



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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Five Myths about the Homeless: Part I

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Homeless by choice?

Though political resistance to raising the minimum wage is a major factor in homelessness, it still gets little media attention. Consider this: A full-time job at today's current minimum wage of \$10 an hour would pay \$1600 a month before taxes. As of July this year, average rent in Modesto is \$1023 per month.

But when Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation raising the minimum wage last April, Valley political leaders were apoplectic. Assembly member Kristen Olsen said, "I have deep concerns about how this bill will impact people and families in California—especially in the San Joaquin Valley, where unemployment rates remain high and job opportunities are often few and far between." Congressman Jeff Denham, of the Valley's Tenth District, has a clear record of opposing minimum wage increases in general and has even voted against overtime pay for farm workers.

Do the math. Even at double the minimum wage, people can't afford housing. And, per the legislation signed by the governor, the increase in California's minimum wage escalates slowly over a five year period. In January, it rises to a whopping \$10.50 an hour. Simple arithmetic tells us that using the common formula that rent should be around thirty percent of income, people making minimum wage can't afford shelter.

Real factors in homelessness—outsourcing jobs, mental illness, cost of living increases, wage stagnation and others—are rarely cited. Instead, the entire issue has been clouded by a decades-long promotion of what is now a homeless mythology that continues to prevent real solutions to an escalating national crisis.

The Myth of Work

Among the most persistent narratives about people experiencing homelessness is the myth of work. "They don't want to work" has become a constant refrain that offers a comfortable way both to explain homelessness and avoid any discussion of root causes. But when the cost of living rises and wages stagnate, there comes a point when working doesn't make sense.

To many San Joaquin Valley residents, double minimum wage, at \$20 an hour, sounds like good money until a person tries to stretch it into shelter, food, transportation, health care, clothing, utilities and all the other necessities. Today's mythology says that if you can't make it by working, it's your fault, but when working at even double minimum wage doesn't enable people to even subsist, it's not the people who are at fault, it's the system. When builders admit it's financially impossible to provide affordable housing, it's not time to blame workers, it's time to blame an economy that left workers behind.

After decades of union-busting, outsourcing, downsizing, automation, and wage stagnation, the American worker has gone from a proud member of the middle class to a shamed flunky in the service class. Flipping burgers, tending yards, and sweeping floors have too often become alternatives to good factory jobs. Along with the low pay, "service workers" lucky enough to land even these jobs have also gained the opportunity to be mocked and derided.

When hard work no longer provides enough for food, shelter, and family, the result is a loss of dignity, self-respect, and hope. Today's American workers have become the scapegoat for decades of political decisions that left them working harder and harder for less and less.

The Myth of Choices

Milton Friedman's Free to Choose was one of the intellectual lynchpins of the 1980s "Reagan Revolution." Friedman's paean to

laissez faire economic policies ushered in an era when political leaders, conservative

continued page 7

CALL TO ACTION

Because we are tired of moments of silence that only follow other moments of silence
Because we are tired of marching, tired of carrying signs with the same repeated messages
Because we are tired of waking to hear more awful news: same story, different place
Because we thought things were getting better, but we were ignorant
Because we can't keep explaining these outrages to the children
Because mostly we have love for our fellow humans
Because flags at half-mast lose their meaning when they are so often at half-mast
Because our hearts are worn down with sadness
Because we don't know how to make things better, but we have to make things better
Because we are dreaming of a world where no one is in danger just for being black
Because we are tired of sitting still and of our government sitting still
Because it is too much
Because guns too often equal fear
Because fear is the biggest cause of terrorism
Because the moments of silence are moments of inaction
Because open-carry, concealed-carry have ramifications we can't afford
Because we can't afford more inaction
Because this child with his dark skin deserves as much safety as that child with her light skin
Because not one more life needs to be tasered out, choked out, shot out of existence
Because we thought we were better, but we aren't and understanding that is terrible
Because our hearts can't keep carrying these burdens of grief
Because Eric, Tamir, and Michael, because Sandra
Because Alton, because Philandro
Because all those we can't name and there are too many to name
Because our skins are different colors and our hearts are the same
Because we have to do better and there is no time left
Because there is no time left and what are we going to do

Gillian Wegener
July 12, 2016

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If you do not have Adobe Reader, download it free from <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>

Fundraiser play for Sonora's MLK Celebration

By PAT CERVELLI

The Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee will sponsor a preview night at Stage 3 Theater, 208 S Green St, Sonora on Thursday Sept. 8. The play is *Kate: The Unexamined Life of Katherine Hepburn* by local playwright Rick Foster and starring Janis Stevens. A reception with appetizers, sweet treats, wine and music begins at 5:30 p.m. The play starts at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25, available at Tradewinds Consignment Shop, 63 S. Washington St., Sonora. Seating is limited and tickets are selling fast.



This fundraiser supports the annual MLK birthday celebration, planned for Sunday, January 15, 2017, which will feature Dr. Mimi Kim addressing the issue of "Restorative Justice." The celebration, to be held at 2 p.m. at the Sonora High School auditorium, will include music as well as the winners of the 2016 MLK essay contest.

Visit the Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. website at www.motherlodemlk.org or its Facebook page. Stage3 is located at. Visit <http://www.stage3.org/>

Library Foundation Hosts Gala Fundraiser

The Stanislaus Library Foundation will host a quartet of Modesto poets at its Author's Garden Gala on Saturday, Sept. 24 at 6 p.m. at the Modesto



country home of Ginger and Kent Johnson. All proceeds will benefit children's programs at the library's 13 branches countywide, including the Summer Reading program, which serves more than 11,000 school-age children each year.

Featured speaker for the evening is Modesto's poet laureate Gillian Wegener. Joining Wegener will be Stella Beratlis, incoming poet laureate; and poets Ed Bearden and Paul Neumann. The theme for this year's event, the Foundation's primary annual fundraiser, is "abundance." According to Foundation Chair Pat Portwood, "We'll be celebrating the abundance of our Valley—from the richness of our soil and the bounty it produces to the literary talent of our featured guests." Gala guests will enjoy a gourmet meal prepared by Surla's Restaurant.

A unique and popular feature of the Author's Garden Gala is a lively dessert auction. "Local bakers are donating delectable sweets—from cakes to pies and pastries—for which guests will vie in friendly bidding," said board member Kathleen Cohn. "It's all in fun and every penny we raise goes directly to the library."

Tickets, at \$125 each, are available at www.stanislauslibraryfoundation.org or (209) 529-1517.

The Stanislaus Library Foundation enriches lives in our community by raising funds to support key library programs, increasing awareness, and advocating for a vital library.

Faith in the Valley Founding Action

From Congregations Building Community

"One People, One Fight," chanted 75 grassroots leaders from Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Kern, Fresno, and Merced Counties when they gathered at Faith in the Valley's June 2016 Leadership Assembly. These leaders came representing hundreds of families and community members who are ready to come together as one people with one fight to bring about the change needed to transform our Central Valley into a place where all people can thrive. This leadership gathering was a significant milestone for our valley-wide efforts to build our organization Faith in the Valley.

Over the past year leaders have reached out into their congregations and neighborhoods and heard the stories of thousands of people in the Central Valley. In Stanislaus County leaders had over 650 sacred conversations where the pain of our communities was heard. Leaders also embarked on a season of research with experts, elected officials and community allies to discover and identify the drivers of this pain, as well as begin to identify solutions.

At this leadership gathering, leaders decided that we are ready to publicly launch our new organization, "Faith in the Valley" and proclaim a new vision for the Central Valley rooted in racial, economic, and environmental dignity for all people

On **Saturday, September 10th** we will gather over 1,500 faith leaders at our LIFT Power, Faith and Community Forum in Fresno from 11-2:00 pm at the **Fresno Convention Center, 848 M St, Fresno**. Here we will have a chance to create a space where elected leaders and candidates can share with residents from across the Valley their priorities for a better Central Valley during this critical election year. We believe that a different, better future is possible for the Central Valley if we work together. Registration click here. **Information:** info@faithinthevalley.org. Congregations Building Community 511 Vine St., Modesto, CA 95351 (209) 604-8085 cbstan@gmail.com.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CBCSTAN/>

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE OF



Climate Change

SCIENTIFIC and CHRISTIAN
PERSPECTIVES

— AN OPEN FORUM —

Presented by
Members of St. Paul's and
the Modesto Citizens Climate Lobby

Three Wednesday nights:
September 14/21/28
6 - 7:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto
(209) 522-3267

Be informed!

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

stanislaus
CONNECTIONS

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209-529-5750.

Fall Films and Conversations at Modesto Junior College

Starting in October, the Civic Engagement Project at MJC offers three thoughtful films and two timely conversations about water issues in California and race relations in our country. All programs are on Thursday nights in Forum Bldg. 110, at 7:00 p.m. on the East Campus, 435 College Avenue, and are free and open to the public. Here's the schedule:

“Water in the Central Valley”: Lloyd Carter Lecture — Oct 6

Lloyd Carter has worked for decades as a reporter specializing in water issues. He has written for United Press International and *The Fresno Bee*, and he has taught water law at San Joaquin College of Law. Currently, he serves as President of the California Save Our Streams Council and hosts a monthly radio show on environmental issues. Carter claims that Central Valley industrial agriculture has enriched a few but has ruined air quality, killed rivers, polluted drinking water aquifers, nearly killed the Delta, and has destroyed one of Mother Nature's rarest creations, an inland desert marsh.

Code: Debugging the Gender Gap — Oct 20

Who gets hired at high-tech companies like Google, Apple, and Facebook? This documentary reveals significant gaps in diversity at such places and focuses on an important question: if the work of computer scientists drives our future but lacks diverse input, what can be done to bridge the digital divide and make the fertile fields of Silicon Valley more inviting for women and under-represented minorities?

Black in America: A Continuing Conversation — Nov 3

Based on a number of questions from the audience at last semester's event, this event looks more deeply into the problems between law enforcement and communities of color by focusing on historical and cultural factors that impact current tensions. Guest speakers from law enforcement and the community will share research-based historical and cultural information and allow for audience discussion throughout the event in small groups with trained dialogue facilitators.

Drone — Nov 17

The use of military drones has become one the biggest controversies in modern warfare, and this film takes a critical look at the issue from a number of angles, arguing that drones have come to represent a new kind of battlefield, where civilians in strike zones live in constant fear but can seem like little more than pixels in a video game to those carrying out remote-controlled attacks.

Paper Tigers — Dec 1

This documentary follows the lives of students and staff at an alternative high school that has changed its approach and has become an inspiration for other institutions. The school embraced a less punitive and more supportive way of serving its students after it gained new insights about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)—such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse—and the effects these traumatic events can have on a student's education.

2017 Peace Essay Contest

Everyone has the right to have a place they call home.

Every community has many individuals and families experiencing homelessness -- sleeping on the street, in a car, in a shelter, or some other place. As the number of homeless people has grown, each community struggles with ways to deal with this situation. Sometimes residents view this as an unsolvable problem and blame the homeless instead of working toward solutions -- solutions that will work for all and build a sense of community instead of fostering resistance and resentment.

The 30th annual Peace Essay Contest challenges students to research and consider why people become homeless and then to focus on one specific plan that might help to improve this issue by creating a sense of “home” for everyone in the community.

Division I (grades 11-12) and Division II (grades 9-10)

By talking with others and researching, gain an understanding of both the common reasons why people become homeless and solutions which have been tried in various communities throughout our country. In an Argument essay of 500-1000 words, do the following:

- Focus on one reason why people become homeless in our area. Then, create your own plan that would address this particular reason in order to decrease homelessness in our community. Be creative! Think outside the box!
- Describe this plan in detail. By using specific examples and reasons, explain how your plan would decrease homelessness. If your plan includes participation by a government agency, local groups, community volunteers, or homeless people themselves, include those details. In addition, explain what part you would like to play in implementing this plan.
- Anticipate an argument against your plan and provide logical, well-developed reasons to show that your idea is strong and realistic, while a different approach has weaknesses.
- Provide a strong conclusion that supports your plan and shows how it fosters a sense of “home” for everyone in the community.

Division III (grades 7-8)** and Division IV (grades 5-6)

By talking with others and researching, gain an understanding of why people become homeless and some solutions which have been tried in various communities throughout our country. In an Argument essay for Division III and Opinion essay for Division IV of 250-500 words, do the following:

- Think about reasons why people become homeless in our area. Focus on one reason. Then, create your own plan that would address this particular reason in order to decrease homelessness in our community. Be creative! Think outside the box!
 - Describe this plan in detail. By using specific examples and reasons, explain how your plan would decrease homelessness. If your plan includes participation by a government agency, local groups, community volunteers, or homeless people themselves, include those details. In addition, explain what part you would like to play in implementing this plan.
- ** Anticipate an argument against your plan and provide logical, well-developed reasons to show that your idea is strong and realistic, while a different approach has weaknesses.** Required only for DIVISION III
- End your essay with a strong conclusion that supports your plan and shows how it fosters a sense of “home” for everyone in the community.

You might consider these resources: recent articles in the Modesto BEE and Stanislaus Connections; articles online which describe plans that have been tried in other communities; your own, personal experiences with someone who has been homeless; books you have read about this issue.

To qualify for an award, your essay must answer each part of the prompt. Each essay will be judged on the quality of the writing, the strength of the argument you make in support of a specific plan to reduce homelessness, and the personal connection you make to this plan. At the end of your essay, please provide a list of sources you used in your research; do not include graphics (e.g. charts, tables).

Deadline for Entries: November 18, 2016 Notification of Winners: February 28, 2017

| AWARDS | 1st Place | 2nd Place | 3rd Place | Honorable Mention |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Division I | \$300 | \$200 | \$100 | \$50 |
| Division II | \$300 | \$200 | \$100 | \$50 |
| Division III | \$150 | \$100 | \$50 | \$25 |
| Division IV | \$150 | \$100 | \$50 | \$25 |

Download: flyers / entry forms / submission rules <http://peaceessaycontest.weebly.com>

View information: www.stanislausconnections.org OR www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest

Email questions to: peaceessay@juno.com

2017 Peace Essay Contest

Rules & Submission Directions

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of Stanislaus County or attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
2. Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced, using one side of white paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly. **YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
3. Give your essay a title. Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. **DO NOT** use a separate title or cover page.
4. Print & complete the Entry Form and attach to the front of your essay (may be found at: <http://peaceessaycontest.weebly.com> OR www.stanislausconnections.org OR email peaceessay@juno.com).
5. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
6. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
7. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries may be delivered to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2pm-5pm November 16 - 17 - 18, 2016. You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than November 18, 2016 to:

2017 Peace Essay Contest
Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

Judging

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays. Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

1. **Content**
 - A. Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
 - B. Has the writer used relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples to fully develop their ideas?
 - C. Does the essay address the given topic?
2. **Style**
 - A. Is the essay original and interesting?
 - B. Did the student establish and maintain a formal writing style?
 - C. Does the voice of the writer come through?
3. **Clarity of Expression**
 - A. Is the topic introduced clearly?
 - B. Is the essay well organized with a clear introduction and conclusion? Is the essay well organized with clear transitions from one idea to the next?
 - C. Are the ideas clearly stated with factual support?
4. **Mechanics**
 - A. Has the writer attempted to use appropriate transitions, precise language, and a formal style?
 - B. Are grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
 - C. Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
 - D. Does the essay stay within the word limit?

First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded in each of the four divisions which have at least 15 entries. In the event that fewer than 15 entries are entered in any one division, all prizes may or may not be awarded in that division at the discretion of the judging panel. Up to 3 Honorable Mentions may be awarded in each division. Group entries (more than one author) are welcome; however, a student may only enter one essay.

The writer of the best essay in a division from a school which has ten or more entries in that division will be honored as the school winner. All participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Notification of Winners

In late February, 2017, winners will be notified through the student's teacher. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2017 Peace Essay Committee: Indira Clark, Steve Collins, Nancy Haskett, Peggy Hoover, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner, Jann Spallina and David Tucker
This **30th Annual Peace Essay Contest** is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by: Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

Ode to a Toad

By JENIFER WEST

This spring/summer garden was more about rebuilding the soil than what ended up on our table, although we netted a pretty good haul in the process. This has meant things like using the 'chop and drop' method (leaving trimmings right under the plant they came from), spreading spent chicken bedding on the raised beds, and even 'hiring' a couple of furry friends solely for the 'bunny berries'.

The Tree Guy started things with last fall's leaves. Seeing the improvement encouraged me to continue the soil improvement campaign by mulching the beds. This garden, consequently, was the best we've had in years.



Tomato Tip: Keep a layer of mulch (dry leaves, shredded junk mail, coffee grounds, and whatever similar things are at hand) on your tomato (and other) beds. We've always dealt with blossom end rot, due to a lack of calcium in the soil, inconsistent watering, or both. Mulch keeps the moisture level consistent, simultaneously feeding the soil. We had very little blossom end rot this year.

A nice side benefit has been an increase of 'wildlife' in the garden, particularly insects. We did have trouble with earwigs, slugs, and snails, early on. We strive to garden organically, so I planted lots of alyssum, which attracts a wasp that is earwigs' natural predator. Bumblebees began visiting our squash – they're the first bees out in the spring, and they will keep returning to the same plants, so long as there's food. And hummingbirds! How nice to hear the buzz of their little wings, and their funny, whispery voices. Praying mantises, too, appeared. And, later, as plants started dying back and attracting aphids, the ladybugs! We've been known to purchase them for our garden, so it was rewarding to see them come to it on their own.

But the best thing, so far, has been the toad. Toads are excellent in any yard – they can consume huge numbers of insects, including mosquitos (up to 1,000 a night!). I saw one, maybe even the same one, a year or two ago. They can live ten years, or more! This year, I spotted the opening to his (her?) burrow. Or one of them, anyway. At least, I suspected it was. My hunch turned out to be correct – s/he poked her nose out as I was watering one day. Presumably the water startled her awake, as toads are generally nocturnal. Having just ripped out the bean plants that were providing her cover, I decided to create habitat for her. Toads need shade, a place to hide, and access to at least a little water (they drink through their skin). (Frogs, by contrast, spend their lives in water, and so are more often found near ponds, creeks or streams. Toads are usually only found near water during the mating season, in the spring.) She'd claimed a spot in the garden that's too small to really plant anything, so I just covered one end of it with a couple of small boards, and set the drip tray from a plant pot, filled with water, underneath them. Saw her again recently, poking her nose out of a different burrow entrance.

continued next page

Green Tips for a Green Planet: Take action NOW – Keep California's Infrastructure Climate-Safe

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Most of us travel about California with little or no thought to the safety of our roads, bridges, reservoirs, dams and buildings. The Union of Concerned Scientists says, “with climate change we can no longer rely on the past as a good predictor of the future when designing critical infrastructure.”

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, “sea-level rise, extreme heat, more frequent droughts and intense storms can mean empty reservoirs, flooded highways, and ravaged buildings. We already know that parts of the new San Francisco Bay Bridge will be inundated by sea-level rise by the end of century—and it was just re-built.”

“...Seismic safety standards can make the difference between life and death when a disastrous earthquake strikes, and

the stakes can be equally high if we don't design and build infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change,” the UCS cautions.

There is some good news on the horizon. The UCS is sponsoring AB 2800, a bill that will bring together “a Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group—composed of engineers, architects, and climate scientists—to better integrate climate science into the design and construction of major taxpayer-funded projects, culminating in recommendations to the legislature by July 2018.”

AB 2800 passed out of the California Assembly in June with a bipartisan vote and is now in the Senate, where it's in the Appropriations Committee after passing the Natural

Resources and Water Committee and the Environmental Quality Committee.

ACTION: The UCS urges you to write your state senator NOW “to vote YES on AB 2800 and keep the policy drum-beat going for strong California climate policies during this legislative session.

Senator Anthony Cannella: <http://district12.cssrc.us/>
Senator Cathleen Galgiani: Senator.Galgiani@senate.ca.gov

Senator Tom Berryhill: <http://berryhill.cssrc.us/>
To learn more about how you can take action and be informed by the action-based Union of Concerned Scientists, visit their website at www.ucsusa.org

Toad

. . . from page 4

With any luck, she'll like it so much that she'll hibernate there (again?) this winter. Convenient for her, and great for us, when she wakes up, hungry, in the spring!

It's actually pretty easy to make your yard toad-friendly, and once you do, they're likely to find it, and move in. They need a shady area that doesn't get much human or pet traffic (including chickens, which consider them quite a delicacy), and provides some sort of vegetation cover. They'll appreciate a small 'swimming pool', which will allow them to stay hydrated. A rock or something similar should be placed in the pool, to make sure they can easily climb in and out. Change the water every day or two—I do this by simply squirting fresh water into the pool whenever I'm watering. Dampen the area frequently. Don't use pesticides or herbicides, or at least not in the toad area – toads, and other wildlife, are sensitive to them. In fact, even cigarette butts can keep them from calling your yard home. One thing critical to creating a welcoming space for toads and other wildlife is leaving the area a little more 'natural' – we humans tend to want everything neat and tidy, without a stray leaf or twig in sight, while old Mother Nature is a little more relaxed. Those leaves and twigs provide just the right cover for her creatures, and if we do it right, we can attract the ones we want.

Why not make your yard a safe haven for toads? Once they find it and move in, their pest control services more than pay for any effort it takes!

“Global Warming and the Christian Response”

By RICHARD ANDERSON

Global warming realities slap us in the face with every report of storm surge in Florida, droughts and megafires in the US West and Canada, coral deaths in the northern Australian Barrier Reef, and so many others.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Citizen's Climate Lobby Modesto will hold three meetings, Sept 14, 21, and 28 studying climate change and our proper response. Each session is from 6-7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's, 1528 Oakdale Rd and is open and free to the public.

“**September 14** will be presented by the CCL, and be a “Climate Change 101, that presents the science behind this challenge to the person of faith,” said Father Glenn Kanestrom, Associate Priest at St. Paul's. It will present the basic science behind the problems created by our overuse of fossil fuels, but also will explore the reasons a few scientists and many politicians refuse to accept that science.

On Sept 21, Father Glenn and Tom Hampson will lead an exploration of “Faith Principles and Climate Change.” How can we be faithful stewards and caretakers of God's creation while achieving environmental justice for the poor who are most vulnerable to climate change's harsh impacts?

Sept. 28 will focus on solutions to this environmental challenge. CCL Modesto will explain the National CCL's “Carbon Fee and Dividend” concept (<http://citizensclimatelobby.org/carbon-fee-and-dividend>) that is gathering growing support both among companies and conservative politicians. (see “Why ExxonMobil is Supporting a Carbon Tax Now,” <http://fortune.com/2016/07/10/exxonmobil-carbon-tax/> and <http://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2015/09/gibson-introduces-climate-change-resolution-025675> We will compare and contrast California's Cap and Trade with the proposed national revenue-neutral Carbon Fee and Dividend, then consider additional methods for personal action on climate justice.

Kathy Conrotto and Modesto Junior College philosophy professor Bill Anelli are the leaders of CCL Modesto. Contact them at kobrien99@sbcglobal.net

Air District offers Valley residents money back to replace polluting, fuel-powered lawnmowers

The Valley Air District's Clean Green Yard Machines, lawn mower replacement program, encourages Valley residents to replace their old dirty gas-powered lawn mower with a clean electric lawn mower by offering a huge incentive.

This program provides Valley residents a cash rebate of up to \$250 or 50% off of the purchase price of new zero-emissions electric lawn mower when they turn in their older, polluting, gas or diesel-powered lawn mower.

Using a gas-powered mower for one hour can produce emissions equivalent to driving 40 late-model cars during the same period of time. Interested residents should purchase one of the many eligible, electric lawn mower models; take their older gas-powered lawn mower to an authorized dismantler; and then submit the required application and paperwork to the District to receive their rebate.

Program participants must be residents of the eight-county Valley air basin. Rebates are granted on a sliding scale up to \$250, depending on the price of the new mower, not including taxes, fees, accessories or delivery charges. Additional requirements include:

- Applicants must replace a functional, existing gas or diesel-powered lawn mower with the new, zero-emissions electric mower by surrendering the old mower to an authorized program dismantler.
- Electric mowers must be new and not previously used or owned.
- Rebates are issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

For program guidelines, the list of eligible mower manufacturers and authorized dismantlers, visit www.valleyair.org/lawnmowers to apply or call the District's grants program at 559-230-5800.

Applications can be submitted by mail, or delivered to a District office: in Fresno, at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., 93726 (559-230-6000), in Modesto, at 4800 Enterprise Way, 95356 (209-557-6400).

NEW MODESTO RADIO STATION COMING SOON!

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has been granted a full power radio station license and needs YOUR help!

- ⇒ Donations, Donations, Donations!
- ⇒ Feedback on future programming from YOU!
- ⇒ Volunteers with radio backgrounds & experience
- ⇒ Local Music, Arts and Entertainment connections
- ⇒ Community partners



To get involved or learn more about the new station, contact James Costello, (209) 402-9191 or jcostello@igc.org. You can donate by sending your check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353 with “Radio Station” in the memo. You can also donate online at <http://peacelifecenter.org>

What a gay Muslim taught me about Orlando

By JANESEA WILDER

"Homosexuality wasn't a subject we could ever talk about. When it was brought up, people shrugged in disgust and disappointment. Then they would go on about how corrupt darkness is blinding men and destroying their nature. That made me hate myself in a way."

This past year, I got to know a Muslim teenager named Kareem* who came to the U.S. as an exchange student from the Middle East. Outgoing, smart, incredibly warm and kind, he privately shared his struggles about homosexuality with me. He had long noticed leanings in that direction growing up, he acknowledged, but he was from a very conservative, religious family and lived in a small, traditional town. His country imprisons anyone who is openly gay.

As a devout Muslim, he played an active role in the local mosque and was a youth leader. He shared that Islam taught him that homosexuality was "deviant behavior" and a sin, and of course, socially, it was completely unaccepted. "Homosexuality wasn't a subject we could ever talk about. It's a taboo like sex. But when it was brought up, people shrugged in disgust and disappointment. Then they would go on about how corrupt darkness is blinding men and destroying their nature. That made me hate myself in a way." Kareem learned to suppress his emotions and deny his feelings.

Coming to the U.S. this past year was his first time out of the country and threw him into shock, as he described it. "My window on the world had been so small and now it is wide open," he said, flinging his arms out to his side. In his American high school he took classes he had never anticipated, such as the arts, and participated in a wide variety of extracurriculars. He met people who shattered his preconceived notions, including Jews, whom he said he was raised to hate, but now exclaimed, "I love Jews!"

As one ironclad belief after another started to fall, he started looking at even deep-seated "truths", like whether homosexuality were truly evil and, then eventually, even his own faith in Islam. "Here in the U.S., I got slowly used to being myself and accepting what I like. It was easy, calming, reassuring and fun to be who I am." At the same time, he suffered from a shifting sense of identity and felt the ground collapsing beneath his feet. "Everything is in question now — my religion, my orientation, my identity. I'm gay. I'm secular. I can't even consider myself a Muslim anymore. How will I raise my future kids? What can I believe in? How will I act with my family? I feel like I've been brainwashed my entire life."

On the subject of the Orlando attack on a gay nightclub, Kareem was livid, seeing it as the product of an extremist ideology that teaches hatred of homosexuals. In this case,

there are reports to suggest that the perpetrator, Omar Mateen, himself was conflicted about his sexual tendencies. He frequented the nightclub he attacked and used a gay dating app. He had allegedly come on to clubgoers. Kareem said he could understand the mindset of someone repressed and self-loathing, and how it could in extreme cases lead to violence. "It's like you're a ticking bomb, literally!"

As one ironclad belief after another started to fall, he started looking at even deep-seated "truths", like whether homosexuality were truly evil and, then eventually, even his own faith in Islam.

We cannot pretend to know what truly motivated Omar to murder the innocent people in the Orlando nightclub a few days ago (was he a jihadist, anti-gay, closet homosexual, mentally disturbed, misogynist, abusive, violent, bipolar psychopath—or all of the above?) But I bring up Kareem because the attack made me think of the pressure the LGBTQ community is under, not just in the U.S., but in so many parts of the world. In Kareem's home country, to which he has now returned, he is unable to share his beliefs and evolving sense of identity

with his family or even closest friends. He shared with me recently: "Back here, I feel like I am being dragged back into a cage. It's like I am going back into a certain closet I suffered in forever. I feel terrible that I can't tell my family or friends about myself, or about the amazing people I met or the great time I had in the U.S. Why? Because all of that is bad and all of that is a sin. It is making me sick to my stomach and I am trying my best not to think about it or let it consume me."

There are hate groups in his own community that he has already encountered who stalk suspected homosexuals to report, harass, and abuse them. And yet that is a much better situation than elsewhere in the region, with ISIS throwing gay men off buildings in Homs, Syria, or the some 4,000 gays who have been executed by Iran since its 1979 Islamic Revolution, according to gay activists. It is an issue, like so many, that highlights how the "Other" is viewed and treated, ranging from execution, murder, abuse, on the extreme end to condemnation and shaming on the

other. It is tragic that such a talented, exceptional person such as Kareem is condemned to live a life in the shadows and under threat of attack from extremist ideologies. Indeed, although at potential risk even from this blog post, he was eager to share his story in the hopes that it could help someone like him. This can be a time for thoughtful awareness of the intolerance and injustice towards the LGBTQ community not just at home, but abroad.

There have been many touching and uplifting responses to the Orlando attack circulating this past week, which have emphasized our solidarity and unity in the face of hatred. Here are a few I found helpful [follow the links]:

[Click here: Utah Lt. Governor Spencer Cox addressed a vigil for the victims of Orlando](#)

[Mahmoud, a Muslim-American in Orlando, posted the following on his Facebook page, which went "viral":](#)

-Yes my name is Mahmoud a proud Muslim American.
-Yes I donated blood even though I can't eat or drink anything cause I'm fasting in our holy month Ramadan just like hundreds of other Muslims who donated today here in Orlando.

-Yes I'm angry for what happened last night and all the innocent lives we lost.

-Yes I'm sad, frustrated and mad that a crazy guy claim to be a Muslim did that shameful act.

-Yes this is the greatest nation on earth watching people from different ages including kids volunteering to give water, juice, food, umbrellas, sun block. Also watching our old veterans coming to donate. And next to them Muslim women

in hijab carrying food and water to donors standing in line.

-Yes together we will stand against hate, terrorism, extremism and racism.

-Yes our blood all look the same so get out there and donate blood because our fellow American citizens are injured and need our blood.

Yes our community in central Florida is heartbroken but let's put our colors, religions, ethnicity,

sexual orientation, political views all aside so we can UNITE against those who are trying to hurt us.

*Name changed for privacy and security. The individual gave the author permission to share this story and its details.

Edited from <http://euphrates.org/gay-muslim-taught-orlando/>

In Kareem's home country, to which he has now returned, he is unable to share his beliefs and evolving sense of identity with his family or even closest friends.



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Highlights from CDC's Release of First National Data on LGB High School Students

From LISA J. CISNEROS, Esq., LGBT Program Director, Fighting for Justice, Changing Lives

On August 11, 2016, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the first nationally representative data on the health behaviors among gay, lesbian, and bisexual (LGB) high school students, [Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors among Students in Grades 9–12 – United States and Selected Sites, 2015](#). Nationwide, 8% of students identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual, 3.2% were not sure of their sexual identity, and 88.8% identified as heterosexual.

Bullied on School Property

The prevalence of having been bullied on school property during the 12 months before the survey was higher among gay, lesbian, and bisexual students (34.2%) than heterosexual students (18.8%) and not sure students (24.9%) and higher among not sure students (24.9%) than heterosexual students (18.8%).

Threatened or Injured with a Weapon on School Property

Nationwide, 6.0% of all students; 5.1% of heterosexual students; 10.0% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students; and 12.6% of not sure students had been threatened or injured with a weapon (e.g., a gun, knife, or club) on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey. Among female students, the prevalence was higher among lesbian and bisexual students (9.1%) than heterosexual students (3.8%). Among male students, the prevalence was higher among gay and bisexual students (11.6%) and not sure students (17.2%) than heterosexual students (6.2%).

Did Not Go to School Because of Safety Concerns

The prevalence of not having gone to school on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey because of safety concerns was higher among LGB students (12.5%) and not

sure students (10.8%) than heterosexual students (4.6%). Among female students, the prevalence was higher among lesbian and bisexual students (10.8%) and not sure students (11.1%) than heterosexual students (5.1%). Among male students, the prevalence was higher among gay and bisexual students (15.5%) than heterosexual students (4.1%).

Felt Sad or Hopeless

During the 12 months before the survey, 29.9% of all students; 26.4% of heterosexual students; 60.4% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students; and 46.5% of not sure students nationwide had felt so sad or helpless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities.

Seriously Considered Attempting Suicide

Nationwide, 17.7% of all students; 14.8% of heterosexual students; 42.8% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students; and 31.9% of not sure students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

Ever Had Sexual Intercourse

Nationwide, 41.2% of all students; 40.9% of heterosexual students; 50.8% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students; and 31.6% of not sure students had ever had sexual intercourse. The prevalence of having ever had sexual intercourse was higher among gay, lesbian, and bisexual students (50.8%) than heterosexual students (40.9%) and not sure students (31.6%). Among female students, the prevalence was higher among lesbian and bisexual students (52.2%) than heterosexual students (38.2%) and not sure students (28.4%) and higher among heterosexual students (38.2%) than not sure students (28.4%).

For more information on this data and LGBTQ student rights, contact CRLA's LGBT Program Director, Lisa Cisneros at lcisneros@crla.org or (831) 724-2253 x 305.

ID Project needs your help

By JOHN LUCAS

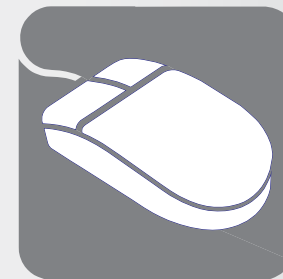
The Modesto Peace/Center has been providing free and affordable ID to the poor and homeless since last May 2015.

We have helped hundreds of people get their ID documents. Having an identification can be the first step for getting a job, accessing services, finding housing and, getting off the streets.

Two things are occurring right now with the ID program. We are running low on funds to continue paying for ID documents and we need more volunteers to staff the office or schedule clients for appointments. People in the office work about once a month or less for 3 to 4 hours at helping with processing applications for IDs at the MP/LC office. The other option is working at home scheduling clients for their appointments.

To apply, contact Frank Ploof at ploof1@att.net, or call or 209-556-2376. To be a scheduler of our clients, you need to have a phone, computer, and an internet service. Schedule is working for one week at any time during the day. Set your own schedule.

To contribute to the ID project, send check to Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353. Write "ID Project" in the memo of your check.



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

Homeless myths

. . . from page 1

pundits, and talk-show hosts reduced the American Dream to an individualistic mix of hard work, family values, and "free" choice.

Ronald Reagan's famous words, "Government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem," became a mantra that culminated in Bill Clinton's 1996 announcement that, "The era of big government is over."

In his first year in office alone, President Reagan cut government housing assistance funds by half. He also continued to promote the notion that homelessness is a matter of choice. By 1984, when the number of people experiencing homelessness had attracted national attention, Reagan famously said:

"What we have found in this country...even in the best of times, and that is the people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless who are homeless, you might say, by choice."

Even today, after the devastating effects of the global economy on American industry and workers, there is a widespread belief that homeless people choose to live on the streets. One of the most pernicious effects of such beliefs stems from the notion that all homeless people are alike. That notion fails immediately in the face of a few simple facts

Homeless in Graceada Park

One of the most damning such facts is the large number of homeless people who are mentally ill. Some local experts estimate the rate of mental illness among our homeless population is at least forty percent.

Assuming that mentally ill people "choose" their condition isn't just inhumane, it's cruel. Their presence on the streets is the result of closing mental health institutions based on the false theory that modern drugs and home care would address their problems. Most of those closures also happened during the "Reagan Revolution."

Many homeless people, mentally ill or not, do not "choose" to be out of work. Even conservative presidential candidate Ross Perot warned almost a quarter century ago about the "giant sucking sound" that would result from jobs lost due to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). And NAFTA was only the beginning of a massive corporate move away from American labor.

Today, the giants of American industry have "chosen" to employ millions of willing workers everywhere from Mexico to China. According to the prevailing mythology, the workers they left behind here in the United States have "chosen" to

be poor or homeless.

Since Ronald Reagan's 1984 proclamation that homelessness is a choice, the global economy has not only sucked away American jobs, it has wreaked havoc on income equality. With reduced labor and construction costs, investors and corporate executives have reaped huge profits while most of those who used to participate in economic growth have fallen farther and farther behind.

Rising profits in the hands of the favored few not only punished American workers, they led to a political system ever more dependent on huge campaign contributions. Until the recent wild card of advertising via social media, corporate donors routinely gamed elections by funding candidates who would make "choosing" available to fewer and fewer people. What was once a more equitable democratic republic became a plutocratic oligarchy where the myth of choice grew in inverse proportion to a harsh reality of diminishing options for the vast majority of American citizens.

Next: Read Part II: The Myths of Drugs, Government, and Family at <http://thevalleycitizen.com/five-myths-about-the-homeless-part-ii/>

Peace Camp 2016

By EMMY POWER

For the past 34 years, Modesto Peace Life Center has been putting on 'Peace Camp'. Families gather at Peaceful Pines campground for a weekend of relaxation in Nature. Personally I had never been until this year and I decided to go because family and friends of mine who had gone previous years had talked about how much fun they had during their stay at Peaceful Pines. Going into camp, I expected to be on a tight schedule where you could only eat at certain times and everyone did every activity together, but it was quite the opposite of that. There were several activities throughout the weekend but all of them were optional. Scheduled activities included: Nature hikes, a two session workshop on inner peace led by Lori Wong, Ukulele Lessons taught by Scott Gifford as well as a campfire sing along, the Talent/No Talent show, the Star Walk lead by Tim Smart and of course the daily meals. Individual activities that you could do if you didn't find some of those things appealing were arts and crafts, exploring the area, napping on the hammock (which my friends and I found ourselves doing a few times) or just getting to know the interesting people attending the camp.

Personally my favorite moments of the camp were the Talent/No Talent show, the Sunrise Hike (Views of the Morning hike below) and free time on the hammock with friends. I found the 'Talent/No Talent' Show very interesting because of the variety of acts. From a mini art showing, to Sitar playing, joke telling, Rubik cube solving, and even a mini skit of a young boy named Joe's experience at camp, the show had it all.

The Sunrise hike was breathtaking. We didn't go early enough to see the sun rise, but the view was stunning. While at the peak of our hike you could look around and it was an endless view of tall pine trees that stretched for miles. The sky seemed more blue and the air was more crisp and it was one of the most peaceful moments I had ever experienced in my life. To experience it with some of my closest friends made the moment so much more enjoyable.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center puts on several events that I have been involved with such as the annual Pancake breakfast, movie nights the third Wednesday of the month, and vigils for events in the world, but Peace Camp was truly my favorite. I look forward to it's arrival next summer, and if you

are reading this and have never been I strongly urge you to go out next year. If this article wasn't convincing enough for you to consider attending next year, here are pictures of the weekend's events: <https://empowerphoto.wordpress.com/2016/07/07/peace-camp-2016/>. Watch a movie at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w-f_R-DIQE&feature=youtu.be

For more information on the Peace Center, visit their webpage: <http://www.peacelifecenter.org> or their Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/ModestoPLC>



Come, Raise Your Paddle at the Annual Fall Gala & Auction to support the Tuolumne River Trust!

This year's fundraising highlights our collaborative, innovative work on headwater forest restoration to address the havoc wreaked on our forests by drought and the bark beetle infestation. Tuolumne's headwater forests are vital for ensuring clean water, wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration.

This year's event is taking place Thursday, September 29th from 6:00-9:00pm at the Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave. in Berkeley, CA. *Designed by Julia Morgan, the Berkeley City Club is also known as the "Little Castle" as many of the building's features are evocative of the Hearst Castle, which Morgan also designed.*

Tickets are \$150. Please RSVP no later than September 22nd at <https://www.tuolumne.org/>. Or contact Dulcey Reiter, Tuolumne River Trust, dulcey@tuolumne.org, 415.882.7252.

Tuolumne River Trust, 312 Sutter St., Suite 402, San Francisco, CA 94108

Film Night features Michael Moore's *Where to Invade Next*, Wednesday, September 21

By DAN ONORATO

Just when we need him most, America's favorite political provocateur, Michael Moore, brings us his latest award-winning film, *Where to Invade Next*.

In this latest subversive comedy/documentary, the Academy Award-winning director confronts the most pressing issues facing America today and finds solutions in the most unlikely places—in other countries, like Portugal, Norway, France, Iceland, and Germany.

This film is "classic Moore," writes Peter Travers in February's *Rolling Stone*: "Love him or hate his methods, Moore touches a nerve in *Where to Invade Next*. In a climactic remembrance at the Berlin Wall, he recalls a time when a corrupt regime was brought down by people willing to protest. What counted most were humanitarian principles, the same bedrock concepts that America was founded on. See, the joke's on us. The rest of the world is swiping ideas that we originated. Amid the comic chaos of this scattershot satire is a shocking reminder to Americans that discovering the path ahead may be as uncomplicated as rediscovering the way we were." Travers adds, "Moore is just the pain in the ass America needs in a crisis."

Come see this entertaining and provocative critique of contemporary America on Wednesday, September 21, at 6:30 p.m. at the Center, 720 13th St. in Modesto, and join in the lively conversation afterwards.

View the trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KeAZho8TKo>



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Taylor Graham, El Dorado County's first poet laureate, shares the inspiration of peace pioneer Elihu Burritt

Taylor Graham was recently appointed as **El Dorado County's first poet laureate**. She has been involved with a local peace and justice network that, at one time, included her poetry critique group in Season for Non-violence events.

She says of the 2016 election campaign: "Personally, this election season is a brick wall poetically; my poems have been concentrating on past history in our country, (which hasn't always been exemplary for peace and justice). Graham lives with her husband (a retired forester/wildlife biologist) and two German Shepherds on five acres outside Placerville. For over forty years the Grahams



responded as volunteers with their dogs to search for lost people. Off callout now, they still train their dogs, because it's an education and joy. Her work appears in the anthologies *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* and *Villanelles*. Her most recent books are *Walking with Elihu: poems on Elihu Burritt*, *The Learned Blacksmith* (Hot Pepper Press, 2010), *What the Wind Says* (Lummo Press, 2013) and *Uplift* (Cold River Press, 2016).

Here are a few poems from her Elihu Burritt project:



"Horseshoes and Ploughshares" refers to his teaching himself 50 languages while working as a blacksmith. "A Ship Goes Aground off Nantucket" and "How to Conquer an Enemy" are based on his writings at the time of the Oregon

Question. Soon after, he traveled to Europe and spent a good part of his life organizing international peace congresses there and in other ways working for peace and human rights. He walked the length of Britain, looking at farming and industry (the Industrial Revolution was in full swing) and the situation of the common working man.

Horseshoes and Ploughshares

Amo, first stroke. *Amas*, the next.
Ama, stroke on stroke, hammer on hot arc
of iron. How easily Spanish takes form
when you've already taught yourself French –

j'aime, yo amo, sister verbs
sired by Latin *amare*, as *cavallo, cheval, caballo* –
words for horse in different tongues –
sprout from the same root, a great leafing tree

of language. So like the pedigree of man.
You like to muse on this universal
brotherhood, stronger
than maple trunks or bond of metal.

From the west, do you hear rumors of war?
While you hammer a ploughshare,
you're learning to conjugate Love,
a word your countrymen so sorely need.

A Ship Goes Aground off Nantucket

based on Elihu Burritt's "A Child's Question"

Fifty-four Forty or Fight! It looks like war,
United States against the Motherland.
And off the coast of Massachusetts, Mother
Nature brews a storm.

Against the wind, British sea-men
wrestle down their sails.
But still, their ship
wrecks on the shoals off Nantucket.

Merchants and whalers, good Nantucketeers
rope themselves in, throw themselves
into the waves to save foreign sailors
from a common foe and friend, the Sea.

Now observe this English mariner
shivering and drenched,
wrapped in Yankee
comforters and warmed with tea

as a small child asks
her father, *isn't this the enemy*
we wish to go to war
to kill?

How to Conquer an Enemy

based on Elihu Burritt's "Storming Quebec"

Shall we go to war over a boundary
with Canada? And now, by chance, Quebec City
burns – a third of its population homeless.
Seize the moment. Arm the battleships,
prepare for war. Strike
while the people grovel in their ashes.

You can win the enemy over, hand to hand
and mouth by mouth. *Spring upon him*
like a good Samaritan, with blankets, jackets
and trousers; hogsheads of bacon; codfish,
pork, and flour. Fire the cannon at fifty
hams per minute. Take the harbor

and swiftly come ashore. Barricade the streets
with loaves of bread. As white flags
wave from every corner and the amazed
church-bells peal, it will be clear:
you have killed an enemy
and made a friend at one shot.

Fugitive

and here I met a fellow-being and a fellow countryman,
with as good title to freedom as myself.
- Elihu Burritt's journal, Nov. 27, 1846

London, late November, guttering daylight.
You return to your unlit
room too cheap for comfort

and find a stranger – darker shadow hunched
over the fire: jaws
too clenched to say his name: black

stowaway from a slave-block
in the mint-julep "home of the free,"
hanging –

no, it's his ragged calico
that hangs coatwise, still dripping
bilge-water in puddles.

Of your two overcoats, you offer him
the better, easing his locked
elbows into free sleeves.

Your old mournful hat, as well;
you've got a new one, and who
on God's good earth

needs the luxury of two
of anything? A man travels lighter
for what he gives willingly away.





Remembering Myrtle Osner

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Osner family, I am writing to express our appreciation for the recent article about our mom, on the occasion of her death. Mom loved the Peace/Life Center and *Connections*. She exemplified the understanding that "Peace, Justice, and the Environment" are intimately linked and interdependent.

Dan's article really captured the essence of mom and her relationship to PLC. Thank you so very much.

We also wish to express our appreciation to all who have made tangible their respect and love for mom by making a contribution to the Center. Your contribution honors her and her family appreciates and is grateful for your contributions.

Yours in Peace,
George Osner

Some things to think about

From Libby and Len Traubman

"When you don't live in the community you don't think of them as human."

~ O.J.: *Made in America*, ESPN-TV documentary (June 2016)

"If I learned one lesson from my time with the CIA it is this: Everybody believes they are the good guy. The only real way to disarm your enemy is to listen to them."

~ Amaryllis Fox, Former CIA Counter Terrorism & Intelligence Officer (10 years) <https://www.facebook.com/ajplusenglish/videos/744058605735649/>

"After 9/11 serving as a CIA officer in the Middle East, including in Iraq's Al Anbar Province in the 'Triangle of Death,' my main take-away was an acute awareness of most adversaries' ignorance about the lives and humanity of one another."

"So back in the U.S. I founded The Euphrates Institute to cultivate informed and engaged global citizens to lower walls and build bridges to one another."

~ Janessa Gans Wilder, Former CIA Insurgency Analyst, <http://euphrates.org>

"Life is best when you build bridges between people, not walls."

~ Billy Crystal - Eulogy for Muhammad Ali (1942-2016), <https://youtu.be/bOKCoctNk9A>

An Ethic, Not a Religion

By VASU MURTY

Like pacifists and/or pro-lifers, vegetarianism, in itself, is merely an "ethic", not a religion. Like the pro-life ethic, vegetarianism has attracted some of the greatest figures in history: Leonardo Da Vinci, Count Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw, Percy Shelley, Susan B. Anthony, Rosa Parks. Like the pro-life ethic, vegetarianism has served as the basis for entire religious traditions. Buddhism, Jainism, Pythagoreanism, and possibly early Christianity all immediately come to mind.

Early church fathers like Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, and others were vegetarian, and many of them wrote extensively on the subject. It's possible Christianity began as a vegetarian religion and was gradually corrupted over the centuries, beginning, perhaps, with the "apostle" Paul. Over 150 canonized Christian saints were vegetarian and their lives and teachings have been well documented.

Protestant reformers like John Wesley (founder of the Methodist church), Ellen White (founder of the Seventh Day Adventist church), and General William Booth (founder of the Salvation Army) were vegetarian, as were Quaker poets, pacifists, and abolitionists like Joshua Evans. The moral status of animals continues to be debated within Christianity to this day, as evidenced by the writings of Karl Barth and Dr. Albert Schweitzer, as well as current trends in animal liberation theology: Reverend Marc Wessels, Reverend Andrew Linzey, Reverend Annika Spaide, Reverend Frank Hoffman, the late

Reverend Janet Regina Hyland, Dr. Stephen Webb, Baptist theologian Dr. Richard Alan Young, Dr. Charles Camosy, Rick Dunkerly of Christ Lutheran Church, etc.

When I was doing research on religion and animal rights, I was pleasantly surprised by the volumes of information on Christian vegetarianism. Rose Evans (1928 - 2015), editor and publisher of *Harmony: Voices for a Just Future*, a "consistent-ethic" periodical on the religious left, said there are more Christian vegetarians than Jewish vegetarians. Yet some people still react to the idea of Christian vegetarianism as if it were an oxymoron.

Would it be unusual for a Christian to teach compassion for animals to the point of vegetarianism? Some of the most distinguished figures in the history of Christianity were vegetarian. "Well, they were wrong," said my friend Tim Parks, who spent a number of years in China as a Protestant missionary. Someone else similarly commented, "They were some of the most *unusual* figures in Christianity."

How do we know if they were wrong or if their views were unusual? We have no way of knowing unless these Christians, the long history of animal advocacy, concern for animals, and vegetarianism in Christianity, etc. are given a fair hearing. Christian vegetarians throughout history and Christian vegans today may be a minority, but as pastor Rick Warren says, "A lie doesn't become truth, wrong doesn't become right, and evil doesn't become good, just because it's accepted by a majority."

Sunday Afternoons at CBS' world of music starts 25th Anniversary Season

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Sunday Afternoons at CBS invites the Modesto Area community to celebrate our 25th Anniversary Season starting September 25th 2016 with the heart thumping, toe tapping world beat sounds of Dirty Cello, cello with a twist of Klezmer, blues, blue grass and lots of Happy. A 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner follows the concert at the home of former Mayor Garrad and his wife Dallas Marsh.

The season continues on Oct. 30 with Clive Carroll, virtuosic guitar master from the UK, who opened for Tommy Emmanuel at Modesto's State Theater. That afternoon includes a special beer tasting and savories intermission with beers provided by the Last Call Brewing Company of Turlock.

On November 13, CBS founding family member Alan Arno pole will bring back California Zephyr to the stage followed by a Peju Winery and Pasta dinner.


Patty Castillo Davis Y Compadres will welcome in the New Year on January 22. Patty has invited a talented group of musicians to join her in a Celebration of Women featuring Jewish, Latin American, American pop, jazz, rhythm and blues.

The always popular Grace Lieberman and Friends Valentine Concert on February 12 will be followed by the 2nd Annual Valentine Tea catered by David Bradford. The first tea with David's divine goodies was a sell out, so be sure to

buy tickets early with a season subscription.

The March 19 Season 25 finale brings the return of Genticorum from the French Canadian Eastern Seaboard, a group of equally talented and witty Quebecois musicians.

Plan ahead now to be on hand for a season filled with beautiful and exciting music and grand opportunities to share the fun. All concerts are held at 1705 Sherwood Ave. starting at 3 pm. Tickets are available through the CBS office and at the door. Learn more at sundaysatcbs.com



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Standing with Survivors of the Bomb

From Tri-Valley CARES

Approximately 200 anti-nuclear activists gathered outside the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab on August 9 to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Nagasaki - and to stand with survivors of nuclear weapons from Hiroshima to the Marshall Islands.

Keynote speakers included famed whistleblower and nuclear weapons analyst, Daniel Ellsberg, atomic-bomb survivor, Nobuaki Hanaoka, and Executive Director of Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, John Burroughs. Tara Dorabji with Tri-Valley CAREs gave the group a sense of place with her description of current nuclear weapons work at Livermore Lab, while Chizu Hamada drew links between the nuclear bomb and nuclear power. Jackie Cabasso, from Western States Legal Foundation, updated the crowd on the "Growing Dangers of Wars Among Nuclear-Armed States."

Click here for a YouTube video of Daniel Ellsberg's speech at the rally from the Ecological Options Network.

The rally was followed by a march to the Livermore Lab West Gate where peace advocates then staged a "die in" and had their bodies chalked on the roadway to symbolize the victims vaporized in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 45 peaceful protesters, including Ellsberg, chose to risk arrest for blocking the roadway at both the West and East Ave. Gates to the Lab.

Links to photos, news articles, video and radio broadcasts can be found below. We will continue to add links as additional materials become available.

Click here for a YouTube video of the march, die-in and arrests from the Ecological Options Network.

[This Full Rally Video](#) was live streamed to Japan by IWJ (Independent Web Journal), SF office, Genta Yoshikawa.

[This Full March and Non-Violent Direct Action Video](#) was also live streamed to Japan by IWJ (Independent Web Journal), SF office, Genta Yoshikawa.

[East Bay Times Op-Ed "Must demand that the nuclear armed states disarm"](#) by [Jacqueline Cabasso](#), [Marylia Kelley](#) and [Tom Webb](#).

[Click here](#) to read the text of John Burroughs' speech from the rally.

[Click here](#) to read the text of Jackie Cabasso's speech from the rally.

[Click here](#) to read the text of Tara Dorabji's speech from the rally.

[Click here](#) to read the text of Chizu Hamada's speech from the rally.

[Click here](#) for the Pacifica Radio Evening News segment and article about the event.

[Listen to Marylia Kelley's live interview on KPFA Radio's "The Talkies" with Kris Welch.](#) (Her interview begins at minute 4)

[Click here](#) to read an article about the event in Akahata newspaper (in Japanese)...

[Click here](#) for an article and video from the Central Valley Business Times.

[Click here](#) for more pictures, videos and links...

http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/Aug9_2016rally.JC_speech.pdf

Visit Tri-Valley CARES: <http://www.trivalleycares.org/>

Random Acts of Outrage

By JOHN McCUTCHEON

From John McCutcheon's newsletter: The news, of course, is dominated by presidential election shenanigans. I'm asked daily "what I'm writing" about the election. In fact, I've rarely written about elections, per se. Oh, I wrote about Donald Trump in March when the possibility of him actually being the nominee was a source of humor. But not so much now, huh? One of the things I've learned over the last dozen years or so is that music is more useful when it invites rather than excludes. It seems everything in our culture today is geared toward polarization. Why? Because it's more profitable. If there's no conflict, there's no headline. "If it bleeds, it leads," states the modern news mantra. And all the news is focused on the top of the political food chain, where everyday folks like you and I have little access or influence. So we end up feeling powerless and pissed-off. And that feeds the beast, keeping that same cycle going. And it keeps the talking heads well fed, well paid, and, well, talking. And few, if any of them are smarter than you. They're simply more shameless.

Most of what happens in this world that affects our lives most intimately occurs right outside our front doors. I've heard people articulate the fine points of, say, Bernie's economic plans who cannot name their county commissioner or their Congressperson. Police reform? School overhaul? That pothole you keep hitting? How to attract new jobs? It's all decided on the local level. I've traveled all over this globe and seen so many people doing amazing things in their communities, irrespective of the gridlock and venom on the national stage, that I cannot allow myself the luxury of despair.

I doubt anyone has not already made up their minds about who they are *not* voting for this November. I've heard people say they're simply not voting. But there are lots of candidates and issues down-ballot that will have way more impact on our daily lives than anyone at the top of the ticket. And nothing gets things done in our communities more than an educated, organized, engaged, and tenacious local citizenry. So, do your homework, cast your votes and roll up your sleeves. Because, to quote the old chant, "this is what democracy looks like."

Note: John McCutcheon will perform in a benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, January 10, 2017, just before the inauguration of our next president.

Peace Life/Center ID Project

**Free/Low-cost ID and/or
Birth Certificate Application
Assistance**

Volunteers ready to assist!

Call 209-222-8624 to set an appointment!

Modesto Peace/Life Center
720 13th, Modesto, CA 95354





"His freedom [Donald Trump's] to speak protects my freedom to call him a bigot," Rowling continued. "His freedom guarantees mine. Unless we take that absolute position, without caveats or apologies, we have set foot upon a road with only one destination. If you seek the removal of freedoms from an opponent simply on the grounds that they have offended you, you have crossed a line to stand alongside tyrants who imprison, torture and kill on exactly the same justification."

— J.K Rowling

<http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-rowling-trump-20160517-snap-story.html>

ART CLASSES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN



FALL CLASSES ARE NOW REGISTERING
AT THE GALLERY, OR ONLINE AT
WWW.MODESTOGOV.COM/ECONNECT

1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369
Tues. - Fri. 11:30 - 5:00, Saturday 12-4
Email: class.ccaa@gmail.com

12 CALENDAR



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

ACTIONS FOR PEACE

Sonora - Stockton

SONORA: Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

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

SEPTEMBER

7 WED: Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGIL on Homelessness. McHenry & J St., 4:30-5:30 pm.

8 THURS: Fundraiser play for Sonora's MLK event. *Kate: The Unexamined Life of Katherine Hepburn* by local playwright Rick Foster and starring Janis Stevens. Reception 5:30 pm, play, 7 pm. \$25. Stage3 Theatre, 208 S Green St, Sonora. See article, this issue.

10 SAT: "Faith in the Valley." Proclaim a new vision for the Central Valley rooted in racial, economic, and environmental dignity for all people. Fresno Convention Center, 11 am to 2 pm. See article, this issue.

14-21-28 WED: St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Citizen's Climate Lobby Modesto hold three meetings studying Climate Change and our proper response. Each session is from 6-7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's, 1528 Oakdale Rd. Free to the public. See article, this issue.

18 SUN: The Modesto Film Society presents *All the King's Men*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/721>

21 WED: Film Night at the Center: Michael Moore's *Where to Invade Next*. 6:30 pm. at the Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. Discussion will follow. See article, this issue.

24 SAT: Author's Fair, 9 am to 12 pm, Stanislaus County Library, I St., Modesto.

24 SAT: Poetry Workshop. Beauty of Form with Salvador Salerno, 1 pm, Stanislaus County Library basement auditorium.

24 SAT: Stanislaus Library Foundation hosts a quartet of Modesto poets at its **Author's Garden Gala** at Modesto country home of Ginger and Kent Johnson, 6:00 pm. Gourmet meal prepared by Surla's Restaurant. Proceeds benefit children's programs at the library's 13 branches. Tickets: \$125 each available at www.stanislauslibraryfoundation.org or (209) 529-1517. See article, this issue.

25 SUN: Sunday Afternoons at CBS celebrate its 25th Anniversary Season with the heart thumping, toe tapping world beat sounds of Dirty Cello, cello with a twist of Klezmer, blues, blue grass and lots of Happy. A 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner follows the concert at the home of former Mayor Garrad, and Dallas Marsh. All concerts held at 1705 Sherwood

Ave. starting at 3 pm. Tickets are available through the CBS office and at the door. Learn more at sundaysatcbs.com

29 THURS: Annual Fall Gala & Auction to support the Tuolumne River Trust. 6:00-9:00pm at the Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave. in Berkeley, CA. Tickets are \$150. Please RSVP no later than September 22nd at <https://www.tuolumne.org/>.

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday Nov. 12: Pax Christi Northern California's Annual Regional Assembly. "Building Peace in a Conflicted World." Ken Butigan, keynote speaker, reports on April's Rome Conference which urged the Vatican to replace the Just War tradition with the evolving just peace tradition. Also workshops on Gandhian nonviolence, nuclear abolition, the new sanctuary movement, Islamophobia and police-community relations in communities of color. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, St. Elizabeth's High School, Oakland.

John McCutcheon returns January 10, 2017.

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.

Weekly insight meditation and dharma talk, 9:00 am-10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: insight-meditationcentralvalley@gmail.com

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

MONDAYS

StanCounty Radical Mental Health: a peer facilitated support group open to people living with mental health issues. Every Monday at 7pm at the Peace/Life Center 720 13th St. Modesto. We strive to create a safe, non-judgmental space. More information: email stancountyrmh@gmail.com or call Brian, 209-596-7762.

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 - 4:00pm, Community-Hope-Recovery, 305 Downey Ave. Modesto. Info: Monica O, Tiamonica64@gmail.com or Susan J, SusanthePoet@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

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

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

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

CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS: Info: 537-7818, jcostello@igc.org

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

Ukulele class/play-a-long led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. www.funstrummers.com

Weekly insight meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: insight-meditationcentralvalley@gmail.com

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

Unity Tai Ji Qi Gong (A Journey Within) - First United Methodist Church Multipurpose Rm - 6 pm - Wednesdays - freewill offering. Michele, 209 602-3162.

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

LGBTQA Collaborative Meetings 4th Thursdays. Lunch meeting: Peer Recovery Art Center, 1222 J St, Modesto, Noon to 1:30 pm. Dinner meetings: Community - Hope - Recovery Center, 303 Downey Ave., Modesto. 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Dinner Sept. 22 (A) Oct. 27 (B) Nov. 17 (A); Dec. (B). Dedicated to promoting well-being in the LGBTQA community. John Aguirre, jpmadesto@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 Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. Jana Lynn Community Rm., 500 N. 9th St., Modesto. Thursdays 6:30-8 pm. FREE (donations accepted). Info: email RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

Latino Community Roundtable (LCR) meets on the second Thursday of each month at Noon at the Red Event Center, 921 8th St., Modesto. Info: call Maggie Mejia, (209) 303-2664, <http://lcrstan.org>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

FRIDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

Hispanic Leadership Council. 1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Other meetings at Terrace Cafe, Double Tree Hotel. Info: Yamilet Valladolid, 523-2860.

SATURDAY

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

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

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

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS:

Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing. For up to date information, visit www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm