

# Come and Hear John McCutcheon on January 14!

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

Folk legend John McCutcheon will perform in a concert fundraiser for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on **Tuesday, January 14, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto.

In this stressful and challenging time, it is good to gather in community with others who share our values for justice and peace. John's concerts have been a source of inspiration and unity over the years. We hope that you will join us.

John's music addresses injustice and inhumanity and celebrates the tenderest bonds of family, friends, and community. He and his friend Tom Paxton co-wrote and created their new album, *Together*.

Tom Paxton will not be able to perform as initially scheduled (see p. 2).

In-person tickets are available at Intrinsic Elements (1214 J St., Modesto, 209-409-8510) for \$30 in cash or check or \$35 at the door. The new price for people 30 years old and younger is \$10.

Please consider becoming a sponsor. You will receive tickets to the concert, your name in the program, and reserved seating. Five levels of sponsorship are available:

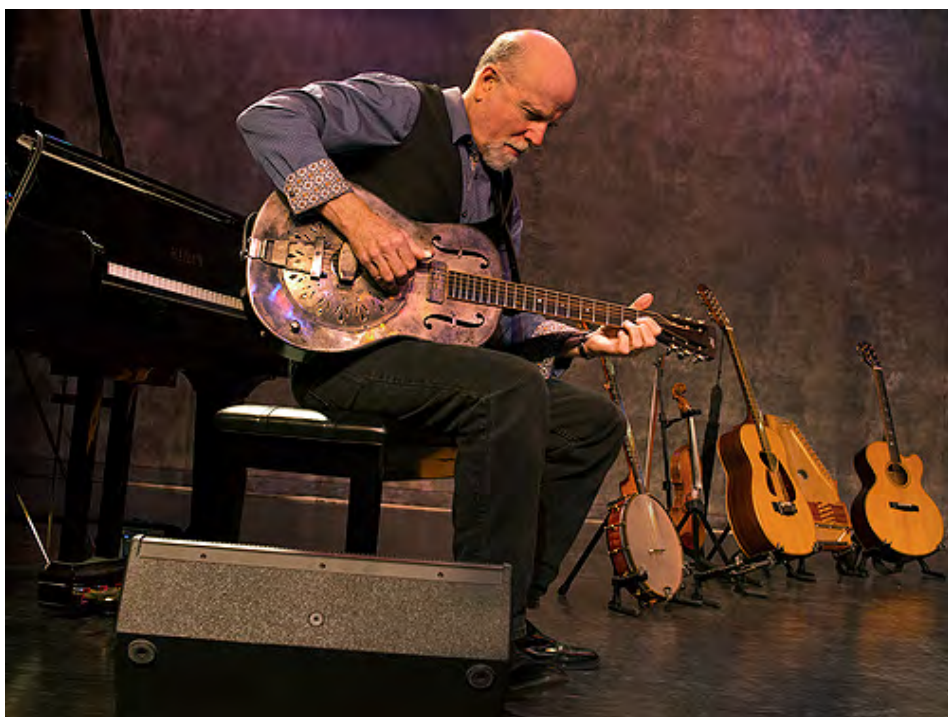
- Autoharp \$50 One ticket,
- Guitar \$100 Two tickets,
- Banjo \$175 Four tickets,
- Piano \$300 Eight tickets,

Hammer Dulcimer \$500 Fifteen tickets.

You may send your sponsorship donation check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353. Please write "concert sponsor" in the memo on the check.

You may also buy your tickets or sponsorship at Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/john-mccutcheon-concert-tickets-1070250260339?aff=oddtcreator>

For info, contact Ken Schroeder at [kschroeder70@yahoo.com](mailto:kschroeder70@yahoo.com) or 209-480-4576. Let Ken know if you would like a dedication to appear in the program (such as "In Honor of" or "In Memory of.").



## Continue to Learn at Modesto Institute For Continued Learning (MICL)

Registration is open for the spring session at the Modesto Institute For Continued Learning (MICL). Courses are open to all Stanislaus County residents 50 years and older. Classes are held on the West Campus of Modesto Junior College. Courses include:

- A History of India, All Things Considered, Creative Writing, Travels Around the World, Current Events, MICL Meet Your Past, Triumph of Christianity, Great Migration, Vietnam, Philosophy of Humor, Early Humans, Wine



Tasting, Great Decisions, On Tyranny, Social Zoom, Friday at the Movies, Book Club/Discussion.

Registration fee of \$60 covers all courses. No parking fee. Classroom information is sent after registration is completed.

**Choices to register:**

**Online** at MICL's website at [micl-online.org](http://micl-online.org), or

**In-person:** El Capitan Building, MJC West Campus, **Wednesday, 1/8/25, 9-11:30 AM.**

**Call MJC** at 209-575-6063.

There is no mandatory attendance, and no units are offered. Courses are for academic and social enjoyment only. Come join us!

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# The Peace Essay Contest Needs Your Help

By **ADRIANA FELIX** and **DEENA ELLIOTT**

The Peace Essay Contest has been a beloved part of our community for over 30 years, offering students a platform to think critically and write about social justice issues. We extend heartfelt thanks to the committee members, participants, volunteers, educators, judges, and everyone who contributed to making this contest such a valued tradition in our community.

Originally, the Peace Essay Contest aligned with the Modesto Peace/Life Center’s mission by encouraging school youth to explore themes of peace, justice, nonviolence, and sustainability. The contest’s scholarship ceremony brought together students, families, and community members to celebrate the powerful voices of youth with the potential to drive social change and build inclusivity and equity. Today, we are energized by a renewed interest in bringing back a reimagined contest to continue this important work—though “contest” may evolve to reflect new forms of engagement.

One thing stands out in conversations with former committee members: their legacy is irreplaceable. Our role now is to adapt this platform to a new generation, staying true to its mission while embracing diverse voices and leveraging technology to broaden its reach. Our vision is to create a space that welcomes even more students to participate, including those who may not have joined in the past. We believe in the power of words, creativity, and dialogue to inspire change, and we want to expand this platform to include not only essays but also other forms of expression like poetry and audio. While the world has changed, the call for critical thinking and engagement with global and local issues remains as strong as ever. Now, more than ever, the pursuit of social justice through youth engagement is vital.

Join our committee to help shape this inclusive and accessible platform, inspiring young people to become advocates for peace and justice. We’re looking for a diverse range of skills and perspectives to bring this vision to life and are calling on those who believe that a more peaceful world is possible. Together, we can empower the next generation to envision and build a more equitable world. If you’re ready to engage with passionate young visionaries and play a hands-on role in reimagining this powerful project, we invite you to join us.

**ACTION:** Contact us at [Modestopeacecontest@gmail.com](mailto:Modestopeacecontest@gmail.com) or leave a message at (209) 529-5750. Bring your dedication and talents to breathe new life into this initiative—together, let’s make a lasting impact.

**Be informed!**  
Read the Valley Citizen at  
<http://thevalleycitizen.com>

**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION  
OPENING SOON!**

**Learn More:**  
[stanislauscf.org/scholarships](http://stanislauscf.org/scholarships)

## SCF announces 2025 scholarship applications

Through our Scholarship Program, Stanislaus Community Foundation and its partners award over \$300,000 in scholarships to more than 150 local students Each year. The program offers financial assistance to Stanislaus County residents pursuing higher education at an accredited college, university, or vocational college through multiple scholarship funds.

The 2025 scholarship application period will open on Wednesday, January 1, 2025, and run through March 14, 2025.

Scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$3,500. Stanislaus Community Foundation’s online application system matches eligible applicants with available scholarships, providing a centralized process for students seeking financial aid. Only one online application is required to apply for all scholarships.

More information and eligibility criteria for each of our scholarship funds can be found at <https://www.stanislauscf.org/scholarships>. Students or parents with further questions can email our Scholarship Coordinator, Jessica Tapia, at [jtapia@stanislauscf.org](mailto:jtapia@stanislauscf.org)



# Why Tom Paxton Will Not Perform at the McCutcheon Concert

By **JOHN MCCUTCHEON**

After over sixty years of touring and a couple of recent health issues, Tom Paxton has decided that it is time to retire his touring. Consequently, he will not be joining me on my Left Coast Tour next month. He is fine now, rest assured, but at 87, it was time to pay attention to his body, his family, and common sense. Both Tom and I are really disappointed that we won’t be doing these concerts together. We love performing as a duo, and as he’d planned to retire by Memorial Day anyway, this was truly going to be a last hurrah. We are still writing together regularly and even have plans for another album this spring. I can attest that touring at 72 is more difficult than in the past. (My hammer dulcimer case is twice as heavy as it used to be!) I can’t imagine what it is like fifteen years further down the road.

So, I’ll be doing the shows solo, as I’ve done for the past forty years, and will be featuring not only songs from *Field of Stars*, but I can promise I’ll include many of Tom’s beloved songs in the setlist. And we’ll do our best to carry on like he was right there with us.



**IN MEMORIAM**

Nikki Giovanni  
June 7, 1943 – December 9, 2024

# Frank Ploof - Indomitable Advocate For The Unhoused

By TOM PORTWOOD

Back in early June, I walked by an elderly gentleman a few times on McHenry Avenue in Modesto who had hidden himself among some thick Oleander bushes bordering a parking lot. The fellow was raggedly dressed and looked all but resigned to whatever fate had in store for him. He was surrounded by a few possessions and sat on a rickety wooden chair. When I asked if he needed anything, he didn't respond - he just kept staring out at the passing traffic as it sped by. A few days later, only the chair remained. But where had the fellow gone? What had brought him to that makeshift place of shelter, and what had prompted - or forced him - to leave? Hunger? Medical or mental health needs?



Like so many other of our neighbors, I've encountered out on the streets over the past decade, this individual and his plight left a lasting impression on me. I had to look up the source for the quotation, but apparently, Puritan John Bradford is often attributed with saying, "There but for the grace of

God go I..." - that brief poem-like phrase of humility and empathy for the sorrows and troubles of those who endure circumstances far less fortunate than our own.

In a selfless decade and a half of volunteer service to those in our community forced to live on our streets, parks, and along our waterways, Frank Ploof has encountered and materially assisted many, many individuals like the fellow I saw those few times in late Spring. His dedication to those of our neighbors in grave distress or need has essentially become the guiding mission of his retirement years, following a distinguished career at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Over the years, Frank has tirelessly set about his task of finding and then lending a helping hand to the unhoused, as well as being a strong, loyal advocate for the voiceless and the underserved.

During 2023, along with other members of the Modesto Citizens Action Group (MoCag), he fought for and watched in frustration and dismay as a safe ground for the homeless proposal was voted down by a 4-3 vote by the Modesto City Council.

But Frank, who'll be 78 years old in April, is nothing if not ever resilient and has recently been working on a proposal that would shift the focus from "safe ground" and draw attention to the alarming increase of older adults among the unhoused.

"We're shifting gears, changing the vocabulary," he said in a recent interview. "We're trying not to use the word *homeless*."

Since the safe ground proposal failed to garner the necessary support from the Modesto City Council fourteen months ago, Frank is entirely behind an approach tentatively called *Safe Haven for Vulnerable Seniors*.

The goal of this proposal is to "get seniors into a safe place where they can get the medical treatment that most



of them need in one way or another." While there are other services focusing on seniors in Stanislaus County, this program would be different in that "this would be a low-end safe haven for seniors where the primary mission is safety and providing health care services."

As Frank can attest to from his own field experience, the unhoused population is aging.

The California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH) found that the median age of all homeless adults in California was 47. The study also found that "older adults experiencing homelessness were in poor health, with a high prevalence of chronic diseases and functional impairments."

According to the 2024 Point in Time Count, there are currently 2,052 people in Stanislaus County who are unhoused, either living in a shelter or on the streets. About 21% of those are older adults aged 55 and above. With the high cost of housing forcing more and more older adults to the margins, the number of unhoused older adults has increased in recent years, Frank noted.

The CASPEH study found that "forty-one percent of older homeless had their first experience of homelessness after age 50" - at a point in their lives when they are highly vulnerable in any number of ways. This is the population that Frank believes could be best served through focused services.

In the program he and others are still fine-tuning, "vulnerable seniors would have small temporary-transitional housing where they can develop a plan to move on to permanent supportive housing (PSH), dependent upon the availability of PSH."

"Many seniors need medical care," Frank explained, "so we are exploring the possibility of the site operator being an organization that has a 'Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly' PACE service such as Golden Valley and Wellbe Health."

When asked why we continually fall short of our goals to fully assist unhoused individuals in our community when so many people are working hard at all levels on the issue,

Frank answered slowly, carefully choosing each word:

"It's a multifaceted longtime human condition problem, and in our contemporary world, it comes down to politics and dollars, where the dollars are controlled by the politics - from the federal to the local level. Cities are not funded to deal with the issue in any meaningful capacity - they are not funded to provide housing. Through state funding, it's the County's job to take care of health issues, particularly mental health. For example, the County receives Medi-Cal funding, which is a federal pass-through."

"The intent of the power system is to make the unhoused among us invisible - it's a lesser form of cruelty to make them invisible than it is to lock them up. So, when they chase them out of the parks, the unhoused go somewhere else where they're not as *visible*. It's very hard, especially now when you have the Park Rangers who can chase them out of *any* park, and then there's the Police and the Sheriff's hustling up anything that looks like a camp and telling them to move on. Also, some neighborhoods are better organized than others with their "NIMBY-ism" efforts, and that's been discouraging."

"I hate to use a worn-out phrase - but it's doing the right thing. The right thing in the context of humanity is to make sure that the least of us are treated well. Being civil is actually hard work. I can see where there's a tendency to be authoritative - you don't have to worry about negotiating anything with anybody. But you have to move away from that if you want to live in a civil society because it's about negotiation. None of us can have everything. To be human in a civilized sense means that everyone deserves respect."

Winter's cold, stormy weather is already upon us, and Frank expressed concern that there were possibly not enough warming centers throughout the county, particularly fearing that the closure of the Modesto Central Library for renovations will impact the unhoused as they seek respite from the elements. He urged the community to be on the lookout for their neighbors on the streets and in the parks and help them whenever and wherever they can.

To do "the right thing."

# Tuttletown Twofer

By **ELAINE GORMAN**

The Tuttletown Recreation Area, a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation land area surrounding New Melones Reservoir, contains a few dozen miles of hiking trails. This area is located off Highway 49, between Angels Camp and Sonora. The reservoir's surface is around 1000 ft. in elevation, depending on drought or inflow from the Stanislaus River. On this mild late-fall day, we mainly chose level trails that hugged the reservoir, hoping to view water birds and winter migrants.

As I approached the entrance kiosk (\$ 8-day use or Federal Lands Pass), I noticed a large bird at the top of a gray pine near the road. Pulling over, I got out the binos and watched a Red-Tailed Hawk watching me. We eyed each other for several minutes until I won the staring match, and the hawk pushed off and flew away.

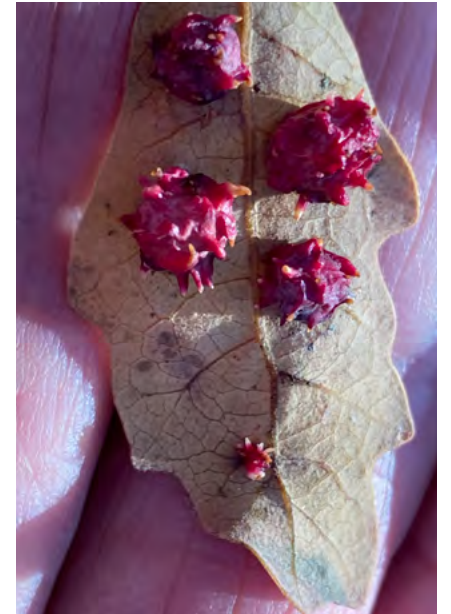
At the kiosk, the park ranger informed me that the boat ramp was closed due to a caution regarding an invasive mussel. This was a good reminder to always check park websites before adventures to be aware of closures and cautions. When Byron arrived, we snagged a trail map at the kiosk and headed to the trailheads at the northwest edge of the recreation area.

The parking lot at the road's dead end is the start for two trailheads. We chose the Heron Point Trail to begin, hiking clockwise on the 3-mile loop. The trailhead sign is at the north end of the parking lot. Wild oats and other grasses were dried brown. We tried to avoid "velcro bugs," the small seeds of stickseed/forget-me-not; otherwise, we'd be spending time extracting the bothersome spiny seeds from our clothing. The blue oak leaves had started turning brown and dropping, so the mistletoe was particularly noticeable. Feel free to snatch a smooch.

Binos at the ready, we scanned the trees and brush for birds as we walked. Although bird activity was sparse, we observed Black Phoebes, White-Crowned and Golden-Crowned Sparrows, Acorn Woodpeckers, Turkey Vultures, Juncos, and Western Bluebirds. Where were the herons? We were a bit disappointed that geese and ducks weren't evident, but grebes were swimming on the placid surface of the reservoir, creating striking V-shaped patterns in their wakes.

The foothills of the Sierra are a prime area to look for Oracle Oaks. Oracles are hybrids of deciduous oaks (blue) and evergreen/live oaks that live in the same habitat. Sure enough, we could spot the trees that still contained green and yellow leaves, which contrasted with the brown of the blue oaks and the dark green leaves of the live oaks. The manzanitas also caught our interest, as the striking, bronzy, smooth bark added color to the trail.

After about 2.5 miles, there is a fork in the trail, but no sign. Stay right, which is the return to the parking lot. After enjoying a quick snack at our vehicles, we walked to the south end of the parking lot where some picnic tables are located. The Redtail Trail is NOT signed, but it is obvious as it leads south. We decided on the 2.5-mile "lollipop" route. We walked toward the buttery yellow



leaves of the willow trees in a nearby ravine.

We passed a "granary" tree — a tree that is full of acorn-filled holes — created for storage by Acorn Woodpeckers. Good work! After about 0.5 miles, we came to a junction. We took the trail to the right to begin a counterclockwise loop of about 1.5 miles. Several types of mushrooms were popping out of the leaf litter. Some oak leaves sported bright pink spiky leaf galls (pictured), nurseries for wasp larvae.

We soon had long views of the reservoir, with the hills on the far side creating reflections of gigantic reclining curvaceous women on the still surface. The trails in this area are shared by wildlife, as evidenced by abundant scat full of berries and fur (yes, mountain lions are part of the landscape). Sadly, we spotted one of the human-caused banes of the Sierra, a mylar balloon tangled in brush.

We turned left and headed back to the vehicles at the main Redtail Trail (not signed). We stopped at one of the picnic tables near the parking lot to have lunch before

we headed home. A small group of chatty hikers passed by, enjoying the beautiful day, then leaving us in calm.

Notes: There are several other trails which provide more strenuous hiking opportunities. Restrooms are located in parking lots. There are several camping options and boat launches (when they are open to visitors).

<https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/planning-visit/camping.html>

<https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/docs/tt-trail.pdf>

**Getting there:** About 55 miles, 1 hr. 15 min. drive time. From Modesto to Oakdale. Go east on Highway 108/120 toward Jamestown. Turn left at the signal in Jamestown at Rawhide Rd. Continue on Rawhide Rd. for about 4 miles. Turn left at Highway 49. Go about 2.5 miles, and look for a sign on the right that points to "Tuttletown Rec. Area". Turn left at Reynolds Ferry Rd. In about 1.5 miles, you will see the entrance kiosk. Follow signs to Heron Point.

## Yokuts Group Sierra Club Student 2025 Scholarships



The Yokuts Group Sierra Club \$1,000 Scholarship for 2025 is now open for applications to students attending any accredited community college, junior college, or university in the fall of 2025. These students must be enrolled in a Stanislaus County high school or an accredited community college, junior college, or university.

The application letter should include a short essay on the applicant's classwork and activities related to environmental stewardship.

For additional information about this scholarship, see the Yokuts Group Sierra Club's Instagram, Facebook, and website pages.

<https://www.instagram.com/yokutssierraclub/>

<https://www.facebook.com/YokutsSierraClub>

<https://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts>

**ACTION:** For more information, contact Laura Stokes at [LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com](mailto:LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com) or (206) 371-4853 (Seattle Area Code).



**MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER**

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and a **sustainable future**

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# Israel Committing 'Extermination and Acts of Genocide' by Depriving Gaza of Water

*"This isn't just negligence; it is a calculated policy of deprivation that has led to the deaths of thousands from dehydration and disease," said the rights group's director.*

By **BRETT WILKINS, Common Dreams**

A Human Rights Watch report published Thursday accuses Israel of "extermination and acts of genocide" in Gaza "by intentionally depriving Palestinian civilians there of adequate access to water, most likely resulting in thousands of deaths."

Mirroring language used in Article II of the Genocide Convention to define the crime of genocide, HRW said that Israeli officials "have deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of part of the population in Gaza" by deliberately denying Palestinians "access to safe water for drinking and sanitation needed for basic human survival."

"Israeli authorities and forces cut off and later restricted piped water to Gaza; rendered most of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure useless by cutting electricity and restricting fuel; deliberately destroyed and damaged water and sanitation infrastructure and water repair materials; and blocked the entry of critical water supplies," the report states.

"In doing so, Israeli authorities are responsible for the crime against humanity of extermination and for acts of genocide," HRW continued. "The pattern of conduct, coupled with statements suggesting that some Israeli officials wished to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, may amount to the crime of genocide."

HRW "also found that some statements from senior Israeli officials calling for cutting water, fuel, and aid, in tandem with their actions, have amounted to direct and public incitement to genocide."

## According to the report:

Immediately after the attacks in southern Israel by Hamas-led Palestinian armed groups in Gaza on October 7, 2023, which Human Rights Watch has found amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity, Israeli authorities cut all electricity and fuel to the Gaza Strip. On October 9, then-Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced a "complete siege" of Gaza, stating, "There will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel, everything is closed."

That same day, and for weeks thereafter, Israeli authorities cut off all water and blocked fuel, food, and humanitarian aid from entering the strip. Israeli authorities continue to restrict the entry of water, fuel, food, and aid into Gaza and to cut Gaza's electricity, which is required to operate life-sustaining infrastructure. This continued even after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued provisional measures in January, March, and May 2024 ordering Israeli authorities to protect Palestinians in Gaza from genocide and, in so doing, provide humanitarian aid, specifying in March that this includes water, food, electricity, and fuel.

HRW detailed how Israel "also barred nearly all water-related aid from entering Gaza, including water filtration

systems, water tanks, and materials needed to repair water infrastructure," and how Israeli forces "have deliberately attacked and damaged or destroyed several major water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities."

"Based on interviews with healthcare professionals and epidemiologists, it is likely that thousands of people have died as a result of the Israeli authorities' actions," the report states, adding that deaths are in addition to the more than 45,000 Palestinians directly killed by Israeli bombs and bullets.

HRW added that hundreds of thousands of Gazans have contracted diseases and ailments attributable to a lack of access to safe and sufficient water, including diarrhea, hepatitis A, skin diseases, and upper respiratory infections.

"Water is essential for human life, yet for over a year the Israeli government has deliberately denied Palestinians in Gaza the bare minimum they need to survive," HRW executive director Tirana Hassan said in a statement. "This isn't just negligence; it is a calculated policy of deprivation that has led to the deaths of thousands from dehydration and disease that is nothing short of the crime against humanity



of extermination, and an act of genocide."

Without naming any specific nations, the report notes that "several governments have undermined accountability efforts and continue to provide the Israeli government with arms despite the clear risk of complicity in serious violations of international humanitarian law."

The United States is Israel's main arms supplier and diplomatic ally, approving tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons transfers, vetoing several United Nations Security Council cease-fire resolutions, and threatening international officials seeking to hold Israel accountable for its crimes.

"Governments should not contribute to the grave crimes that Israeli officials are committing in Gaza, including crimes against humanity and genocidal acts, and should take all steps possible to prevent further harm," Hassan said. "Governments arming Israel should end their risk of complicity in atrocity crimes in Gaza and take immediate action to protect civilians with an arms embargo, targeted sanctions, and support for justice."

The HRW report follows the publication earlier this month of an Amnesty International report accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, an assessment shared by United Nations experts, national leaders, jurists, academics, and activist groups. Israeli and U.S. leaders deny that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.

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## 'We Disagree': US Dismisses Landmark Amnesty Report Accusing Israel of Genocide

*"We have said previously and continue to find that the allegations of genocide are unfounded," said a State Department spokesperson.*

By **Eloise Goldsmith, Common Dreams**

A U.S. State Department spokesperson told reporters on Thursday that the United States disagrees with Amnesty International's new report accusing Israel of carrying out genocide in the Gaza Strip.

"We disagree with the conclusions of such a report," spokesperson Vedant Patel said a day after the human rights group released the document. "We have said previously and continue to find that the allegations of genocide are unfounded."

The Israeli government has vehemently rejected the findings in the report.

"The deplorable and fanatical organization Amnesty International has once again produced a fabricated report that is entirely false and based on lies. The genocidal massacre on October 7, 2023, was carried out by the Hamas terrorist organization against Israeli citizens. Since then, Israeli citizens have been subjected to daily attacks from seven different fronts. Israel is defending



itself against these attacks acting fully in accordance with international law," wrote the Israel Foreign Ministry in a post on X.

Amnesty Israel also does not accept the findings of Amnesty International's report, according to *The Times of Israel*.

In a statement, the Israeli branch of the organization—which reportedly did not take part in the funding, research, or writing of the report—said that "the scale of the killing and destruction carried out by Israel in Gaza has reached horrific proportions and must be stopped immediately," per *The Times of Israel*. However, the groups does not believe the events "meet the definition of genocide as strictly laid out in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide."

In the 296-page report released Wednesday—titled, *"You Feel Like You Are Subhuman": Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza*—Amnesty International found through its research and legal analysis "sufficient basis to conclude that Israel committed, during the nine-month period under review, prohibited acts under Articles II (a), (b), and (c) of the Genocide Convention, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting on

# As Valley universities hold Native American remains, tribal members grapple with ‘spiritual burden’

Audits show thousands of Native belongings are still being held by California’s public universities.

By **RACHEL LIVINAL**, Higher Education Reporter for The Merced Focus

Along the Merced River, a short distance from Yosemite National Park, lies a freshly-covered grave for a boy from an unknown Native American tribe.

Jazzmyn Gegere, who is a member of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Tribe dug the grave herself not too long ago. Gegere is also a descendent of the Mono Lake Paiute, Chukchansi and Yokut tribes. She said this boy didn’t die recently. His remains were uncovered during an archeological excavation nearby without any indication of a name, gender, or tribe, before being repatriated to her tribe. Despite the lack of information, she knows her ancestor was a boy because of what he was buried with and her traditional spiritual knowledge.

After digging the grave, Gegere led a small reburial ceremony with tribal community members. She walked the group toward a space among fallen yellowed leaves. Birds chirped from the branches above and the water rushed against the rocks below.

They sang songs and recited prayers.

“Even though we don’t necessarily have a name or face for this ancestor, you still feel it as though you were burying your very close first cousin,” Gegere said.

There was no itinerary for this ceremony. Her tribe, like many others, never thought they would have to perform ceremonies like these.

“We’re bringing them home in a good way and we’re doing it the best way that we know how,” she said.

Although this ancestor was handed over to Gegere’s tribe shortly after he was found in Mariposa County, others are still being held in universities and museums, and have been for decades. Many institutions use them for scientific or research purposes in fields like anthropology and history.

For more than 30 years, this practice has been illegal.

In 1990, a federal law called the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) required any institution that receives federal funds like museums, government agencies and public universities to return Native American remains and cultural belongings to their descendents. California’s legislature then passed a state law in 2001 to include tribes that are not federally recognized, like Gegere’s.

Three audits published by the California State Auditor in 2020, 2022, and 2023 showed that hundreds of thousands of Native belongings still remained at California’s public universities.

Gegere’s tribe and others are likely to be conducting ceremonies like this more often as those universities work to comply with the laws.



**Jazzmyn Gegere stands in front of a basketry exhibit at the Mariposa Creek Parkway that includes information about plants from the Southern Sierra Miwuk tribe. Credit: Rachel Livinal/KVPR**

But coordinators at those institutions also report challenges in returning these belongings – and those hurdles add to the regulatory and emotional barriers that tribes face in getting their ancestors back.

## Audit brings tribal challenges to the forefront

After the first two audits examined Native American possessions within the University of California system, the third focused on the California State University system, the largest public four-year university system in the country. Among the findings, the audit revealed the CSUs failed to repatriate more than 700,000 ancestors and cultural belongings.

Among the San Joaquin Valley’s CSUs — Stanislaus, Fresno, and Bakersfield — they have held an estimated total of at least 37 ancestors and more than 38,000 cultural belongings.

The audits were prompted by a handful of state laws introduced by California Assemblyman James Ramos to place pressure on institutions in the state who had yet to follow the original repatriation laws.

“When other people hold remains of another person and see them as not even human but more of a prized possession, we have a problem,” said Ramos, a Democrat who is a member of the Serrano/Cahuilla tribe in San Bernardino County and the first Native American elected to the state legislature. “The mentality within the academia world... is that what they have and what they’ve uncovered is their personal property, even though it’s the remains of loved ones, of people’s family.”

Gegere agrees this practice is wrong. To her, it’s “just about the same as somebody going to your family cemetery and digging up your grandmother.”

## An arduous undertaking

As the director of cultural preservation for her tribe, Gegere handles all matters requiring repatriation.

Since the last audit, she said she’s been overwhelmed with consultation letters from universities. The laws require universities to contact tribes after creating an itemized list of the ancestors and belongings in their possession. She expects to receive at least 20 letters by the end of the year.

Although she’s grateful universities are returning these belongings, she also describes repatriation as a long, tedious process, because she often deals with underfunded staff and sometimes feels institutions don’t offer the sympathy the situation requires.

*“When other people hold remains of another person and see them as not even human but more of a prized possession, we have a problem.”* — California Assemblymember James Ramos

For starters, the law refers to her ancestors as ancestral or human “remains.” But she doesn’t like that term.

“I don’t even feel comfortable calling our ancestors ‘human remains,’” she said. “It doesn’t sit right. I don’t like that because you’re objectifying a person.”

Gegere also feels like universities need to treat this process with more care, but that isn’t always the case. She said, in her experience, some who have consulted with her from campuses have not come across as empathetic.

“It’s very objectified to them, they’re not connected,” she said. “They don’t understand. They just know that this is the process, this is what they need to do and then they move forward in that way.”

For her, this bureaucratic process is a taxing undertaking.

“This is an emotional venture that we are taking,” she said. “It’s a spiritual burden that we have to carry and then lift.”

Gegere’s tribe is not federally recognized. So she said this requires an additional tribe that is federally recognized to sign for her ancestors once consultation with a campus is complete.

It can also be challenging to obtain land in the correct resting place, she said, so many reburials occur in local cemeteries. Plus, Gegere provides funds for tribal elders and other members to travel to participate in the ceremony, but the tribe doesn’t receive much funding for it to begin with.

Because of these hurdles, Gegere said repatriations can take up to a year or longer.

## Universities face uphill battle

In the last year, the Valley’s CSUs have been working to hire full-time coordinators to help come into compliance with the law. But university representatives also told KVPR they have experienced their own share of problems.

Just finding possible candidates to hire is a challenge. David Silva, the interim Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) coordinator at CSU

**continued next page**

Bakersfield, said to him it appears Bakersfield isn't as attractive to potential hires as other campuses are.

"We don't have giant malls," Silva said. "We don't have 40 movie theaters or the most up-to-date restaurants."

Even though Silva was recently hired to fill in while the university searches for a permanent hire, the institution has yet to consult with tribes – but that when it does, he expects the campus to approach communication with compassion.

"We always want to make sure that we're not overstepping our bounds and the best way to do that is also to be as respectful as possible to the Native American tribes and to what they're looking for in terms of consultation," Silva said.

In an email, CSU Bakersfield spokeswoman Jennifer Self told KVPR that the university has an estimated 234 boxes of items, and more than 55 potential ancestral remains. Self said that the campus is working on consolidating a space for the items and updating their records.

Fresno State's NAGPRA coordinator, Kellie Carrillo, said the university is currently communicating with 34 tribes.

"This formal consultation between Fresno State and the tribes includes presentations to tribal leadership, and hosting tribal cultural resource management staff on campus for multiple visits and discussions regarding protocols, and preparations for the next steps," Carrillo told KVPR in an email.

Carrillo also said Fresno State repatriated 122 ancestors to tribes in 1999.

She said she is dedicated full-time to the repatriation of ancestors and cultural belongings. However, she said the university is hiring a second position to assist with tribal relations.

"I don't really know if communities [that aren't tribal] understand how much work that is to build relationships with tribes," Carrillo said. "It's just really building trust around a really unique issue that is still hurtful and it tends to go back to the history of California Indian people in general."

Carrillo said she also belongs to a Native American tribe. So she said she understands the overwhelming amount of work that repatriation efforts put on tribes, like the influx of letters Gegere has received in the past year.

"It's put some of the tribes in a bad place where they're having to kind of go through each of those [letters] and find out where they need to move the quickest on repatriation," Carrillo said.

Stanislaus State's NAGPRA coordinator, Jake Malsbury, said the university remains transparent with tribes and relies on "tribal knowledge" in order to move forward in the process of repatriation.

He later said in an email that the university is currently consulting with tribes and working to fill a campus oversight committee for the law.

## Tribes move forward for future generations

Earlier this year, Ramos held a hearing in Sacramento for the Assembly Select Committee on Native American Affairs to evaluate how state universities have been moving forward since the audit.

Among those providing testimony was Leo Sisco, chairman of the Tachi-Yokut tribe in Lemoore.

"We feel our ancestors. They are not science projects. Our ancestors carry values, stories, and we want to bring those stories and those values home," he said, choking up. "It's sad that this crime can be practiced publicly and it takes an audit, it takes intervention by outsiders, to make this right."

Sisco said he feels conflicted about encouraging young

people to attend universities that have not complied fully with the repatriation law.

"As tribal leaders, I am ashamed to say that I am lying to them," he said. "I want them to go to further their education, but the places I want them to go are doing stuff like this to our people."

Gegere has mixed emotions as well. She is glad the young boy she buried is home now. But every time an ancestor is returned it opens up old wounds.

"It's just really building trust around a really unique issue that is still hurtful and it tends to go back to the history of California Indian people in general." — Kellie Carrillo, NAGPRA coordinator at Fresno State

Still, she hopes she can fix a wrong that was done to generations past. The repatriation work is slow-moving, but it's at least a starting point. After the recent ceremony, she took the day off to be with her children. She reflected about the hefty task that still lies ahead to get all the remaining belongings from campuses.

And she won't take the young boy off her mind.

"I'll be cherishing my children when they get home and just really being grateful for how things are now," she said. "That my children are safe and they'll always be safe and I don't have to be scared to be a proud Native woman."

*The Merced FOCUS is a Merced-based newsroom covering issues that matter to the San Joaquin Valley and is part of the Central Valley Journalism Collaborative (CVJC) supported by a grant from the James McClatchy Foundation. Reprinted with permission.*

## 'We Disagree': US Dismisses Landmark Amnesty Report Accusing Israel of Genocide from page 5

Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part."

In order for a conflict to be considered genocide under international law, there must be both evidence of specific criminal acts—such as killing members of a given group—as well as "intent to destroy, in whole or in part,

a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such."

In its report, Amnesty International concluded that "these acts were committed with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza."

Intent also came up during the State Department press conference

Thursday when journalist Said Arikat of the Palestinian paper *Al-Quds* asked Patel a follow-up question about the report.

"I know that genocide depends a great deal on intent... And [the report] bases its conclusions on the statements, time and time and time again, by Israeli commanders, by Israeli officials," he said. "What is it going to take for you, for the United States of America... to say what is happening

is genocide?"

Patel responded, "That's an opinion, and you're certainly welcome and you are entitled to it, as are all the organizations."

Israel faces an ongoing genocide case, led by South Africa, at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court recently issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas leader Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri.

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**CEASEFIRE NOW**  
 MOVE ON

# MoSt to host 13th Annual Poetry Festival at Carnegie Arts Center

By TOM PORTWOOD

The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) will host its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Festival on **Saturday, February 1, 2025**, at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock, CA, from 10 am to 2 pm. *This event features a generative workshop led by author Michael Meyerhofer, whose workshop, **Pulling Up the Floorboards: Two Radical Approaches to Revising Poems**, will guide you through the process of writing and revision.* Michael Meyerhofer is the author of five poetry books, including *What To Do If You're Buried Alive* (free from Doubleback Books). His work has appeared in *The Sun*, *Missouri Review*, *Southern Review*, *Brevity*, *Rattle*, and other journals. He's also the author of a fantasy series and Poetry Editor of *Atticus Review*. For more info and an embarrassing childhood photo, visit [troublewithhammers.com](http://troublewithhammers.com).



Modesto-Stanislaus  
Poetry Center

Poets and poetry lovers: The MoSt Poetry Festival is the place to be on Saturday, February 1. Join us as we meet fellow poets and create space to write new poems in a supportive community.

RSVP \$40. Price includes continental breakfast and a

light lunch. Visit <https://www.mostpoetry.org/>

If you are a poet with a publication, please bring your books to sell. Bring poetry books to exchange at our community table.

*Poets & Writers support this event in part.*



## VIELKA SOLANO: Poetry as a Gift and Instrument of Healing

Vielka Solano was born in a little town outside Santiago, Dominican Republic. Already a poet, she received her degree in medicine from the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, and in 1989, Vielka moved to Modesto and attended UC Davis so that she could continue healing those in need with medicine and her poetry. After 20 years of dedication to her family and work, she returned to poetry, published four books, and continued to use poetry as an instrument of healing. Now, she works as a medical provider for a nonprofit in Patterson and as a volunteer worldwide.

She has been invited to poetry festivals, book fairs, and literary conferences around the world. Her work has gathered attention for its intensity and difficult subject matter, such as social injustice, the trauma of war, and domestic violence. For this, she received the Blue Shield Foundation grant for several years and works with the project **Influencers4Justice** to tackle these topics.

Vielka takes poetry, as part of a comprehensive art program, to students in underserved schools in Stanislaus County, most recently under the Heartland Grant in 2023-24. Vielka continues her healing work through poetry doing various workshops with her organization Poesia y arte curando el alma (Poetry and Art Healing Soul).

*A Gathering of Voices* is delighted that Vielka has shared several of her extraordinarily beautiful poems in this issue of *Stanislaus Connections*.

## A Mural

With songs of many people  
countries  
farmworkers and laborers  
of all colors of all ages  
“Illegal” or legal  
illiterate or literate  
all together in one uproar  
let us form a living mural  
Let all the hopeful come  
to fight against forgetfulness  
without curtains without time  
let those who wait arrive  
those who dream  
those who believe in the truth  
that takes us to plant a tree  
a persistent tree  
of equity and justice  
that will remain unmoved  
shielding and supporting  
our inheritors

With their dreams reinventing truths  
let us draw the reality we want  
despite the pain and the fear  
of the envy and the lies  
with which others pretend  
to draw our contour

All together to the same rhythm of unity  
let us paint an active mural  
Let us carry in our fierce hands  
the multicolor present  
that defines our race of undefeatable spirit  
of ferrous and invincible soul  
capable of taking unimaginable forms  
with successes and failures  
to the desire of a righteous future

With the inextinguishable fire  
that rebuilds old foundations  
let us push this fight together  
Let us unite our hands  
let us lift the colors  
that paint the uncorrupted tomorrow  
let us make a living mural

Let us not forget the legacy  
of the great collective mural

let us not forget the legacy  
of the great expressive mural

of fraternal love  
of the great collective mural

## Beyond the Complaint

Rage is not an invention  
it's the harvest

When the furious people rise up  
parliament stops  
It is unknown if the rebellious sparks  
carry grapeshots or carry tears

When the government wrings the naked  
the oppressive vomit slides on the asphalt  
the bad breath of words  
become understandable

Rage is not an invention

When the wind carries bloody rain  
I don't need butterflies  
as whips  
the word wallows in an altar of angels  
with a mischievous tongue

Strawberry bubbles come out  
on the cheeks of the carpenter  
standing on the dirt street  
and the muddy horns rise  
and the tiles under the rain  
in the midst of broken hearts

Rage is not an invention  
it's the harvest

But one day  
the barefoot word will leap  
in the deaf ear of the faithful  
beaten by the wait  
it will leap acidly on the empty plates  
by the paid misery of the skeletons  
disguised as riches

Then  
and only then  
the rage  
will not be the harvest

## Now

I know I was there  
it is just that I misplaced the image  
just like at every instant I lose  
the now  
the house the streets the people  
and the dance of your eyes in the mornings?  
the perfumed embrace of my children  
the laugh out loud of the eldest  
following the talk of "bad words"  
of the youngest  
and how all the other faces  
of my intertwined genealogical tree  
start to disappear

Yes  
I was there  
even if today I can not  
spell that inhabitable remembrance  
and my memory is sometimes  
an empty space  
a solitary present  
that will not have a yesterday

I was  
now  
I just am  
at the mercy of violent waves  
that crash at my hippocampus  
contemplating the sparks  
in an attempt to restart  
the lost communication

I was a little girl when I was there  
I think  
a dark tunnel interposes itself  
I try to cross squatting down  
between the silent numbers of the calendar  
and my memories  
                  crystal figures that shatter  
become dust that cut the moments  
with a sharp silence  
like the blade with which I shaved  
my legs to go to that one dance  
the dance of your eyes?

I am  
here I am  
without knowing if it is the memory  
or the sanity that abandons me  
or if it is both that  
prefer to play without me  
in the unending labyrinths  
without memories  
now

## Warrior Heart

I curse the fast-flowing sound of your words  
annihilating horizons  
sweeping innocent dreams  
                  in the cold of the daybreak  
like a dull hoe that doesn't cut this story

I grumble at the sharp noise of your vowels  
that slide through your moving and infernal  
tongue

That voice in the dawn hurts me  
like a litany of starts taking over  
the loneliness of my bed

The voice of my deceased wanders  
through the streets of my days  
like a song off tune

I detest the feelings of agony  
that whisper under our bed  
hidden and stalking

I curse the syllables you shoot out like grapeshot  
the blasphemy of a demon  
that provokes nausea and tears

The voice of the children  
calms the pain  
like grandmother's balm  
in the nights of pain

If I could  
I sow in you the voice of bougainvilleas  
I would embrace it with velvet  
cover it with tenderness  
adorn it with the alphabet  
of future dreams  
I would silence it  
with my own voice  
hidden  
in my warrior heart



# Great Programs on KCBP 95.5 fm, the Voice of the Valley

## Streaming on [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

### CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

**Confetti Park** - Music, stories New Orleans style, Saturdays at 8:00 am; & Sunday's 12:30 pm.

**The Children's Hour** - Sundays 3:00 pm. And Mondays at 4:00 p.m.

### SCIENCE

**Radio Ecoshock** – the latest scientific information on Climate Change – Saturdays, 9:00 am.

**Explorations** – Science explained with Dr. Michio Kaku - 9:00 am Sundays.

**Big Picture Science** - 1:00 pm Sundays.

**Planetary Radio** – 2:30 pm Sundays.

### PROGRAMS

**The Ralph Nader Hour:** Citizen advocate Ralph Nader and guests discuss topics important for consumers and our nation on Saturdays at 4 p.m.

**Ukraine 2.4.2** - a collaboration between Anne Levine, WOMR, the Pacifica Network, and Kraina FM, a 26-city radio network in Ukraine that arranges weekly cutting-edge and exclusive interviews with key people in Ukraine – Thursdays, 10:00 am.

**Beethoven to Bernstein** - Classical music ranging from Beethoven to Bernstein. Big hits from well-known composers - Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Ravel, Copland - and many more, mostly in the form of orchestral, chamber, and piano music - Saturdays, 10:00 pm.

**The Not Old – Better Show** - fascinating, high-energy program of big-name guests, inspiring role models, interesting topics, with entertaining host and former Modestan, Paul Vogelzang – Fridays, 2:00 pm, Saturdays, 12:30 pm.

**Down on the Farm** - topics important for our San Joaquin agriculture with Madera organic farmer Tom Willey - Saturdays, 6 am

**Sounds Irish** Music from County Wicklow - Saturdays, 7:00 pm.

**Various musical programs during the noon hour:** *Oldies, Old Piano, and International.*

**Dead Air** - Hear the Grateful Dead with Cory Daniels. Fridays, 6 pm; Saturdays, 3 pm.

**Attitude with Arne Arnesen** – 3:00 pm. Political and social issues.

**Sojourner Truth** - 4:00 pm – Tuesdays. Interviews and panels focus on issues that affect people of color.

**Democracy Now!** - 7:00 am, Monday thru Friday. Reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez.



**Flashpoint Magazine** - 10:00 pm, Monday thru Friday. Politics, social issues, from KQED's Dennis Bernstein.

**Julian Taylor's Jukebox** – 4:00 pm, Thursdays and Fridays. Eclectic, contemporary music.

**Nuestra Música** – 4:00 pm, Tuesdays. Eclectic, Latin-flavored music with a beat!

### LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

**Rockin' with MJC** – One-hour music shows by Modesto Junior College students. 1:00 a.m. Saturdays; 2:00 p.m. Saturdays; 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays.

**Triumphant Tuesdays** – Noon, Tuesdays. Inspirational thoughts & music with Catrice.

**Sports Talk Modesto** - Join Jay Freeda and Jimmie Menezes. Snappy banter to catch

up on everything happening in the sports world. – Thursdays, 5 pm.

**Vibn with the West Modesto Collaborative** - Jasmine Corena and Likhi Rivas. Engage, Educate, and Advocate on behalf of the West Modesto Community. Showcases Voices of the West Modesto Community – Wednesdays, 7 pm.

**AREA 5150 UFO RADIO** – Spooky music & sounds out of this world, Friday night, 11:00 pm.

**Cyber Stallion: Bucks Stallion's Radio Transmission Emporium** – Cyber Acoustic Music - Saturdays, 12:00 am, Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.

**I-On-Modesto** - John Griffin interviews local people who reveal their inspiring stories. Mondays & Fridays, 10 am and Wednesdays at 9 pm.

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

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

**Modesto Sound** - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) – Tuesdays 5:30 pm, Wednesdays 11:30 am, & Sundays 11:00 am & 4:30 pm.

**Sunday Cruisin'** with your host, DeeJay Rig! Oldies hits

from 1959 to 1999 – Sundays, 5:00 p.m.

**Faithful Fridays** – inspirational music and thoughts with Catrice – Fridays, 7:00 p.m.

**Why Not Nice?** - Showcases unique music from unique cultures and thinkers worldwide, focusing on world/academic/jazz and roots music – Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

**Mars Radio – Hip-Hop Show** - Music, interviews from local & regional artists - Fridays, 8:00 pm. A new, second show plays on Saturday nights at 8:00 pm, with a third at 8:00 pm Sundays.

**Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA)** with Middagh Goodwin – Mondays 5:00 pm; Fridays 9:00 pm & Saturdays 6:00 pm.

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

**This is SKA** with Middagh Goodwin - Tuesdays, 9 pm; Fridays, 11 pm; Sundays, 5 am to 7 am.

**I'll Take You There** - A musical journey with Modesto's El Comandante - Saturday, 5:00 pm; Sundays, 9:00 pm.

**Penny Bloods** – Fun, Victorian melodrama radio plays, often performed by local actors, written by Arnold Anthony Schmidt, CSU, Stanislaus. As scheduled.

**PSAs in English and Spanish** produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

**LISTEN TO OUR MUSIC PLAYLISTS AT SPINITRON** <https://spinitron.com/KCBP/calendar>

**Find a complete programming schedule on our website, [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)**

**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY RADIO STATION: Donate** here: <https://kcbpradio.org/donate/> Please consider a recurring monthly donation.



# Letter to Supervisors

December 2, 2024  
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors  
1010 10th Street, Suite 6500  
Modesto, CA 95354

## Subject: Demand for Action, Transparency, and Oversight on Racist Threats in Stanislaus County

Dear Members of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors,

We, the organizations and individuals signed here, write to demand immediate action and accountability regarding the rise of racist threats targeting communities in Stanislaus County. Predominantly Latino neighborhoods in Ceres and Parklawn have been subjected to graffiti and stickers bearing hateful and threatening messages, including:

“Kill Wetbacks”

“Kill Wetback Families”

Additionally, there are known claims of

similar hate speech and threats directed at Black communities in the county, reflecting a broader pattern of racial animosity and targeted aggression. Such rhetoric is not only unacceptable and poses a threat to the safety and dignity of all of our residents.

We demand that Stanislaus County take the following actions immediately:

- Provide full transparency regarding these incidents, including:
- A timeline of all reports related to these threats.
- The names of deputies and officials present at meetings where these incidents were reported.
- Detailed accounts of actions taken by the Sheriff’s Department and other relevant authorities in response to these reports.
- Issue a public statement condemning these acts of hate and making it clear that such threats will not be tolerated and investigated.
- Provide assurances to the targeted communities that they will be protected and supported.

- Host a meeting with Sheriff Dirke and relevant officials to discuss the ongoing investigation and the steps being taken to address these incidents at this Thursday’s Community Meeting in Parklawn.
  - Implement a civilian review board for the Sheriff’s Department to ensure transparency, accountability, and oversight regarding hate-related incidents and other critical public safety concerns.
- Establishing a civilian review board is an essential tool in building trust between the law enforcement and the community it is entrusted to serve and protect. A civilian review board can help identify areas of

concern to the community, allowing law enforcement to address those areas before they cause a major incident or become a crisis, and provides transparency.

We request a written response to this letter by close of business on Friday 12/06/2024, including the requested transparency details and confirmation of next steps.

The County must demonstrate that it takes these threats seriously by committing to proactive measures that ensure the safety and dignity of all residents.

Bianca Lopez, Vice-President,  
Latino Community Round Table



## Come & Hear Judge LaDoris Hazzard Cordell!



*First African-American Woman  
Jurist in Northern California*

**SATURDAY, March 1, 2025**

**31<sup>st</sup> Annual  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Commemoration**

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

- 4:00 p.m. - Meets with Students in MJC Little Theatre
- 6:00 p.m. - Doors Open
- 7:00 p.m. - Free program

—Sponsors—



City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus; Associated Students of Modesto Junior College; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), *Sponsors needed!* Contact Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org to co-sponsor.

PROCEEDS BENEFIT  
WEST MODESTO COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

6TH ANNUAL  
**CRAB FEED**

**\$75 PER TICKET** All You Can Eat Crab, No Host bar, Music, Live Auction, and Raffles

**JANUARY 18, 2025**  
**800 ROSE AVE, MODESTO, CA 95355**  
**DOORS OPEN: 5:30 PM**  
**DINNER: 6:30 PM**

Buy your Tickets at  
[www.westmodestocollaborative.com](http://www.westmodestocollaborative.com)

For ticket information call WMCC at 209-522-6902 or email us: [adminassist@westmodestocollaborative.com](mailto:adminassist@westmodestocollaborative.com)

Federal Tax ID: 31-1751288

## Respiratory Virus Guidance Snapshot

**Core prevention strategies**

|                          |                    |                                  |                      |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>Immunizations</b><br> | <b>Hygiene</b><br> | <b>Steps for Cleaner Air</b><br> | <b>Treatment</b><br> | <b>Stay Home and Prevent Spread*</b><br> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--|

**Additional prevention strategies**

|                  |                       |                  |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Masks</b><br> | <b>Distancing</b><br> | <b>Tests</b><br> |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|

**\*Stay home and away from others until, for 24 hours BOTH:**

- Your symptoms are getting better
- You are fever-free (without meds)

**Then take added precaution for the next 5 days**

**Layering prevention strategies can be especially helpful when:**

- ✓ Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in your community
- ✓ You or those around you have risk factors for severe illness
- ✓ You or those around you were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering

# calendar

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

## January

**MAPS - Modesto Area Partners in Science:** Free MJC science programs on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 pm. unless noted otherwise. Schedule TBA.

**Modesto Science Colloquium,** Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., MJC West Campus, SCC 115. Free to the Public. Talks recorded for the Science Colloquium's YouTube Site. Schedule TBA.

**The Prospect Theatre:** 24/25 season has continuing offerings. Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2024-2025-season/>

**7 TUES: VIGIL: PEACE-ISRAEL-GAZA** at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five Points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 209-529-5750 or email [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).

**WED: 8: Registration opens for MJC's MICL.** Visit [micl-online.org](http://micl-online.org). See article p.1.

**14 TUES:** Support the Modesto Peace/Life Center! Join us for **The John McCutcheon Concert.** A fantastic community event! Tickets: see p. 1.

**26 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society** presents **Tremors.** 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/tremors-012025/>

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Saturday, February 1:** The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) hosts its **13th Annual Poetry Festival** at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. To register, see p. 8.

**Saturday, March 1: 31st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration.** Speaker: Judge La Doris Hazzard Cordell.

**Saturday, March 22: The Golden State Road Warriors** Wheelchair Basketball Team returns to MJC for a KCBP 95.5 FM Community Radio fundraiser.

## 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, and 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. Zoom. Contact [jean.cvdc@gmail.com](mailto:jean.cvdc@gmail.com) for information.

**Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE:** used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. 2260 Tenaya Dr., Modesto. Mon-Sat., 9:00 AM - 6:00 pm. Closed Sunday. Visit <https://www.habitat.org/ca/modesto/stanislaus-county-hfh>

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

**Unity of Modesto** meets in person every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. at 2467 Veneman, Modesto. Information: 209-578-5433.

**Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship,** 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email [modestovineyard@gmail.com](mailto: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. All are welcome. For more information, please email [charlie@imcv.org](mailto:charlie@imcv.org). Our mailing address is IMCV, P.O. Box 579564, Modesto, CA 95357.

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County**

meets in person and on Zoom every Sunday at 10:30 am at 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Info: 209-788-3720; [www.stanuu.org](http://www.stanuu.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 Area Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the second Mondays at 7:00pm. 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: [tcfmmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmmodestoriverbank@gmail.com); <https://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org/>

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

**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. Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email [WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com](mailto:WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com) or call 209.577.1604.

### TUESDAYS

**Climate Action Justice Network-Stanislaus** meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Link-<https://tinyurl.com/CJAN-FirstTuesday>

**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; For ZOOM link, visit <https://www.naacpmodestostanislaus.org/>

email: [naacp.branch1048@gmail.com](mailto: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.

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

### WEDNESDAYS

**Retired Public Employees Association.** All seniors welcome! Meetings every third Wednesday. Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave. 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Call (209) 324-2060. Pay \$8.00 and order from the menu.

**The Almond Blossom Sangha** meets on Wednesdays, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, Zoom, and sometimes hybrid, for meditation and Dharma discussions. Call Anne at 209-404-4835 for more information.

**The GAP.** A place of support for Christian parents of LGBTQ+ or questioning kids every Wednesday 6:30 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church 1528 Oakdale Rd. Instagram: [Therapymodesto](https://www.instagram.com/Therapymodesto)

**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](mailto:CMT RYT, orlando@arreygue.com)

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

**Merced Full Spectrum** meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.mercedfullspectrum.org>

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS:** Held THE FIRST TUESDAY 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 **KCBP95.5 FM** Community Radio, the "Voice of the Valley" also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

**PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING,** FIRST Thursdays, 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:00 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom. Email Jim Costello for login information, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

**PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO,** 829 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

[www.lgbtmerced.org/](http://www.lgbtmerced.org/) Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

**TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP,** 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email [info@stanpride.org](mailto:info@stanpride.org), or [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgsupport@stanpride.org)

### THURSDAYS

**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](mailto: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](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)

**3rd Thursday Art Walk,** downtown Modesto, third Thursdays, 5 to 8 pm. stroll to art displays and galleries. Info: <https://visitmodesto.com/arts-entertainment/#art-walk>

**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 Thursday, Cafe Amore, 3025 McHenry Ave, Suite S., Modesto, 8 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

### FRIDAYS

Friday 7:30-9:30 pm (Sept thru May) **International Folk Dancing** with Village Dancers, Carnegie Art Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock \$7. No experience or partner needed. 209-480-0387 for info.

**Overcoming Depression:** small group for men & women. Every Friday, 7:15 pm. Cornerstone Community Church, 17900 Comconex Rd, Manteca, CA 95366, (209) 825-1220.

**Ukulele On Funstrummer Fridays:** Every Friday morning from 9 am to 10:30 am Play Along Easy Songs from the Funstrummers Songbooks of over 500 songs. Funstrummers Performing Band Practice from 10 to noon and afternoon gig. Unitarian Church, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, 209-505-3216 for details. Donations accepted. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mej3gD0ZD40&list=LLB8Y19zZg660qHCXGoC6ojQ&index=1>

**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.

### SATURDAY

**Free Community Drum Circle** every third Saturday, 11 am to 12:30 pm, Gallo Center for the Arts, 10<sup>th</sup> & I 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](mailto: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](mailto:orkingenne@gmail.com)

## CalPride Stanislaus EVENTS

1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto, 209-408-8848.  
Open Monday-Friday, 10 am-6 pm.

### ONSITE GROUPS & PROGRAMS (Hosted at CalPride Stanislaus)

**QUEER POINT:** CalPride's harm reduction program supports individuals who use drugs and the broader community and provides on-site syringe services, safer injection kits, fentanyl test strips, and Narcan for overdose prevention. Available Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 6 PM.

**FOLX Group for LGBTQ+ Individuals** between the ages of 25-49, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 1-2 pm.

**Women's Group,** run by women for ALL women every Wednesday, Noon-1 pm.

**Dreams and Solutions Drugs and Alcohol Support Group, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays,** 1-2 pm.

**Writing Group Peer Support Group** for anyone looking to explore themselves through creativity every Friday, 4:30 pm-6 pm.

**BEADiFULL Peer Support Group** focusing on organic, peer-lead conversation and connection while making friendship bracelets and beaded jewelry, 1st and 3rd Fridays, 11:30 am-1 pm

**Wellness Wednesdays,** every Wednesday from 1-5 pm, for any individual receiving services in-center to be in community, create art, play games, etc.

**Legal Name Change Clinic,** every Tuesday and Thursday, 10 am-4 pm, and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by appointment only.

**Affirmation Station FREE Clothing Closet,** open during business hours, Monday-Friday, 10 am-6 pm.

**FREE HIV/HCV Testing and Counseling** available Monday-Friday, 11 am-5 pm.

### OFFSITE GROUPS (Hosted Elsewhere)

**The Men's Senior Group** meets every Thursday at 1 p.m. at the Queen Bean Coffee House, 1126 14th St, Modesto.

**We Thrive POZ Art Group** meets every Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Dragonfly-Art for Life Studio, 1210 J St, Modesto.

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

Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to [Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org](mailto:Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org) Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.