



Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

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It's time for Modesto to have police review board

By **ASTRID ZUNIGA**
and **LATRICIA BEASLEY***

The heartbreaking murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police on Memorial Day weekend has ignited a national conversation that promises to finally address the intertwined problems of police brutality, mass incarceration and structural racism—as well as the economic inequality that undergirds those injustices. Activists and elected leaders at the state and national levels are now pushing to make real, meaningful solutions to the entrenched problem of people of color dying disproportionately at the hands of law enforcement.

But when it comes to policing, state or national changes will be meaningless without local accountability. In Modesto, as in many cities, one of the biggest hurdles to accountability is that the police department is solely responsible for investigating its own officers. Our neighbors in Stockton are mindfully addressing this situation by creating a police review board. It's long past time that we, too, let common sense prevail and make establishing a robust civilian review commission an urgent priority.

To build and maintain a fair, impartial and effective police review process, we strongly recommend following these guiding principles which are modeled on similar successful efforts in other California cities:

Modesto elected leaders and other stakeholders must be committed to appointing commissioners who understand the impact police violence has on our communities. This must be reflected in the makeup of the actual body of the commission, the process of appointing voting members, and the public outreach and engagement efforts. Current

or former law enforcement officers must be excluded to ensure impartiality.

The complaint process must be overseen by an Independent Police Auditor (IPA) and must prioritize the needs of the complainant. Many Modesto residents are hesitant to make complaints for fear of retaliation. To ensure an open community dialog on the problems, complaints must be heard without endangering the complainant.

The IPA, in concert with the commission, must be able to initiate investigations and make public reports on their findings. The power to engage in fact-finding and the transparency of public reporting will be essential to the IPA and commission as they formulate and consider policy recommendations in response to instances of misconduct.

The commission must be given mandate to investigate systemic problems and explore alternatives to existing practices. It is becoming clear that police violence often happens during interactions that could have been resolved with non-police intervention. The review body should be empowered to work with the community to develop alternatives to policing that could include mental health crisis response and outreach to the unhoused to improve public safety for everyone in the community.

These alternatives could reduce some of the burdens placed upon the police and free up officers to deal with more appropriate public safety problems. This course would also reduce law enforcement expenses associated with incidents that could be handled by other trained personnel.

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Michael Baldwin, Sr.: Hard Road to Redemption

Part I*

By **TOM PORTWOOD**

“The best words I ever heard in my life were, ‘Mr. Baldwin, we don’t think you pose a risk to society anymore,’” recently reflected Community Advocate and Paralegal Michael Baldwin, Sr. A Modesto resident since November 2018, Mr. Baldwin’s long, courageous journey toward purpose and a commitment to helping others is a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit in the face of immeasurable pain and tragic mistakes. His is an often-searing story, honestly told. He freely admits he violently lashed out at others and inflicted harm as a youth whose life had spiraled out of control. Sentenced at the age of 20 to two life terms plus 16 years, Mr. Baldwin little knew that being in prison would forever change his life.

“I was born in the city of Chicago, on the west side,” he recalled in an interview the other day. “At that time, in the late seventies, early eighties, it was a mediocre neighborhood, with some violence starting to happen. But it was almost normalized – it was normal for me to see a prostitute, to see drugs on the streets, it was normal for me to see some violence. My mom did a really great job at keeping me and my siblings away from most of those things. She eventually sent me away to a grammar school that was located in a suburban area – so I had to ride a yellow school bus from my neighborhood to get to this mostly all-white grammar school. I competed in school and did really well. But when I got back to my neighborhood, a lot of the guys in the neighborhood had the idea that I thought



I was better than them, so I had to fight when I came back home. I was really in turmoil in a lot of ways during this time,” Mr. Baldwin explained. “But I never let anyone know what was going on inside. I also experienced sexual abuse in childhood, though I didn’t realize it at the time.” Although both his father and step-father were in his life, he had a hard time communicating with them and looked instead “to the hustlers in the neighborhood because they didn’t work hard for money or respect, so they were people I really looked up to.”

By the age of fifteen, his life was rapidly collapsing around him. Desperate for affirma-

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The sprint that brought John Lewis to Modesto

By JAMES COSTELLO

It was late in the year of 2012. We at the Martin Luther King, Jr Commemoration Committee were trying to bring civil rights pioneer, Congressman John Lewis, to Modesto for our next event in 2013. No luck, and time was running out to get a speaker. We had always tried to select people who had either marched with Martin Luther King or have lives of service inspired by King's philosophy of non-violence. These people had meaningful stories to tell, and we wanted our community to hear them--and remember MLK.

Suddenly, luck smiled upon us. John Lewis was



traveling to Oakland to speak at a church. Committee member Tommie Muhammad and I jumped in my car and sped off to Oakland, arriving at the church just in time. We had prepared a letter inviting Mr. Lewis to be our next speaker, and Tommie was going to meet him and present the invitation to him. That was the plan. But you know about plans; sometimes they don't go the way you want them to go.

Just after Congressman Lewis finished his heartfelt remarks and the congregation dismissed, Tommie and I realized that there was not going to be a reception to meet him after. As the cavernous building emptied, panic gripped us. Our opportunity to personally invite Mr. Lewis to be our MLK speaker was slithering away!

Immediately, Tommie sprang up and sprinted across the vast church, running toward John Lewis and his entourage as they turned into a side hallway off the sanctuary and out of sight. I helplessly watched as Tommie shot across emptying space.

Now, if you know a determined Tommie, he was not about to let Lewis escape. After all, Tommie had doggedly pursued Cornel West across the country to nail him as a speaker and

succeeded. And he had dressed up in a tuxedo and paid \$250.00 to snag the actor Mike Farrell at his yearly, posh Death Penalty Focus awards dinner in Beverly Hills and again won the prize.

As we left Oakland, Tommie related to me the events in the hallway. As Tommie approached Lewis, security guards moved to block him. But then, Lewis' Chief of Staff, suddenly intervened. You see, Tommie is *always* the dapper dresser with hat, shirt, tie, all color-coordinated, all in neat order, not a wrinkle in place.

Undoubtedly wowed by Tommie's earnestness and appearance (as I at least like to think), the Chief allowed him one minute to speak. Tommie handed him the invitation and quickly told the staffer what we wanted. He instructed Tommie to call him the next day in Washington. To our great delight, John Lewis accepted our invitation!

John Lewis arrived in Modesto on February 9, 2013. After he engaged with students at the King-Kennedy Center, he entered the Mary Stuart Rogers Student Learning Center on Modesto Junior College's West Campus. To his expressed surprise, the Center was packed, wall-to-wall with over 600 enthusiastic people anticipating his words. He had no idea Modesto would greet him so warmly. He did not disappoint.

He spoke energetically with intense conviction. The audience laughed at his recounting of the now-famous episode of his preaching to his chickens as a boy. But what inspired me more was not so much his fiery words which were, indeed, impressive, but how he treated the people whom he met at a reception after.

As the event photographer, I was privileged to closely watch him interact with individuals and families who came up to him to have a picture with him or speak to him. He looked every single one in the eyes. He gave that person concentrated attention as if he or she were a friend. As I observed, it became apparent that his caring was genuine. He was not



just some politician schmoozing superficially but rather a sensitive man attending to the needs of others. It was then that I understood why his constituents re-elect this humble man to his seat in Congress term after term. He cares about them and works hard for them. More than that, he cared and worked for us all until the end of his remarkable life, even if we did not always know it.

It was fortunate for all of us that night that a quick sprint across an Oakland church brought this man so dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of justice and non-violence to Modesto.

What would John Lewis want each of us to do now?
Vote! And defend the *right* to vote! And have Hope!

Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

By JOHN LEWIS

While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language and nationality to demand respect for human dignity.



That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he

could easily have been me. In those days, fear constrained us like an imaginary prison, and troubling thoughts of potential brutality committed for no understandable reason were the bars.

Though I was surrounded by two loving parents, plenty of brothers, sisters and cousins, their love could not protect me from the unholy oppression waiting just outside that family circle. Unchecked, unrestrained violence and government-sanctioned terror had the power to turn a simple stroll to the store for some Skittles or an innocent morning jog down a lonesome country road into a nightmare. If we are to survive as one unified nation, we must discover what so readily takes root in our hearts that could rob Mother Emanuel Church in South Carolina of her brightest and best, shoot unwitting concertgoers in Las Vegas and choke to death the hopes and dreams of a gifted violinist like Elijah McClain.

Like so many young people today, I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He



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said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time. Continue to build union between movements stretching across the globe because we must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others.

Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.

John Lewis, civil rights leader and congressman who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death.

Hard Road to Redemption

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tion, he couldn't find it anywhere. He had become a teenage father a year earlier and would father more children over the years. "Then I became a heroin addict," Mr. Baldwin related. "I snorted a couple of times, never intending to become an addict, just doing whatever the guys around me were doing, but it wasn't long before I was addicted, and it started to consume my life."

Dropping out of high school with only weeks left before graduation, he took to hanging out, "did a couple of odd jobs and just tried to stay high." At this point, he made the first hesitant step at reclaiming his life and decided to go to a detox program with the help of his parents. But after detoxing from heroin, he left his family and took "the first chance I had to leave Chicago and come to Sacramento."

That decision proved to be ruinous, even though he never touched heroin again. "I was still trapped by everything going on in my head and in my heart," he admitted. One day there in Sacramento, he gave a ride to a fellow and his girlfriend. "I spent three days with this guy and his girlfriend and tried meth for the first time, which prompted me to commit a crime against some people this guy claimed owed him. I wound up assaulting some people and kidnapping and robbing others." The law came down on Mr. Baldwin. Hard. But his conscience would soon come down on him even harder.

Before he could fully grapple with the enormity of the harm he had done to others, he was sent to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). "Once inside CDCR, I was petrified. For the first two or three years, I was just numb. I was just as violent as everyone else. But I was also depressed and severely medicated. My sleep patterns were disturbed. I didn't comb my hair or brush my teeth. I thought I was hearing voices, and that's why they gave me medication. In reality, it was my conscience waking up. It was really the first time I heard all the dialogue inside of me."

When another inmate approached him one day and asked, "Hey Michael, who hurt you?" Mr. Baldwin says that "I cried from a place I didn't even know existed inside of me. I talked to him about the abuse I had suffered – real and imagined." This fellow inmate helped Mr. Baldwin to reach out to his mother and rediscover the love they felt for each other. And that was a turning point, a moment and a day he will never forget. "I began to love on her, and it cleansed me. I began to let go of resentments and forgive people. I was committed to getting back to my family. I realized that on the day I committed my crimes against those people, I had also committed a crime against my children. That directed my course, and I began to have a relationship with God."

Inspired by that faith, and for the remainder of his many years in prison, Mr. Baldwin said that he "began to help other men get free. I began to serve other men. I was still a man, but I wasn't filled with being a bully anymore. I didn't want to be aggressive anymore. One day, this white kid walked up to me, called me the N-word, and spat in my face. And it didn't even upset me. I had reached a level where I could take that. When I called my mom and told her about it, she said, "I am so proud of you!"

"I began to talk about issues other people in prison just wouldn't talk about, like sexual abuse and crimes against women. I began to talk about these things, and some inmates



began to respect me. And others began to come and ask for assistance from me. That was the beginning of my advocacy. I began to become a facilitator and a teacher while in prison. I went back and got my education. I became a paralegal and a certified drug and alcohol specialist. I became a mediator and a peacemaker. I got some college education. I put my nose to the grindstone. In prison, I got the chance to become my true self."

On October 22, 2018, Michael Baldwin Sr. walked out of Corcoran State Prison a free man, a far different one than the man who had walked into the CDCR 26 years, 7 months, and 17 days earlier. The world outside had changed dramatically in the intervening years. Now Mr. Baldwin set himself the task of helping the people in his community as best he could, of helping this new world before him to be a better place for everyone. His family was waiting for him.

*Part II will appear in the October issue of *Stanislaus Connections*

Police Board

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Police officers are public officials; it is a matter of public concern whether they are acting in the public interest, particularly when they have the unique state-sanctioned ability to use force on other people. The next George Floyd or Breonna Taylor could be a resident of our city. We should not wait until we become a national story before taking positive action toward change.

We urge the Modesto City Council to adopt these principles and take a bold step toward creating a future of accountability and racial justice.

*Supportive signing organizations: Modesto Peace/Life Center; Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME 3930; Faith in the Valley-Stanislaus. ACLU Stanislaus; NVLF-North Valley Labor Federation; Women's Democratic Club of Stanislaus; Valley Improvement Projects; Stanislaus & Tuolumne Central Labor Council-STCLC; NAACP Modesto-Stanislaus; Indivisible Stanislaus; and Turlock Black Live Matter Movement.

If your organization would like to add your support to this statement, email James Costello, jcostello@igc.org

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AOC stands up for herself and for all women

Ed. Note: These are the words Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC, D-NY) spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives on July 23, 2020.

I would also like to thank many of my colleagues for the opportunity to not only speak today but for the many members from both sides of the aisle who have reached out to me in support following an incident earlier this week.



About two days ago I was walking up the steps of the Capitol when Representative Yoho suddenly turned a corner, and he was accompanied by Representative Roger Williams. And accosted me on the steps right here in front of our nation's capital.

I was minding my own business, walking up the steps, and Representative Yoho put his finger in my face, he called me disgusting, he called me crazy, he called me out of my mind. And he called me dangerous. And then he took a few more steps and after I had recognized his — after I had recognized his comments as rude, he walked away and said, I'm rude, you're calling me rude. I took a few steps ahead and I walked inside and cast my vote.

Because my constituents send me here each and every day to fight for them. And to make sure that they are able to keep a roof over their head. That they are able to feed their families. And that they are able to carry their lives with dignity.

I walked back out and there were reporters in the front of the Capitol, and in front of reporters, Representative Yoho called me, and I quote, a f — — b — —. These are the words Representative Yoho levied against a congresswoman. A congresswoman that not only represents New York's 14th district but every congresswoman in this country because all of us have had to deal with this in some form, some way, some shape at some point in our lives.

And I want to be clear that Representative Yoho's comments were not deeply hurtful or piercing to me. Because I have worked a working-class job. I have waited tables in restaurants. I have ridden the subway. I have walked the streets in New York City. And this kind of language is not new. I have encountered words uttered by Mr. Yoho and men uttering the same words as Mr. Yoho while I was being harassed in restaurants. I have tossed men out of bars that have used language like Mr. Yoho's, and I have encountered this type of harassment riding the subway in New York City. This is not new. And that is the problem.

Mr. Yoho was not alone. He was walking shoulder to shoulder with Representative Roger Williams. And that's when we start to see that this issue is not about one incident. It is cultural. It is a culture of a lack of impunity, of acceptance of violence and violent language against women, an entire structure of power that supports that.

Because not only have I been spoken to disrespect-

fully, particularly by members of the Republican Party, and elected officials in the Republican Party, not just here, but the President of the United States last year told me to 'go home' to another country with the implication that I don't even belong in America. The governor of Florida, Governor DeSantis, before I was sworn in, called me a 'whatever that is.' Dehumanizing language is not new. And what we are seeing is that incidents like these are happening in a pattern. This is a pattern of an attitude towards women and the dehumanization of others.

So, while I was not deeply hurt or offended by little comments that are made, when I was reflecting on this, I honestly thought I was going to pack it up and go home. It's just another day, right?

But then yesterday, Representative Yoho decided to come to the floor of the House of Representatives and make excuses for his behavior. And that I could not let go. I could not allow my nieces, I could not allow the little girls that I go home to, I could not allow victims of verbal abuse and, worse, to see that — to see that excuse and to see our Congress accept it as legitimate and accept it as an apology and to accept silence as a form of acceptance, I could not allow that to stand. Which is why I'm rising today to raise this point of personal privilege.

And I do not need representative Yoho to apologize to me. Clearly, he does not want to. Clearly, when given the opportunity he will not. And I will not stay up late at night waiting for an apology from a man who has no remorse over calling women and using abusive language towards women. But what I do have issue with is using women, wives, and daughters as shields and excuses for poor behavior.

Mr. Yoho mentioned that he has a wife and two daughters. I am two years younger than Mr. Yoho's youngest daughter. I am someone's daughter too.

My father, thankfully, is not alive to see how Mr. Yoho treated his daughter. My mother got to see Mr. Yoho's disrespect on the floor of this house towards me on television, and I am here because I have to show my parents that I am their daughter and that they did not raise me to accept abuse from men.

Now, what I am here to say is that this harm that Mr. Yoho levied, tried to levy against me, was not just an incident directed at me, but when you do that to any woman, what Mr. Yoho did was give permission to other men to do that to his daughters.

He — in using that language, in front of the press, he gave permission to use that language against his wife, his daughters, women in his community, and I am here to stand up to say that is not acceptable.

I do not care what your views are. It does not matter how much I disagree or how much it incenses me or how much I feel that people are dehumanizing others.

I will not do that myself. I will not allow people to change and create hatred in our hearts.

And so, what I believe is that having a daughter does not make a man decent. Having a wife does not make a decent man. Treating people with dignity and respect makes a decent man. And when a decent man messes up, as we all are bound to do, he tries his best and does apologize. Not to save

face, not to win a vote. He apologizes genuinely to repair and acknowledge the harm done so that we can all move on.

Lastly, what I want to express to Mr. Yoho is gratitude. I want to thank him for showing the world that you can be a powerful man and accost women. You can have daughters and accost women without remorse. You can be married and accost women. You can take photos and project an image to the world of being a family man and accost women without remorse and with a sense of impunity. It happens every day in this country. It happened here on the steps of our nation's Capital. It happens when individuals who hold the highest office in this land admit, admit to hurting women, and using this language against all of us.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for joining us today.

Watch AOC's remarks here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1sEEhdEhCQ>

From Slave Patrols to Police Departments

By JAMES MENDEZ

On June 25, the Fresno City Council voted 5-1 to fund Advance Peace in its 2020–21 budget. Advanced Peace brings a community-based program to Fresno and will work to decrease homicides. The City Council allocated at least \$125,000 yearly, but no more than \$300,000, with yearly renewals for three years based on achieving certain metrics.

These are times of less resources due to the economic impact of the pandemic. Even so, this is a small amount of the almost \$1.2 billion budget. The city budget includes \$346 million for the General Fund, which includes \$175 million for police. If the program is able to prevent just one death it will be beneficial given that each death by gun violence costs Fresno County \$2.4 million.¹

Utilizing programs such as Advance Peace are part of ongoing discussions in Fresno and nationwide to reform police. The hope is that reform of America's police will result in less racist policing practices and decrease police violence. In particular, reform needs to decrease violence directed toward Black people.

There is also talk about “defunding police.” The expectation is there would be a better governmental response to nonviolent social problems such as acute mental health crisis and homelessness. Taking away those responsibilities from the police might also decrease the violence perpetrated by police.^{2,3}

Since the George Floyd murder on May 25, the historical role of police in oppressing people of color is being evaluated again. Racial discrimination, racial profiling and brutality by police are not recent phenomena.

There has been racial discrimination in America since the late 1400s when captured Africans were forcibly brought to the Americas as slaves. By 1526, African slaves had been brought to several areas that would later become part of the United States (Florida and the Carolinas).

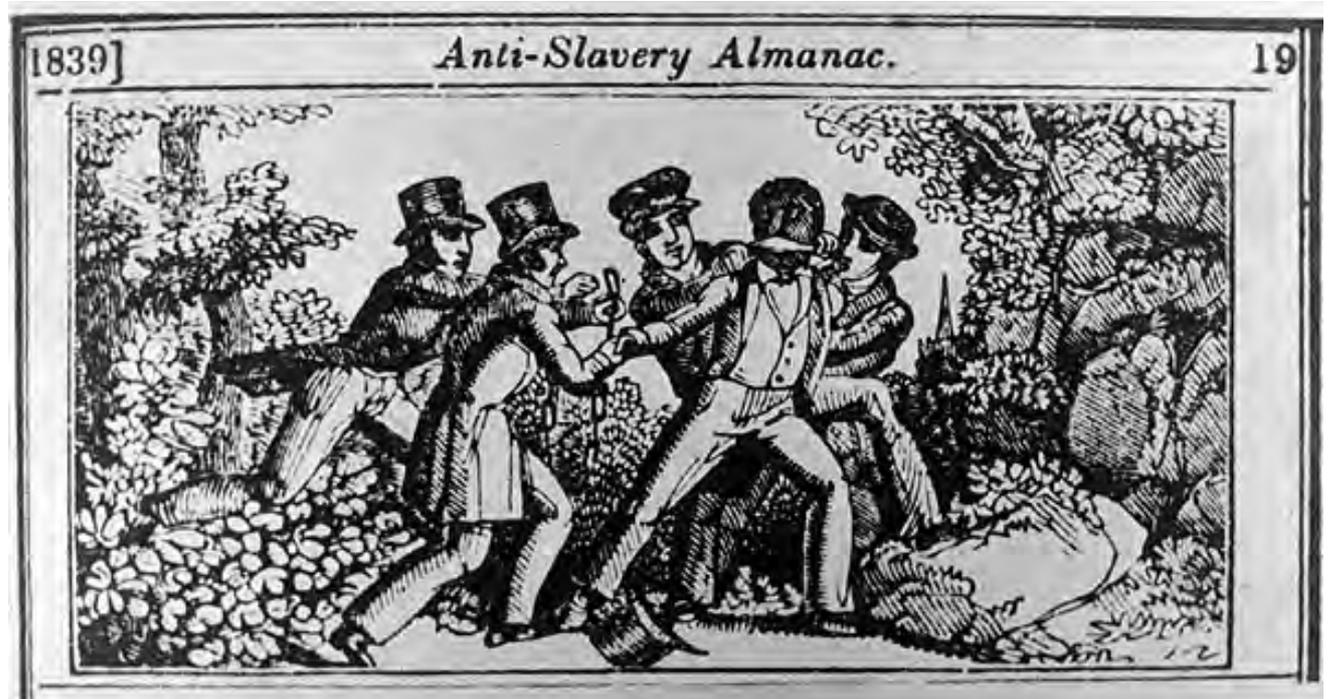
The African slave trade had been present in the Americas (Mexico, Brazil, the Caribbean) for more than 100 years when in late August 1619, a slave ship named the White Lion set anchor in the James River at Point Comfort, Va. The ship was an English privateer ship carrying “20 and odd” Africans to Virginia. Although they were exchanged for food as indentured servants, this was the beginning of the American institution of slavery.⁴

Since the beginning of British colonization of America, the ruling class has subjected native people, people of color and immigrants to oppression using excessive policing and violence. Initially, the ruling class used sheriffs, constables and night watchmen for law enforcement.

Starting in the 1830s, publicly funded police departments were formed in northern cities to perform law enforcement. Publicly funded police departments were formed in the South after the Civil War.

Background: North versus South

In the North, prior to the 1830s, businesses paid private security officers to protect their property and suppress workers complaining about working conditions. Publicly funded police departments were formed with the encouragement of business civic leaders to replace the private security officers



that businesses were paying to protect their property.

By having publicly funded police departments, businesses were able to use public employees (the police) to serve the private economic interests of business. Business was also able to take advantage of the legal use of force by police.

Police were used against workers and immigrants who were protesting and organizing against poor living and poor working conditions. Business use of free publicly funded police was both cost-effective for manufacturing concerns, and politically useful, because it conflated the issue of workers' rights with the issue of crime.

The development of police departments was different in the South. The southern British American colonies relied almost exclusively on slave labor for their agricultural work. The increasing number of slaves and the relatively small number of Whites in the South caused the plantation owners to live in constant fear of slave rebellions disrupting their social, political and economic status.

“The ruling class used publicly funded, armed, militarized police to protect their property, guard their wealth and maintain their economic and political control over native people, African Americans and immigrants.”

White plantation owners used brutal violence to maintain slavery, discourage runaways, prevent insurrections and control the African slaves. In 1663, the first recorded British American slave rebellion occurred in Gloucester County, Virginia. In response to the rebellion, the first Slave Codes were enacted in 1664 in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia.⁵

The Slave Codes spread throughout the colonies. The

Slave Codes defined a slave as a piece of property without any rights. The Slave Codes allowed masters of slaves to inflict punishment for any behavior identified as unacceptable.

To maintain order and enforce the Slave Codes, the plantation owners instituted slave patrols in 1704. The first one was in the Carolina colony. Eventually, all the colonies had slave patrols. Starting in the 1700s, slave patrols functioned as state militia in the Southern colonies. The slave patrols served to preserve White control and protect the slave owners against insurrection.

Slave patrols initially consisted of groups of White male volunteers to enforce the Slave Code laws. Over time, all the White adult men were legally compelled by local authorities to serve on the slave patrols. Participating in slave patrols was the civic duty of all White men until the 1830s.

The slave patrols helped maintain slavery through the following actions:

Slave patrols used their broad authority to chase down, apprehend and return runaway slaves to their owners. Members of slave patrols could forcefully enter anyone's home, regardless of their race or ethnicity, based on suspicions that they were sheltering people who had escaped bondage.

Slave patrols would serve summary justice, outside of the law, to brutally punish slaves with beatings and whippings if the slaves were thought to have violated any plantation rules such as violating curfew, traveling without a permission pass or assembling without permission. In so doing, slave patrols would provide a form of organized terror in an effort to deter future slave revolts, rebellions and insurrections.

When slave patrols returned captured slaves to their masters, there was also the threat of being sold for disobedience and thus separated from their families.

Starting with Pennsylvania in 1780, slavery and slave patrols were outlawed by eight of the then 17 states over a

Pat Noda: A Life to Celebrate

By DAN ONORATO

In reflecting on the Peace/Life Center's 50 years of stay power, we're amazed: we've built a supportive community of committed peace activists, and we've been steadfast all these years in promoting peace, social and economic justice and a sustainable future. We have a lot to be thankful for. And as an all-volunteer organization we have many people to thank. For the last five years at our Harvest Gathering celebrations in October, we've focused on thanking our volunteers. In this article I want to highlight one person. He's a long-time volunteer in our Peace/Life Community. He doesn't draw attention to himself, but in his own unassuming way he embodies unwavering conviction, heartfelt compassion, and generous service for others, especially for the disadvantaged. What's more, on September 6, he'll be 100 years old! So, read this as a way to join in saying,

**Happy 100th Birthday, Pat Noda!
The Modesto Peace/Life Center
appreciates you.
Thank you.**

Pat's a quiet man. Praise doesn't motivate him, and he doesn't seek the limelight. Social status or financial success aren't on his list of needs. He values, and has lived, a simple life style. He has large, welcoming dark eyes and a warm, friendly smile. Over the years he's probably had to punch new holes in his one belt to hold up his pants. He's not into new clothes. He doesn't talk a lot but let him get started on topics like healthy eating or politics and his voice grows louder and more animated, with unabashed opinion—repeated in case you don't get his point.

Pat is the sixth of nine children. His parents came to the United States from Japan around the turn of the 20th century, his father, Shichiro Noda, to California in 1894 at age 19, his mother, Sachiko Yasuda, to West Virginia in 1904 at age 18. Protestant missionaries may have helped Sachiko to migrate to America. Shichiro opened a laundry in Los Angeles and later worked as a foreman on the Union Pacific Railroad. Sachiko did housework for a judge and his family. After an arranged marriage in West Virginia in 1910, the couple moved to Livingston, California, where they rented a farm raising grapes and strawberries and started their family. They began their life together in poverty and, as Japanese Americans, faced a lot of prejudice. In 1914 Shichiro, who was educated and spoke English well, became the first manager of the Livingston Cooperative Society for the Yamato Colony of Japanese farmers. He held that position for 15 years. Later he set up a trucking business and worked out of San Luis Obispo. With her husband away, Sachiko took primary responsibility for the family farm and spent a



lot of her time working their fields during the day and doing the laundry and cooking at night. As a Charter Member of the Livingston Church of Christ, she was as active in church activities as she could be. Meanwhile, the older children helped out raising the younger children.

Pat was born in 1920. He was named after the American revolutionary war patriot and orator Patrick Henry because Pat's father respected U.S. history and democracy. Pat's oldest brother Andrew was named after Andrew Jackson, another older brother Lafayette after the Marquise de Lafayette, his older sister Harriet after Harriet Tubman, and a younger



Pat with Shelly Scribner for his 99th birthday, 2019

brother Grant after Ulysses S. Grant. Early on Pat became interested in health that transformed into his life-long advocacy of healthy living. When my wife was recovering from cancer, Pat's letters to me included not only his best wishes for her but also his advice stressing the importance of a healthy diet. He even sent us a book on that topic. Pat's concern for others' well-being deepened the compassion and sense of personal responsibility to be of service to others that were emphasized in the Methodist churches Pat and his family participated actively in.

In early 1942 soon after the United States entered World War II, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 that forcibly uprooted 120,000 Japanese Americans living on the West coast into what in many ways were concentration camps, euphemistically named "relocation camps." The Noda family was sent from the Merced Fair Grounds to the Amache Internment Camp near Granada, Colorado. But under a clause that allowed some interns to work or study in the Midwest or East (but not in the West), Pat and some of his siblings were able to leave. Pat went to Iowa where, possibly with financial assistance from a Quaker missionary, he got his B. A. from Iowa Central College. He then became a teacher/principal in a small school in Galt, Iowa, but left it when he decided to become a minister. He attended Princeton Divinity School and received his Divinity Degree at McCormick Divinity

School. But after working in two churches, he concluded the ministry was not for him.

Pat's father died in early 1942. The land belonging to Japanese American farmers was saved from confiscation or sale by an arrangement made through their farm cooperatives to let a third party lease the land and take the proceeds as long as the owners were incarcerated. When the war ended, the farms were returned, and Sachiko moved back to Livingston. Pat returned to the Noda family farm in nearby Cortez where many Japanese Americans resettled. The family farm had several good years of grape harvest, Sachiko was able to have a new home built, and, after a brief period in the Bay Area, Pat returned to help take care of his mother before she died in 1959. Then Pat worked for years at Banquet Foods in Turlock. After his retirement he was freer to pursue his passion to serve his community and be more involved in politics.

In 2010 he announced his candidacy for the Turlock City Council. Given his long-held value of serving those most in need, Pat's platform was no surprise: he wanted to improve the public bus system and promised to have the city create a shelter for the rising numbers of people without protection from cold, rain, and sometimes hunger. Pat had been helping homeless people for years. He provided food and shelter for them in his home and gave them work in his large yard and garden so they could pay him. Years earlier when he was helping out with the family farm, he would drive to Los Angeles neighborhoods that had no access to fruits and vegetables and "sell" all he had. Often, he gave the food away. Pat's campaign trail was unique: no longer a driver, Pat biked to the apartment complexes where many of the homeless sought some degree of shelter. He probably also leafleted at the Turlock Flea Market when he wasn't working as a parking assistant there.

Pat wasn't discouraged or deflated by his unsuccessful plunge into politics. He'd long been involved with the Modesto Peace/Life Center and enjoyed the activities and company of kindred spirits in our peace community. Pat's good friends, Mark O'Bryan and Rose Rodríguez, often drove him to our events—the annual Pancake Breakfast each June, the Harvest Gathering in October, the Holiday Potluck Songfest at Alice's and my home in December, and

continued next page



from previous page

the Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Commemoration in January-February. In 2013 he was proud to meet and shake hands with the late Congressman John Lewis, our MLK keynote speaker and a Civil Rights icon in the movement to promote nonviolent social change. For a number of years Pat also enjoyed Peace Camp in the Sierra—the camp fires and singing under the stars, the workshops, the camaraderie, and especially the “Talent-No Talent” show, where no talent trumps talent hands down, to the delight of all.

Pat was at home in our peace community, perhaps because he came from a family that stood their ground, unafraid to live their convictions. One story about his father was that he left Japan because he was pacifist. Another was that he was the lone voice sensibly opposed to a project his village favored, so he left. Some of his brothers were also outspoken: one was a Christian Socialist, another was a pacifist Quaker. So it isn't surprising that Pat had no qualms about passing out political literature or criticizing President Obama for being too conservative or distributing *Stanislaus Connections* in Turlock.

I think of Pat in many ways. But the one that for me lights up the sky like 4th of July fireworks is his passing out our newspaper in Turlock. Such generosity stirs my soul. It merits celebration. For the last 20 or so years, Pat came to Modesto to get bundles of *Connections* and then returned to Turlock to distribute them. This small task, like so many in the Center, has import: through our newspaper we reach out to a wider community, inspiring reflection, deeper understanding, and involvement in important issues. Consider also what Pat had to do. He didn't have a car. Each month his task took up the better part of a day. He'd call ahead of time to ask Shelly Scribner to put two bundles of our newspaper outside the Center's door. Then on pickup day he'd bike to Turlock's



START bus station, attach his bike to the bus, and ride to Modesto, then bike to the Center. He'd repeat the routine back to Turlock and spend hours the following days placing *Connections* in local businesses or handing them out to passersby on the street. Eleven months each year (we don't publish in August). For nearly 20 years. A man in his 80s and 90s. On his bike. No matter the weather. Happy to help out.

That persevering, generous spirit is worth celebrating. Many others, like Pat, have done and do their part, big or small, to help the Center remain a vital voice and presence in our area. All deserve our praise and thanks. But only one is 100 years old!

And no one else has quite the twinkle in his eye when he smiles.

Happy Birthday, Pat!



ACTION: *Pat lives at Turlock Residential Care Center on 1101 East Tuolumne Road. Nearly two years ago he was injured in a bike accident and had to move into a care facility. He could no longer live independently. The staff, Pat's family, and friends like Mark and Rose are taking good care of him. Because of current restrictions, visitors can't enter the Care Center to see residents. So the family is planning a unique celebration for Pat's 100th birthday on Sunday, September 6, between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. in the backyard of the facility. If you want to participate, please RSVP to his niece, Marcia Kamiya Cross: 559-683-3274. Arrive early so we're all there by 10:30. All present will wear masks, be socially distanced, and hold a sign conveying their own personal message for Pat, written large enough so Pat can read it from inside. At 10:30 the birthday greetings will start.*

P.S. Special thanks for the stories and information about Pat from his nieces and nephews and from Mark O'Bryan and Rose Rodríguez.

Valley Habitat now online plus Alaskan travel slide show

By ANITA YOUNG

The full-color September-October *Valley Habitat*, a joint publication of the Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club and the Stanislaus Audubon Society is available at <https://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts>.

While we cannot meet in person due to Covid-19 restrictions, you can join us via Zoom for our September 18 program meeting. We've all been cooped up at home, but you can enjoy some armchair travel with a slide show and narrative by Yokuts Chair Jeff Olson on his national Sierra Club outing to the Alaskan wilderness. Link to the program at:

Topic: Yokuts Group Public Meeting

Time: Sep 18, 2020 07:00 PM Pacific Time.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://sierraclub.zoom.us/j/6756586124?pwd=VvxEOUo0M1o1RFFhYWZnYVVrM2ROQT09>

Meeting ID: 675 658 6124

Passcode: sierraclub

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 675 658 6124

Passcode: 526871

Fire resources from TRT

From the Tuolumne River Trust

We write to you with heavy hearts as wildfires continue to spread throughout California. Our hearts are with those who have been impacted by evacuation orders, air pollution, and loss. We hope you are staying as safe as possible during these difficult times.

These fires demonstrate how critical it is for us to maintain healthy forests, floodplains, and ecosystems. We will continue our work to protect and restore these natural systems and places. As we brace ourselves for a potentially grueling fire season, we have compiled a list of resources in order to help you stay safe and informed.

CalFire Daily Wildfire Updates

Real-Time Air Quality Monitoring in the Central Valley

Tuolumne County Evacuation Map

Bay Area Wildfire Updates

Prepare for Wildfires - An Evacuation Guide

Understanding Air Pollution Measurements

It has never been more important to continue efforts to restore and protect our forests. We know that properly managed forests greatly reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. We will continue our work in the upper watershed to build resilience back into the watershed. These outdoor spaces are critical to our health and well-being, especially during the global pandemic.

We find refuge, community, and inspiration in these special places. We also find refuge in this community of people who care deeply about the river and the communities it runs through. Thank you for your continued support; we truly couldn't do this work without you, our dedicated donors, volunteers, and partners.

Visit the Trust at <https://www.tuolumne.org/>

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MeterMaids Celebrate 30 years of poetry and connection

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

What began as a sharing of poetry between two women who worked with the committee that brought the 20th Anniversary of Earth Day to Modesto in April 1990 inspired one to reach out to other friends who wrote and loved poetry.

The group gathered monthly at various homes and remained nameless for many, many years, welcoming a few men and many women into its fold. Eventually, the group evolved into an ever-changing, nurturing sisterhood, whose members have ranged in age from 16 to 80 and included two mother-daughter partners.

One daughter, the 16-year-old, is grown, married and continues to meet with us from New York on Zoom with her infant son on her lap.

The structure of our monthly meetings departs from most poetry groups, which usually write independently, then bring poems to be read, critiqued and enjoyed. We are not designed as a critique group, but critique does happen. We are not a therapy group, but we do support one another through our personal challenges. We all share a common love of poetry and a passion for writing.

Over the years the group has developed a tradition of starting each meeting with an afternoon “tea” schmooze during which members catch up with one another, share our lives, gather words or suggest prompts, then write and share. The tradition includes sharing the fun of writing and creating around such monthly prompts as fortune cookie Monday in January, hearts; MLK, dead presidents in February, Women’s History in March, the four seasons at solstices and equinoxes, Cinco de Mayo in May, Stone Soup, pumpkins, ghosts and goblins in October, *Dia de los Muertos* and Thanksgiving in November and the many holidays in December.

Over the past 30 years three chap books have been published, and a 30-Year-Anniversary book featuring poetry submitted by members past and present will go to press very soon, thanks to the talented and dedicated work of one of our original founding members, Karen Baker.

We share these samplings of our poetry with gratitude for the talented community of poets both in MeterMaids and in the Modesto Area. We are pleased that members who have moved away to new adventures can join our Zoom meetings during this quarantine year and beyond.



All Pain Is Real

All pain is real.
Even imaginable,
dull and surreal,
flying above an ailing body,
above a honeyed meadow,
killing the spirit of careless wellbeing,
interpreting mindless remarks
as indisputable facts.
Things might not get better.
Pain is real,
but you aren’t craving
for a pain-free existence anymore.
A scale for measuring human suffering
hasn’t changed from ancient Egypt,
regardless of the gruesome fact
that Jesus’s body is no longer available
for checking the rusted standards.
The Times They Are a-Changin’,
but all pain is real,
unmeasurable,
unbearable,
as Jesus might testify.

– Helen Kenevsky

How Could I Have Known It Was A Lie?

He: A Salesman’s Salesman
I: quiet and gullible
He glib and worldly
I naïve and protected
He 10 years older
I young and sheltered
He conscienceless
I unable to filter
accumulative lies
A marriage travesty based on deceit
Dishonest manipulator
Controlled manipulate
Twelve years before the mast of discernment

Poetry event features The Meter Maids

WHAT: Second Tuesday Poetry with host Stella Beratlis. A reading to celebrate the 30th anniversary of local writing group The Meter Maids and the release of their anthology to mark the occasion.

WHEN: Saturday, September 8 @ 7 pm

HOW TO JOIN: from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android:

<https://cccconfer.zoom.us/j/97782297419>

Gullible no more
No one’s patsy
Victor not victim
Strong, proud, survivor

Martha J. Martin
Wielding a shiny baton
Black body armor
Glinting face shield
Impassive expression

Stoicism

Under the sun
On black streets
Clenched fist around beliefs
Over skin color

Stoicism

Under one governance
Black gun pointed
Different opportunities
Indifference and white privilege

Stoicism

Under white light
Black of night
Baby’s giggle
Raises awareness
Challenging

Stoicism

– Lynn Coleman

Over

Over & over & over.
We go over this
from beginning to end
watching wordless singing
swinging from torn limbs
brushing away tears reserved for death.

Over & over

we march in circles around the city
trying to get back inside from a ravaged outside.
We listen to voices out of synch with each step taken.

Over the hill we go
clawing at soil moist with life;
life precious like a baby’s first giggle.
Life we once held in calloused hands
flows down our limbs onto soil hardened like our hearts of stone.

Over & over & over.

We repeat our sins from the past
casting them into the future
praying for a reprieve and adjudication from the past
that we may return to an abundant harvest.

– C. Barstad



Haiku 2020

Troublous time voices
Nefarious acts abound
Change with new Choices

Is it Love or fears
Both can bring us to our knees
Where truth then appears

Alone in our rooms
Intentional space births Life
Cornucopia

Yes daily delight
Darkness can never sever
Hope sings inner sight

One breath in One Life
Sacred Love brings Unity
Illumination!

– Donna Phillips

Boy child

The insanity of childhood--
ridiculous joy, where past and future are meaningless
a single giggle, the first, snaps us present
a wordless song--
a salve of coos in a worried world
testing, testing, his voice--
making use of only sweet, powerful words,
a marinade of language,
using privilege to create building blocks and his bright
eyes to light the way for his brothers--
all mothers were summoned,
say their names.

– Haley Greenwald-Gonella

Oddities in the Garden of Eden

We are oddities yet strangely alike.
Hundreds of species and genus living in temperate climes.
We may demand loam, grit, or tolerate clay.
We are hardy but not foolhardy.
Some are corms, rhizomes and tubers submerged
underground; others are Wandering Jews.
Some are stately spired; others short stout clumps.
Some leaves are monochrome; others variegated.
Some live in bogs or rockeries; others in dappled sunlight
or high desert.
We are fragrant or non-scented; pristine or murky.
Our colors range from black to blue, cherry to lemon,
apricot to violet.
We have our own character.
Some of us need a shave for our beards.
Observe haughty Lily sashaying with lowly Jack in the
Pulpit.
Mr. Yellow jacket, with his waspish dervish, swirls round

Ms. Blue Bonnet.
Randy Dandelion bows low to Lady Slipper.
Morning glory bids au revoir to Night Shade.
Two lips kiss frilly daffodils.
Primroses, proper and demure, scoff at Bleeding Heart.
Impatiens is upset by Creeping Charlie.
Our names have been adopted by homo sapiens: Aster,
Dahlia, Iris, Delphinium, Rose, and Camellia.
What insidious harm could befall a Bella Donna?
Some are emotionally fraught: Euphorbia and Felicia.
Some require grandiflora maintenance; others are easy
peasy daisies.
Some live long; others short.
Some are hells on wheels helleborus; others are angels'
trumpets.
I, of course, am the latter.

– Martha Martin

Life in the Time of Corona

This is not new
weren't we already self-sheltered
protecting our skins
careful of touching, of hugging
poisoning our crops to protect them
then washing them clean
weren't we diligent about borders;
fences, walls, and opaque ideologies
there was always the threat, the other
the one in need of fixing or a fix
didn't we always band together
against a common foe
wasn't there ever a small part of us
inert and parasitical
wanting some living body to breathe through
a celebrity, an American idol

We know deep down this is not all of what we are
we don't like the movie we came to
the horror show that reveals our collective wounds
we need the lights to go up on the audience
morph our startled faces into smiles

In my fenced backyard, I have let the lawn and weeds
flower and seed
sparrows are happy
I am eating dandelion greens
control is minimal
wisteria creeps onto Japanese maple
I snip here and there for the sun to peek through
I wear comfortable clothes

It's okay
I will stay my safe distance
this is our home school
we are learning our lessons
that we care about each other
that much of the usual is unimportant
that what is important is always safe

– Karen Hansis Baker

Children of the world

Border confinement
Not seen as sojourners
Viewed as invaders
Treated like criminals.
The nation's leader, sated on greed
And separatist values
Structures more policies of xenophobia.
New policies of exclusion
Supported by righteousness
Fear of other tribal associations.
Guardians of the border
Powerless to comfort, trained for prison duty.
Airless cells
Children crying
Windowless chambers
A bitter after-taste
Following 4th of July Watermelon.

– Lynn Coleman

The Daughters' March

Having two sisters and sisters-in-law,
Ruffles and skirts were the dressings I saw.
Voices soprano filled all the halls
And pastel pink roses covered the walls.
Smiling demurely was what we each learned,
No matter how deeply our spirits were burned.
Be seen, but not heard, you sweet, little girls;
Just hide behind lipstick and behind your curls.
When daughters arrived, count one, two and three,
Silence and closets were not meant to be.
These courageous, brave women arrived on the scene;
They would be heard and not simply be seen.
With style and grace and beauty and poise,
These strong, lovely ladies could also make noise.
They all cast their ballots and cast off old roles,
And climbed out of seclusion and out of old holes--
To make more than a difference and to take a stance,
To throw off the ruffles and put on sweat pants.
They march as their mothers had done in the past:
For freedom and rights and a say-so at last.
Now that our daughters have myriad choices,
I just hope my grandson will hear all their voices.

– Andra Greenwald



From Slave Patrols to Police Departments

continued from page 5

period of 20 years. By the late 1790s, slave patrols were still active in all nine slave states in the country.

“With a self-sustaining population of over four million slaves in the South, some Southern congressmen joined with the North in voting to abolish the African slave trade, an act that became effective January 1, 1808.” While the African slave trade was abolished in the United States in 1808, slavery and the buying and selling of slaves, along with slave patrols, continued within the U.S. boundaries.⁶

Slave Patrols Transformed into Police Departments

For 150 years, from 1704 to 1865, slave patrols were a legally sanctioned law enforcement system in America. Slave patrols were used for the express purpose of controlling the slave population and protecting the interests of slave owners.

With the end of the Civil War came the end of slavery. Ratified on Dec. 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States and thereby ended the slave patrols. Even though slave patrols ended after the Civil War, racism did not end.

The commitment of White southern landowners to maintain their control of the African American labor force, their supremacy and their plantation agriculture system continued after the Civil War. From 1865 to 1868, former slave state governments issued Black Code laws to continue their control of a similar economic and political system that had existed during the previous 200 years of slavery.

Under the Black Codes, Southern Whites introduced vagrancy and labor contract laws at the state, county and municipal levels. Those laws required African Americans to have written evidence of employment or be arrested for vagrancy. If they were arrested and were unable to pay the fines, the former slaves would have to perform plantation work for free.

There were other laws that African Americans could only work as a farmer or a servant. The laws specified how, when and where African Americans could work and how much they would be paid. They also restricted African American voting rights, dictated how and where African Americans could travel and limited where they could live.⁷

The Black Codes ended when the U.S. Congress ratified the 14th Amendment in 1868, which granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States—including

former slaves—and guaranteed all citizens “equal protection of the laws.” The 14th Amendment made the Black Codes illegal by giving formerly enslaved blacks equal protection of laws through the Constitution.

Starting in 1868, the former slave states started to institute “Jim Crow Laws” (separate but equal laws) to legally enforce and maintain segregation with separate public spaces (like schools, hospitals, transportation, libraries, water fountains and restaurants) for Blacks and Whites. The Jim Crow laws remained in place until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Jim Crow laws subjugated African Americans and denied them their civil rights. Police were charged with enforcing the Jim Crow laws. Blacks who broke those laws, or violated the unwritten social norms, were subject to arrest by the police and often subjected to police brutality.

After the Civil War, in the South’s slave patrols were transformed into all-White police departments and state militia forces. Police departments often were made up of Confederate veterans of the Civil War and the very same men who had been members of slave patrols before the Civil War.

Southern police departments enforced the Black Codes and the subsequent Jim Crow laws. Southern police departments often continued the other functions of the slave patrols in the same violent fashion.

Even though slavery, the Slave Codes and the Black Codes were eliminated, the police legally oppressed African Americans through the enforcement of the Jim Crow laws. By enforcing Jim Crow laws, police performed systematic surveillance of African Americans. Just as slave patrols had done in the 1800, the police enforced curfews and “sundown laws.”

Police departments generally excluded African Americans from becoming police officers. During Reconstruction and the Jim Crow period, the few African-American police officers were usually relegated to token positions.

Regardless of location in the United States, since the mid-1800s the ruling class of cities and towns across America developed similar police departments.

The ruling class used publicly funded, armed, militarized police to protect their property, guard their wealth and main-

tain their economic and political control over native people, African Americans and immigrants. One of the reasons given for the systemic racism in current police departments is that many police departments, which are publicly funded to serve all the people, were formed using racist slave patrols as models for the department.

People are now asking how such a police system can fairly and safely monitor, oversee and protect African Americans.

Generally speaking, like the slave patrols of the South, police nationwide have used racism and brutality to enforce the laws created by the dominant political groups. Those laws were formed to maintain control and order over native people, African Americans, immigrants, union organizers and others who might disrupt the social, economic or political order.

For these reasons, many people are calling for significant reform of and to “defund” police departments.

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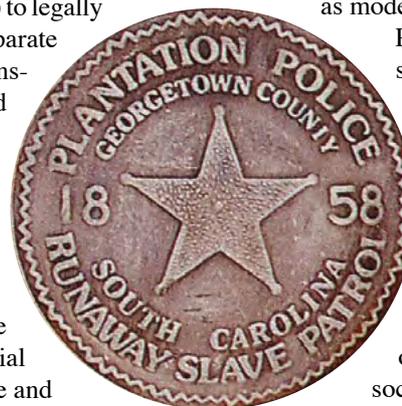
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James “Jim” Mendez, born in Los Angeles, came to Fresno 1977 to do a residency in internal medicine and stayed. He retired as a physician but continues to work as a political activist and is a member of the Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee (CVPPAC). Contact him at jim_mendez@icloud.com.

From the Community Alliance, <https://fresnoalliance.com/from-slave-patrols-to-police-departments/>



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Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

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Democracy Now! - 7:00pm

Flashpoint Magazine - 10:00pm



Children’s Programming

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Peace Pole Dedication: For Equality and Justice

On Saturday, August 29, 2020, a Peace Pole was dedicated at Modesto's Congregation Beth Shalom. Speakers included Imam Aiello, Rev. Darius Crosby, Doug Highiet and Rabbi Shalom Bochner who performed the dedication. Judge Rubén Villalobos was MC. Jocelyn Cooper, president of the Modesto Peace/Life Center made the following, moving remarks:

I have a story to share with you. About six months after the 50th anniversary of the march across the Pettus Bridge, I decided I wanted to go to Selma and walk across the Pettus Bridge.

As soon as I arrived in Selma, I felt I was no longer in 2020. I felt transported to the '60s. I felt like my mind and spirit had left my body. As I began to walk across the bridge, I didn't feel alone. All the souls living and dead were walking with me. As I took my last steps off the bridge, I had an overwhelming feeling of sadness, and tears began to roll down my face. I had to try hard to hold back the uncontrollable feeling of breaking down and sobbing. In that moment, I wondered how many more must walk across this bridge to cry or shout for racial justice. How many more must die?

History repeats itself. Here we are gathered today this morning in opposition of white supremacy, and stalked by the death of Jacob Blake and others before and after him. We are standing for peace, love, unity and racial justice. We cannot let today be the end of the movement. We must reach out and push for diversity every day. Racial justice must be a part of our daily lives; our friends, business, in corporations, in schools, in economics. Every human being has the right to be treated equally.

We must dedicate ourselves to honor John Lewis by focusing on change.

I will end and leave you with the words of Martin Luther King: "Now is the time to make real democracy. Now is the time to make justice a reality."

Photos from top left: Jocelyn Cooper, 2020 march on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Imam Aiello, Rev. Darius Crosby, Doug Highiet, the peace pole, and Rabbi Shalom Bochner.



Children's Home Welcomes New Associate Director

Children's Home of Stockton (CHS) is proud to welcome Kimberly Miller as its new Associate Director. Miller comes to CHS with a wealth of knowledge and experience. She has nineteen years of business management experience working in a variety of sectors such as: local government, non-profit, private, education, and healthcare. She holds a Master of Business Administration degree, Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management, and an Associate of Science degree in Accounting. She is currently a Doctoral candidate pursuing an Educational and Organizational Leadership degree.

Miller's previous work experience includes Finance Director and Director of Administration at the Women's Center-Youth & Family Services and more recently she held the position of Program Manager assigned to the Administrative Services Department for the City of Stockton.

"I have known Kim for nearly twenty years and have

worked with her for fourteen years when she was the at the Women's Center-Youth & Family Services," said Joelle Gomez, CHS' Chief Executive Officer. "I have no doubt that Kim's experience in business administration and leadership experience will aid us in moving our critical work forward. She brings a heart of gold, a strong understanding of the complexities of non-profits and compassionate leadership."

CHS has been serving a vulnerable population of at-risk youth for 138 years. CHS is the largest 52-bed Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) in San Joaquin County, certified to provide Specialty Mental Health Services and offer Transition Aftercare services. In addition, CHS provides on-campus one.Vision classes operated by the San Joaquin Office of Education.

CHS is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. For more information, to get involved, or to tour the CHS campus, call 209-466-0853 or visit www.chstockton.org



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

SEPTEMBER 2020

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

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

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

WED: VIGIL: NO VIGIL in September
3 THURS: Peace/Life Center ZOOM Board Meeting, 6:30 pm. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org

8 SAT: Poetry event – The Meter Maids. Second Tuesday [on Saturday] Poetry with host Stella Beratlis. Celebrate the 30th anniversary of local writing group, The Meter Maids and the release of their anthology to mark the occasion. 7 pm. JOIN from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://cccconfer.zoom.us/j/97782297419>

18 FRI: Yokuts Group Public Meeting. Yokuts Chair Jeff Olson presents on his national Sierra Club outing to Alaska's wilderness 7:00 pm. Join ZOOM meeting, <https://sierraclub.zoom.us/j/6756586124?pwd=VkkxOUUoOUM1oIRFFhYWZnYVVrM2ROQT09>. Meeting ID: 675 658 6124. Passcode: sierraclub

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

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the 2nd Mondy at 7p.m. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in this support group for families whose children have died at any age, from any cause. Call 209-622-6786 or email for details: tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com; <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.org>

Suicide Loss Support Group: Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, nandrews6863@charter.net.

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

Walk with Me, a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

Silver & Gold Support group for our senior LGBT com-

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

TUESDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

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

Modesto Folk Dancers All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 480-0387.

GLBT Questioning Teen Support Group (14-19 years old). 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, College Ave. Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 7 – 9 pm. Safe, friendly, confidential. This is a secular, non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

Transgender Support Group, 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email info@stanpride.org, or tgssupport@stanpride.org

Mindful Meditation: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Anne, 521-6977.

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

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: SUSPENDED, held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

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

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

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace/Life Center. Meetings TBA.

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

THURSDAYS

CA10 Progressive Coalition Monthly Meeting, third Thursdays. Inclusive group of progressive activists to share resources, ideas, and information in order to support all the great organizing work happening in the Valley! Feel free to invite trusted allies. Meet-up and social hour: 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. Meeting: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Follow group on Facebook. Info: Tim Robertson, tim@nvlf.org

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

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

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

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

Green Team educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. www.StanislausGreenTeam.com

Third Thursday Art Walk, Postponed until further notice. <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

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

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

FRIDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

ONGOING

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

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

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

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

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

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month.

Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org
 Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.