Academy, June 17-28

The Leadership Academy is designed to develop leaders who have the skills to positively influence and impact themselves, their peers and their communities using the

teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The intense two week on campus experience prepares youth, ages 13 – 18, to be influential leaders and change agents for their schools, communities and the world.

The two-week camp includes:

- A Civil Rights tour of Alabama
- Small group facilitation
- Interactive modules
- Learn to code
- Create nonviolent video games & apps
- Produce short films and music videos
- Learn to utilize Dr. King's principles to combat bullying
- A 12-month follow-up plan with monthly in-person and virtual meetings

The Leadership Academy fee is \$350. Nominate a student for the Academy [here](#): [Nomination Form](#)

Register your student for the Academy [here](#): [Application](#) (A non-refundable deposit of \$25.00 is required for each application.)

Apply for a scholarship to attend the Academy [here](#): [Scholarship Application](#)

For more information email leadershipacademy@theking-center.org or call (404) 526-8913.

GOT THESE TWO CARDS?



Get More Benefits!

- \$0 Monthly Plan Premium
- \$0 Copay Primary Care Physician
- \$50 Quarterly towards personal care items

Text "MEDICARE" to 77948

1-888-294-5053 • www.MrMedicare123.com
Valley Capital Advisors, LLC. Ca Lic #0J11639
912 11th Street, Suite 200-B, Modesto



MARCH 2019

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

MJC Science Colloquium Schedule, Spring 2019. Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 pm Science Community Center, Rm 115, MJC West Campus. Purchase Temporary Parking Permits for \$2 from dispensers located near MJC West Campus entrances. March 6: Daniel Chase, Professor of Physics, MJC: The History and Discovery of Helium (A celebration of the International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements). March 13: Garry L. Found, Forensic Odontologist, Stanislaus County Sheriff – Coroner: Forensic Odontology. March 20: Erica Kenney, Food Biologist, Gallo Winery: The Emotions of Coffee Drinking. March 27: Alison McNally, Professor of Geography, CSU Stanislaus State: Habitat Fragmentation and Restoration at the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. April 3: Catherine Tripp, Professor of Biology, MJC: Coastal Oceanography at Bodega Marine Laboratory. April 10: Emily Basnight, Jim Hopf, and Des Orsinielli of the Citizens Climate Lobby: Climate Solutions That Can Save Your World – An Earth Day theme talk. **MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science).** Free, informative, engaging community science programs. 7:30 pm, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. March 22: Steven Murov, <http://murov.info>, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, MJC. Periodic Table Milestones and Real and Fake Elements. <http://murov.info/timelines.htm>. April 12: Dr. Jonathan Fortney, UC Santa Cruz. The Kepler Mission: Exotic Solar Systems on the Path to Earth-Like Planets. Insights from the mission and the future of planetary research. <http://www.ucolick.org/~jfortney/> **6 WED: VIGIL: Homelessness.** McHenry & J St., NOTE: new time. 4:30-5:30 pm.

6 WED: Equity at the Mall, State Capital, 9 am-3 pm. (see article this issue).

8 FRI: Peace Essay Contest Awards Ceremony. Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center, MJC West Campus. 7 pm.

16 SAT: Modesto RecFest, FREE family-friendly recreation opportunities in Legion Park in and along the Tuolumne River, 10 am to 3 pm. See article, this issue.

17 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents The Producers, 1307 J. St., Modesto. 2:00 pm. Join the State Theatre and get perks! Visit <http://www.thestate.org/Membership>

30 SAT: 3rd Annual Stanislaus County Caregiver Resource Fair. Stanislaus Veterans Center on Saturday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm, free continental breakfast, community vendors, health screenings, opportunity prizes, and education workshops, three speakers. Free of charge.

30 SAT: 25th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration. Speaker, Dr. Michael Eric Dyson. 7:00 pm, MJC East Campus. FREE. See article, this issue.

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday April 6: Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®. See article, this issue.

Saturday May 4: Pilgrimage of Hope begins in Fresno.

Sunday June 9: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast. Modesto Church of the Brethren.

June 28-30-Peace Camp in the Sierra.

ONGOING

Modesto Sound offers Audio Technician training classes for those 13 and older. Work with musicians; hands-on learning Live Sound, Recording Bands, Producing, Mastering, Electronics, and Pro Tools. Call or email for more information and class times. Modesto Sound, 110 Santa Barbara Ave., Modesto. \$200 (limited scholarships available). 209-573-0533, studio@modestosound.org; ModestoSound.org

Tulane University's School of Social Work has released a resource guide on homelessness and poverty among students and youth.

Veterans Resources from Recovery Village: <https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/resources/veterans/>

Green Living guide: https://www.couponchief.com/guides/guide_to_cheap_green_living

Essential Guide to Sinkholes or Ground Settlement issues

in Florida. Interactive, searchable maps for affected properties: sinkholemaps.com

Prepare for virtually any natural disaster with the Natural Disaster Preparedness Guide: www.expertise.com/home-and-garden/home-preparation-for-natural-disasters

Complete guide to support groups at <http://www.friendsar-goodmedicine.com/pdf/FriendsDirectory.pdf>

Calculators for a sustainable environment: valuable website which contains car payment and car use calculators and links to many calculators to help people reduce their energy footprints. <http://www.carpaymentcalculator.net/calcs/environmental.php>

Valley Improvement Project's mission is to improve the quality of life of under-represented and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley. For ongoing events visit V.I.P. at <http://valleyimprovementprojects.org/about>. Email: valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ValleyImprovementProjects?ref=br_tf

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.

CENTRAL VALLEY ART ASSOCIATION and MISTLIN GALLERY. Exhibits by local artists; poetry readings third Sat. 4 pm. 1015 J St., in Tenth St. Place. Open 10 to 5, Mon. through Sat. 529-3369.

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>

OCCUPY MODESTO: Action Info: Nancy, 545-1375.

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.

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

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 50+ years of age. Ongoing support group for mental health and wellness to meet the needs of the mature Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. Every Monday 3:00 - 4:00 pm. Community-Hope-Recovery, 305 Downey Ave. Modesto. Info: Monica O. Tiamonica64@gmail.com or Susan J. SusanthePoet@gmail.com

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:30-5:30 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

MEDIA: Listen to Peace/Life Center radio, KCBP 95.5 FM streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org> and at 95.5 FM, 2 pm to 2 am.

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.

TUESDAYS

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, Christ Unity Baptist Church, 601 'L' St., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 7 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: mercedboard@gay-centralvalley.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

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.

LGBTQA Collaborative Meetings 4th Thursdays. Agendas are the same for each meeting. Lunch meeting: Peer Recovery Art Center, 1222 J St, Modesto, Noon to 1:30 pm. Dinner meetings: Stanislaus BHRS – Redwood Room, 800 Scenic Dr., Modesto,

CA 95354, 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Meeting dates: Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Nov. 17, Dec. 15: No meeting/ Winter Mixer. Dedicated to promoting well-being in the LGBTQA community. John Aguirre, jpamodesto@gmail.com, 559-280-3864.

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

ART GALLERY WALK, downtown Modesto, third Thurs., 6:30 to 8 pm. Info: <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

VALLEY HEARTLAND ZEN GROUP: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emtpynestzendo.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; jpamodesto@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 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: 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

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 kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

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.