

Stanislaus Community Foundation Announces Investments to Rebuild Local Media in Stanislaus County

Stanislaus Community Foundation recently announced a series of significant grant investments to bolster local media and ensure that residents across Stanislaus County have greater access to credible, community-focused news. These strategic investments underscore SCF’s commitment to fostering a well-informed, engaged community and preserving diverse local narratives.

Central to this effort is a \$500,000 multi-year grant to the Central Valley Journalism Collaborative (CVJC) to launch The Modesto FOCUS/EL ENFOQUE Modesto, a new nonprofit, nonpartisan news platform that will deliver high-quality journalism and critical information to residents in an accessible, digital format. The Modesto FOCUS will launch in 2025 and serve as a trusted voice for Stanislaus County and a critical resource for readers who rely on news that directly impacts their lives.

These strategic investments underscore SCF’s commitment to fostering a well-informed, engaged community and preserving diverse local narratives.

Direct Link Between Quality Journalism & Civic Society

- Lower voter turnout and less choice in candidates
- Fewer contested races
- Less voter knowledge about candidates
- Less knowledge about incumbents
- Significant decline in volunteerism
- Lower bond ratings, higher financing costs, and higher taxes
- More government corruption and waste
- Less government spending on public benefits
- More polarization
- More toxic emissions, greater difficulty tracking public health outbreaks

Source: Reuters Local News

State of Play: Local Media

A study of the traditional newspaper, magazine, television, and radio programming ecosystem in Stanislaus County shows:

- Eight of our nine local papers are owned and operated by three Central Valley publishers
- The Modesto Bee sold to an East Coast hedge fund after declaring bankruptcy in 2020
- 209 Multimedia has the largest magazine footprint, complementing their majority holding of hyperlocal newspapers
- Sacramento determines all mainstream television programming
- Nearly one-third of local radio stations are broadcast in a language other than English
- All local print publications are produced in English only

Additionally, Stanislaus Community Foundation is supporting a range of initiatives to strengthen the region’s media landscape, including:

- A 2025 competitive grant cycle with \$100,000 in funding for existing media organizations.
- Paid internships for Stanislaus State and Modesto Junior College creative media and digital journalism students.
- Funding to explore the creation of a nonprofit Community Media Center for local public access channels.

“Community-driven journalism is the backbone of an informed society,” said Marian Kaanon, President and CEO of Stanislaus Community Foundation. “These investments align with our mission to serve the community by enhancing public access to quality information, building public trust, and supporting the dedicated individuals behind local news.”

SCF’s Civic Solutions Fund, supported by multiple donors, makes these investments possible. The fund is dedicated to rebuilding local news and civic leadership in the community. To contribute to the Civic Solutions Fund and support local journalism, visit [stanislausc.org/scf-impact-areas](https://www.stanislausc.org/scf-impact-areas).

“Community-driven journalism is the backbone of an informed society.”



JOIN The Modesto FOCUS Email Listserv!

Since 2002, SCF has worked with hundreds of local, charitably focused families to invest more than \$51 million in philanthropic resources in our region. The Stanislaus Community Foundation’s vision is to create a community of choice where people can live, work, and thrive. To support this vision, SCF builds impactful collaborations between donors, nonprofits, and government agencies. **ACTION:** Visit <https://www.stanislauscf.org/>

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MAPS Showcase of Scintillating Experts

A gateway for the exploration of the wonders and mysteries surrounding us. MJC West Campus Sierra Hall 132* at 7:30 pm, FREE.

Fri., Nov. 14: Dr. Sarah Wheeler, Lab director of the Yolo-Sacramento Mosquito and Vector Control District.

“Real-time Monitoring of Mosquito-spread Viruses in the Central Valley.”

<https://www.eventscribe.net/2023/AMCA/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presenterInfo&PresenterID=1461662>

Fri., Dec. 6: Isabelle Haddad, UC Merced Ph.D. candidate. “The Intersection of Climate Change and Environmental Justice with Central Valley Focus.” ihaddad@ucmerced.edu



Modesto Science Colloquium Fall Semester 2024

Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., MJC West Campus, SCC 115. Free to the Public. Talks will be recorded for the [Science Colloquium's YouTube Site](#).

Nov 6: Stephanie L. Bolton, Ph.D., Director of Research & Education Director and Sustainable Winegrowing, Lodi Winegrape Commission. Sustainable Winegrowing.

As one of Wine Enthusiast magazine's "Future 40" for her contributions to sustainable winegrowing and viticulture science, Dr. Bolton will focus on viticultural studies of sustainability, exploring agricultural biodiversity, grapevine viruses, and rootstocks. She will also discuss the LODI RULES program, a pioneering sustainable winegrowing initiative that certifies winegrowers who adhere to over 150 sustainable practices.

Nov 20: MJC MESA Student Teams Research Projects. Biomass/Biomanufacturing MESA Projects. Learn how scientists and engineers create materials, energy, and products that reduce waste by repurposing biological residues from agriculture and municipal sources. Four MESA student teams will present semester-long research projects on different areas and how this area of research can impact our region.

*Science Colloquium Committee: Daniel Chase, Jill Cross, Elizabeth McInnes, Denise Godbout-Avant, Troy Gravatt, Deborah Martin, Monika Schortner, Michael Shirley, Catherine Tripp.

Fall Classes: Modesto Institute For Continued Learning at MJC

Registration is open for Sessions C of 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; Democracy & Its Alternatives; All Things Considered; Creative Writing; Travels Around the World; Enjoying the Periodic Table; Improv Activities For the Senior Brain; Current Events; TED Talks; Social Zoom; Friday at the Movies; Book Club/Discussion; Birding; Winston Churchill; Mysteries of Human Behavior.

Registration fee of \$60 covers all courses. No parking fee. Classroom information is sent after registration is completed. **SESSION C CLASSES BEGIN MONDAY NOVEMBER 4.**

Two choices to register: Online at MICL's website at: micl-online.org, OR Call MJC at 209-575-6063.

There is no mandatory attendance, no units offered, and courses are for academic and social enjoyment only. Join us!



Friends of the Library Needs Help for Upcoming Events

By **MARILYN DREW**

The Friends of the Modesto Library (FOML) needs volunteers for the following event:

* The **Fall Scholastic Book Fair** will be held Nov. 6-9 in the library auditorium.

Approximately 25 volunteers will be needed to set up or pack up book displays or work as cashiers for Scholastic book sales.

Please consider volunteering for the upcoming FOML events once you receive one or more. Through our volunteers' efforts, FOML can continue supporting the many library activities that enrich our Modesto community.

Information: info@modestolibraryfriends.org



Be informed!

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



New Location for Yokuts Group Program Meetings

Starting November 15, we will have a new location for our program presentations at the **Office of Valley Improvement Projects, 1224 K St, Modesto**. Snacks and socializing are at 6:45 p.m., and programs begin at 7:00 p.m. Non-members are always welcome!

Friday, November 15, 2024: Megastorms, California, & You. Speaker: Rick Kerrigan

Rick Kerrigan's experience of recent severe weather events in the Sierra foothills and their consequences has led him to dive deeply into what history and science tell us about extreme storms and floods. His book, *Megastorms, California, and You*, is an accessible yet in-depth introduction to what is known about these weather events and their impacts. He hopes to inspire and motivate the broad masses and their public officials to become aware and forward-looking and to take reasonable measures to reduce expected consequences to the absolute minimum.

Rick W. Kerrigan is a California native with family roots going back to 1850. Early exposure to natural history led to projects on native plants and unnamed mushrooms in Santa Cruz County. He has formally given scientific names to more than two dozen 'new' species.

He had public safety responsibilities in several California State Parks for eight years, followed by a B.A. and M.A. (in Biology) from San Francisco State University and a Ph.D. in fungal genetics from U.C. Santa Barbara, then a post-doc at the University of Toronto. He has spent 45 years as a researcher and educator in the life sciences. His book on fungi, *Agaricus of North America*, was published in 2016. Rick's book on megastorms will be for sale at the meeting.



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Volunteer Central: Connecting You with Local Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Central is Love Stanislaus County's new, free, user-friendly app designed to make volunteering accessible and rewarding.

In a country where 90% of people want to volunteer, yet only a quarter actually do, Volunteer Central aims to close that gap by providing a single hub for community involvement. The app connects users with local volunteer projects, tracks service hours, and even offers rewards from local businesses as a thank-you for giving back.



Available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, Volunteer Central makes it easy to sign up, log hours, and start making a difference. Whether you're a student needing service hours, a family looking for

Love Stanislaus County

meaningful activities, or a business planning team-building projects, Volunteer Central has opportunities for everyone.

If you have any questions, feel free to email our Community Engagement Director, Ulisses Vasquez, at ulisses@lovestanislauscounty.org

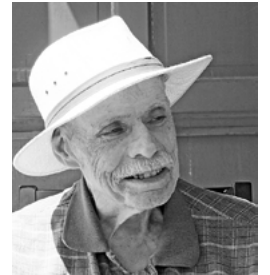
Get Started Today

Download the app, create a profile, and explore volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood. Volunteer Central is here to help you find your place in positively impacting the community.

Walking To The Polls

By TOM PORTWOOD

Continuing a tradition, I walked to and from the polling place this beautiful afternoon, accompanied by dappled sunshine, as ginkgo and Chinese Pistachio leaves cascaded onto the sidewalk and flew round my ankles on the light breeze. The choice was never clearer; for everything we hold dear about our democracy is at stake. Today was different than other election days for another reason as well. I found I was voting less for myself than for the daughters and sons, granddaughters and grandsons of close friends and family – both here in California and across the country - and that added to the solemnity and history of the moment, for the kids who flew by me on bicycles and scooters when Beyer High let out a few minutes after I voted. For the country, we started shaping with today's vote belongs to them. Here's hoping they'll grow into adults experiencing kindness and generosity and yes, equality in ways we can only imagine. Thinking of them gave real meaning to the day.



I wrote that brief paragraph above on Election Day in 2016. Much has happened since then, but with the Presidential Election only days away, I think what I wrote then about the "solemnity and history of the moment" is truer now than it was eight years ago. Our democracy is indeed at stake again in this election. When I was six years old and living with my family in Brazil, there was a failed attempt to overthrow the democratically elected progressive government then in office. I was too young to understand that moment I lived through in Brazilian history, but it has been on my mind since the Capitol insurrection of January 6, 2021. Tragically, Brazil's democracy succumbed to a military dictatorship several years later, the voices of the people in that beautiful country repressed for the next twenty-one years.

Democracies can die so quickly, so quietly. That's why when I cast my ballot on November 5th, I'll consider it the most important vote of my entire life.

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SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024 • 10am-3pm
Mary Stuart Rogers Bldg, West Campus

Event Highlights:

Empowerment & Recognition: Celebrate how formerly and currently incarcerated students utilize post-secondary education to improve their lives and contribute positively to their communities.

Networking: Connect with support programs from various Northern California community colleges.

Community Building: Help diminish social stigmas and foster an inclusive environment.

Support Success: Learn more about the Rising Scholars Program's commitment to supporting justice-impacted students by removing barriers and creating a vibrant community.

Lunch will be provided.

RISE UP CENTER
East campus 209 575-6847
West campus 209 575-6659
stovalg@yosemite.edu | mjc.edu/riseup

It is the policy of Modesto Junior College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in its educational programs and its employment practices.

SCANTO REGISTER
We look forward to seeing you there!

MRB MICHAEL R. BAUDLER
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

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Legacy Alliance Outreach is Here to Help



Legacy Alliance Outreach is a non-profit organization that serves the community by addressing human needs in a holistic manner. The diversity of services provided is as unique as the human beings we serve. We focus on individuals who are impacted by the criminal justice system, educational system, poverty, homelessness, addiction, domestic violence, human trafficking, gang membership, racism, social injustice, and at-risk youth.

We believe that the spirit of every human being is valuable and worthy of care and attention. The services we provide are designed with this in mind.

MISSION: To serve those in need from a heart for humanity by providing a safe place for healing and growth, equipping and empowering to build self-efficacy, and mentoring individuals toward self-actualization.

WHY WE'RE HERE: There is a huge gap in services provided to services needed. The community has needs that are specific to the individual. The system provides a cookie-cutter approach, which leaves a lot of cookie dough that doesn't reach its full potential. There is a massive amount of untapped potential buried in the grave. We intend to tap into the potential that is alive today by providing the services needed on an individual basis.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN: We help no matter what because we have been there. We have experienced prison and the judicial system, we have been unhoused and jobless,

we have been addicted to drugs and alcohol with seemingly no way out, we have been abused and abandoned, we have experienced all the darkness that this world provides. We also have walked into the light and learned new and better ways to live and cope. And WE are in this together. We will not leave anyone in the dark.

How Can We Help You Today?

Peer Support Group: We find peer support a helpful tool that can aid in people's recovery. Our support groups are open to anyone, and we focused on many different topics.

Navigation: We walk alongside you, offering guidance to your best of needs.

Youth Program: We promote the positive in our young people, including competency-building skills, social skills, life skills, academic improvement, motivation, community involvement, etc.

Legacy Alliance Outreach Youth Enrichment program provides a supervised after-school program throughout the City of Modesto. We guide and teach our youths to strengthen relationships with parents, teachers, peers, and the community. Our Youth Enrichment program supports participants' success in school, physical and emotional safety, and social and emotional development.

Our Goals:

- Participants feel safe and supported.
- Participants learn a new skill or increase existing skills.
- Participants build positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Participants feel a sense of connectedness and belonging.

Youth Outreach: At Legacy Alliance Outreach (LAO), we know that out-of-school time programming has the

power to create positive change, providing role models and dynamic activities to support kids in reaching their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.

Youth Mentor Program: provides academic, personal, and psychological support to the students by addressing their issues. Mentors guide them through various phases of academic and personal development.

Transitional Program: We help individuals who are impacted by the criminal justice system, educational system, poverty, homelessness, addiction, domestic violence, gang membership, racism, social injustice, and others in need. Through these groups and classes, you will be able



to connect to the core issues that are impacting your life.

Clothing Closet: We provide free emergency clothing to those experiencing financial hardship or crisis.

We help children

attend school with confidence and provide teens or adults with professional attire for interviews or the workplace. We empower members of our community in need by promoting self-esteem and self-identity.

WE HELP, NO MATTER WHAT!

ACTION: Contact Legacy Alliance Outreach at (209) 480 - 6199, 820 H St., Modesto, CA 95354. Visit <https://www.legacyallianceoutreach.org/>

November is American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month

The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. The event culminated an effort by Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, who rode across the United States on horseback seeking approval from 24 state governments to designate a day to honor American Indians.

More than seven decades later, in 1990, then-President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Similar proclamations have been issued yearly since 1994 to recognize what is now called American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

This *Facts for Features* presents statistics about the American Indian and Alaska Native population, one of the six major race categories defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Thanks to responses to the U.S.



Census Bureau's surveys, the following facts are possible. We appreciate the public's cooperation as we continuously measure America's people, places, and economy.

Did You Know?

7.4 million: The nation's American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups in 2023. Source: [Vintage 2023 Population Estimates](#)

9.0 million: The projected American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups on July 1, 2060. They would constitute 2.5% of the total population.

Source: [2023 National Population Projections](#)

325: The number of distinct, federally recognized American Indian reservations in 2024, including federal reservations and off-reservation trust lands. Source:

[American Indian Reservations, Trust Lands, and Native Hawaiian Home Lands](#)

221: The number of Alaska Native village statistical areas. Source: [American Indian Reservations, Statistical Areas, and Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas](#)

574: The number of federally recognized Indian tribes in 2024. Source: [Bureau of Indian Affairs \(BIA\)](#)

120,476: The number of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native veterans of the U.S. armed forces in 2023. Source: [2023 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates](#).

More Stats

A detailed profile of the American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with one or more other races is available from [2020 Census](#) and the [2023 American Community Survey](#). Statistics include:

Families, Housing, Languages, Education, Jobs, Income and poverty, and Health insurance.

[Continue reading](#) for more facts about American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

Thanksgiving: A Day of Gratitude and Grief

By **MELANIE BERRU**

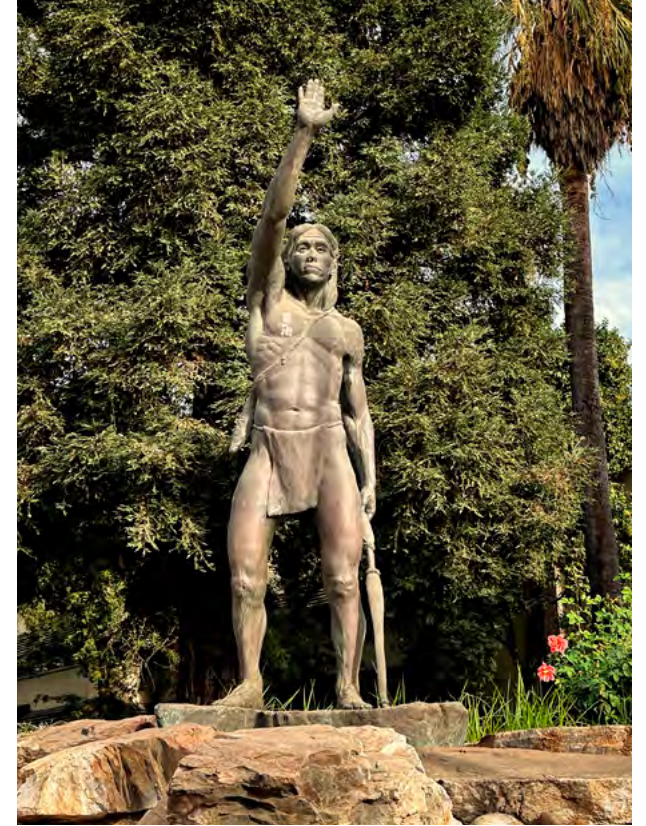
As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables every year, how often do we pause to reflect on the land beneath our feet and the stories it holds? An elder once told me, “the land has memory.” For years, those words seemed distant, almost hollow, until one day, in a precious moment of stillness, the truth of that phrase came alive. As I walked through my grandmother’s backyard, a place I hadn’t visited in years since her passing, the land itself seemed to recognize me, embracing me like an old relative, an ancestor perhaps. It remembered who I was before I fully remembered it, welcoming me back to the very place where I once ran carefree as a child. In that moment, the memories flooded back—the sound of my cousins’ laughter, the wind whistling through my thick, golden-brown hair, and the feeling of careless freedom and boundless joy. It was a gift from the land, a reminder that it holds all the stories, even those we have forgotten.

But what about the larger land we live on today? What about the original stewards of this place, whose unceded territory we now call home in this nation? In this county? What stories does this land carry, and how do we begin to honor the people who have always been a part of its history? I invite you to explore an alternative perspective on this “holiday,” or perhaps to affirm a yearning within you for a view that moves beyond the Eurocentric narrative often told. The mainstream story of Thanksgiving typically centers on Pilgrims and “Indians” feasting together in unity and gratitude—a tale that is not only incomplete but deeply inaccurate. This version conveniently ends before the truth is told: the massacre, genocide, forced assimilation, and colonization that followed, perpetrated by the very settlers who accepted the generosity of Indigenous peoples sharing their food and land.

Imagine this “holiday” through that lens. Picture a day celebrated across the nation that, for your people, marks the beginning of the end of life as they once knew it. The day that turned the stewards of the land into refugees on their own soil, confined to reservations or left to face poverty in forgotten rural towns and neglected urban neighborhoods. Imagine if this annual celebration was a reminder of all that was lost—land, culture, language, their “religion” and countless lives—while the rest of the country gives thanks. What would it feel like to see your history erased from the table, replaced by a myth that silences the suffering and resilience of your ancestors?

This article is not intended to be a history lesson. It is meant to affirm those who seek affirmation and to ignite curiosity in those open to new perspectives. For many Indigenous people, Thanksgiving is seen not as a celebration, but as a “Day of Mourning,” marking the oppression brought by the very Pilgrims—and their successors—we were taught to revere in school. It is a day of deep reflection, of collective grief, and, perhaps most importantly, a day of reaffirming both individual and communal resilience in the face of historical and ongoing injustices.

Yesterday’s violence shows up in today’s realities for our Native relatives in the United States. Today, Native



Americans only make up just 2.9% of the U.S. population, yet their life expectancy is 5.5 years shorter than the national average. Their suicide rates are more than twice as high, making it the second-leading cause of death for Native youth aged 10-24. Native communities experience the highest poverty rates and the lowest high school graduation rates of any racial or ethnic group in the country.

Yet, despite these challenges, they are a resilient people. Native Americans are at the forefront of revitalizing tribal languages, and while they represent only 5% of the global population, they protect an astounding 80% of the world’s biodiversity. This resilience invites us to consider Thanksgiving in a new light—not just as a day to gather with family, whether biological or chosen, but also as a day of reflection, mourning, and, perhaps most importantly, action.

This holiday season let’s be intentional with our support. Let’s educate ourselves and our families by visiting the **Yokut Exhibit** at the **Modesto McHenry Museum**, honoring the original inhabitants of Stanislaus County. Learn about Chief Estanislao, the Native freedom fighter, whom our county is named. Bring your loved ones, share the knowledge, and spark important conversations around the dinner table this year. Instead of shying away from discomfort, let’s shift our perspective—recognizing that spreading knowledge and uncovering ignored history is not a burden, but a gift and a privilege. We can invest in Indigenous-owned small businesses, attend cultural events such as Pow Wows or the **Day of Mourning Sunrise Ceremony** on Alcatraz Island, or, simply, do our own research to learn more about Native lands and the **Yokut people of the San Joaquin Valley**.

It’s 2024—long overdue for us to become culturally literate, both as individuals and as a community. We all carry stories. You have your unique story, I have mine, and the land beneath us holds its own rich tapestry of stories, shaped over centuries. Much of life is about understanding those experiences—connecting the past to the present.

I urge you to embrace curiosity with the wonderment of a child. Learn about the land we call home, honor its beautiful people, and pass those stories on to those who will follow—because they deserve to know the truths that have been silenced for far too long.

All My Relations,
Melanie Berru



Why Homeless People Don't Want Help, Part III: A Long and Winding Road to Nowhere

By **ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen**

"I spent 90 minutes on my phone trying to get some help," said the homeless man. "After 90 minutes of bouncing to a different person or group, I was told to call the first place I called. There's no real help anywhere."

The man, call him Mike, is not alone when it comes to frustrating experiences with what are sometimes called "systems of care" for the homeless. Anyone unfortunate enough to have fallen into the pachinko universe that purports to offer help for the homeless won't forget the experience anytime soon. Ricocheting from pillar to post and then down the dumper leaves lasting memories.

Aside from the mind-numbing and anger-inducing effects from trying to access help for the homeless, the really hard lesson comes when you realize that most help is temporary. Getting into drug rehab is hard enough. Getting a 90-day stay is the jackpot. Most programs are short-term and out the door. Problem is, even after 90 days you're back on the streets with nowhere to go. The programs that offer lasting help are overwhelmed and have long waiting lists.

Last June, when the United States Supreme Court ruled on *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson* — enabling sweeps of encampments even in cases without alternative sleeping sites — California authorities from Gavin Newsom on down joined a chorus of calls for homeless people to take advantage of offers for beds and services. Governor Newsom said in part,

"California remains committed to respecting the dignity and fundamental human needs of all people and the state will continue to work with compassion to provide individuals experiencing homelessness with the resources they need to better their lives."

With fewer than half the needed beds available for California's 180,000+ homeless people, promises of "resources they need" ring hollow. In fact, instead of providing real help, several cities and counties have rushed to enact draconian ordinances that amount to "get out or else" mandates.

In San Joaquin County, county supervisors have proposed an ordinance that would make sleeping in a vehicle for more than an hour a punishable offense. According to Stocktonia, a nonprofit news organization, the ordinance would also prohibit camping in any one place for more than an hour or remaining within "300 feet of a previous camp within any 24-hour period."

In Fresno, a new city and county anti-camping ordinance includes penalties of up to six months and jail and fines of up to \$1,000 for violations. The ordinance went into effect on September 23.

Promises of beds and services when there aren't enough beds and services have been a feature of state and local tactics for managing homelessness for years. It's almost as if authorities realize they need to provide cover for harassing the disabled, destitute, and desperate people who make up a large percentage of the homeless population, a tactic that amounts to "cruel and unusual punishment," as determined by the Ninth Circuit Appeals Court in *Martin v. Boise* in 2018. That ruling has been superseded in *City of Grants*



Frank Ploof, outreach in Stanislaus County, January, 2024 with man and woman living under a tarp.

Pass v. Johnson by the same court that overturned *Roe v. Wade* and later ruled that the President of the United States has virtual immunity from prosecution for crimes committed while in office.

The truth is that the root cause of homelessness in California and throughout the nation is a housing shortage no one denies. It's also undeniable that this fundamental fact has been overshadowed by false memes about people who don't want help.

Yes, it's true that many people don't want to stay in a shelter for months and even years on end, waiting for housing that never arrives. How could the situation be otherwise, given the facts and numbers?

Based in Modesto, Stanislaus Homeless Advocacy and Resource Enterprise (SHARE) is an award-winning nonprofit in Stanislaus County, widely applauded for its members' ability to provide tangible assistance for homeless people in need. Its three members, Lynelle Solomon, Steven Finch, and Frank Ploof, form a rare combination of on-the-ground experience and navigational skills that enable them to maneuver through the bewildering maze of nonprofits and government agencies that constitute California's fractured systems of care.

Solomon and Finch are successful business people based in Modesto. Ploof is retired from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where he worked with some of the nation's greatest scientists. Among the three, there are more than twenty-years' on-the-ground experience with homeless people. They've seen cases like the grandmother stranded in her car while taking care of her Down's Syndrome grandson. They've seen a motel so full of families with children that it's a regular stopping place for the school bus.

Last year, it took Ploof nine months to find housing for a blind homeless woman in a wheelchair. During that time, he took her on trips to UC Davis to help diagnose her vision problems. She had been evicted from a local shelter for creating a disturbance. Evictions are common in overcrowded shelters, one more of many reasons homeless people don't want help if it means staying in a congregate shelter.

When asked via email to comment on impediments to help for homeless people, Finch wrote,

"Right now we have an extreme shortage of all forms

of housing, emergency, transitional or bridge housing and long-term supportive housing. Once we clear through all the hurdles to get someone eligible for services, we have no place to put them, either temporarily or permanently in many cases. There is definitely a tight bottleneck in that segment of the system of care and that backs us up on everything else."

Those homeless people who say they don't want help have oftentimes had enough trips through the pinball systems of care to realize that any real help is years away, at least if it's in the form of housing. That realization, compounded by the fatigue and frustration stemming from being blamed for failing to become self-sufficient would be enough to make most anyone despair.

Like other falsehoods about homelessness, the "they don't want help" slur is an oversimplified exaggeration that diverts attention from the many homeless people who do want help and can't get it. While it's true that a great many homeless people will refuse help if it means a long term



Lynelle Loeb Solomon with homeless people in Roosevelt Park, Modesto, 2023

stay in a congregate shelter, that does not mean they won't accept an offer for a safe place to sleep that provides them at least a minimum of safety and privacy. What's offered most often is not the help they want and need.

The multitude of factors we've already mentioned that influence refusals for help — mental illness, trauma, cognitive challenges and discouraging experiences over time — should always be understood within the context of a grievous lack of services, housing, and shelter for people in dire need. Until state and local authorities respond to those shortfalls with emergency measures that would, at the very least, offer homeless people safe sleeping options, criminalization of homelessness will prove to be yet another case of squandered dollars in service to cruel and unusual punishment for the just recently constructed "crime" of extreme poverty.

Eric Caine formerly taught in the Humanities Department at Merced College. He was an original Community Columnist at The Modesto Bee and wrote for The Bee for over twelve years.

Pastor Martinez: Faithful Advocate for Youth

By **VERONICA JACUINDE, Stanislaus Connections**

Pastor Jorge Martinez is a passionate minister dedicated to the incarcerated youth at Stanislaus County Juvenile Hall. Over the years, he has wholeheartedly devoted himself to making a transformative impact in the lives of countless young people, offering guidance, support and hope to those who need it most.

Looking back on his deep commitment to outreach, Martinez shares, “This is something I’ve wanted to do for a very long time. In 1987, I participated in a one-year program at Tracy Federal Prison where I visited inmates once or twice a month—those who didn’t have family members or anyone to encourage or visit them. During that process, I kept asking myself, ‘I wish I could help them prevent themselves from ending up here,’ and I thought, it starts with the youth.”

Despite his desire to make a difference, Martinez faced challenges in realizing his vision until a pivotal encounter changed everything. “Over the years, it was something I wanted to do, but it never materialized because I didn’t know the right people until I met Timothy Mejia at a Bible study. He introduced me to the Youth for Christ ministry. He told me all about how we could have church on Sunday for one hour at 3 p.m., Bible study on Monday at 8 p.m., and one-on-ones on Tuesday, where you visit, encourage, or talk about pretty much anything—sports, family, how they’re doing in there, or just to encourage them. There were three options: church, Bible study, and one-on-ones. I did all three for a while but then stuck with church and Bible studies. I’ve been doing that for two and a half years now and I love it.”

Martinez was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, and came to the United States in 1969 at the age of five, being raised in Ceres, California. He said, “My mom, Elva, divorced, which is why we left Mexico. She remarried Modesto Resendez, a hard-working farm labor contractor who ruled with a firm yet loving hand. He taught me the importance of family structure and hard work. I wasn’t perfect, though; I did some foolish things I’m not proud of that could have landed me in jail. I’m grateful I didn’t get caught or killed. Living on the west side of Modesto was challenging until I met my wife, Melba. Falling in love put me on a different path, inspiring me to take care of my family and the child we were expecting.”

A life-threatening encounter prompted Martinez to reflect deeply on his life and seek a path toward faith. “I almost got shot on the last day of school. Some guys looking for trouble called me out, calling me names, ‘wet back, spick, go back to Mexico.’ I got angry, cussed them out, pulled a machete from under my car seat on them, and went to whack somebody. Then, in the process, one of the guys pulled out a sawed-off shotgun. But one guy intervened, telling him that this ‘wet back’ wasn’t worth it. I’m glad that guy listened because that would have been the end of me. I run that by my mind, and that was God’s grace intervening. That led me to this journey. What if I had been killed? Thank God that guy didn’t shoot. I wouldn’t have seen my baby. It stayed with me for a couple of years. I had questions. I did a lot of soul-searching, and I started reading the Bible. I went on a rampage visiting churches. I wanted to know if God

was real. Finally, in 1985, I started serving God and have grown into the person I am now.”

Martinez served as an assistant pastor at Friendly Tabernacle Church in Modesto for three years. After resigning, he became a Bible study group leader and youth leader at Well Community Church. This year, he began



(L-R) Devin Keagan Santos (middle) formed a strong bond with Pastor Jorge Martinez (right) through the Youth for Christ Ministry alongside Timothy Mejia, Juvenile Justice Ministry Coordinator (left). (Photo: Melba Martinez)

pastoring at Free Will Baptist Church in Hughson.

What he loves most about pastoring is being with people, encouraging individuals of all ages, young and old, serving God through words and deeds, and sharing the simplicity of the gospel—the good news—with anyone willing to hear it.

Martinez highlights the challenging circumstances many of the youth face today, emphasizing the urgent need for support and guidance. “Most of these kids come from broken homes—no father figures, drug-addicted parents, and families struggling to make ends meet, leaving them with little support or structure. Many get mixed up with the wrong crowd or join gangs, creating a revolving door of crime. Some commit crimes to have a place to shower and eat. This is where Youth for Christ comes in. We share the gospel that God loves them, that He cares and that He can be the father they never had. We encourage them to consider options beyond crime and violence, reminding them that God is a God of second chances. However, we still lack the mentors they need.”

“I’ve asked kids how many have attended Sunday school or youth ministry at their churches, and more than half say they haven’t. The beautiful thing about this ministry is that now they are hearing the message and making life changes. I see kids doing better; one works happily at the hospital, another at Home Depot, and one volunteers at a food pantry. I feel blessed and fulfilled, knowing I’m doing God’s work and following His call.”

Timothy Mejia is a Juvenile Justice Ministry Coordinator who works closely with Martinez and introduced him to the program. “I met Jorge through a friend who saw a sign in his yard for a Bible study at his house. We stopped by the following week, and we became friends. Later, I became involved with the Juvenile Hall Ministry and told Jorge

about it, and he jumped on board. It all started with a little sign he put up in his yard. If he hadn’t put that sign up, I would have never known who he was.”

Mejia highlights Martinez’s relatable qualities as a mentor in Youth for Christ: “He’s down to earth and approachable—you feel like you can just talk to him and open up. He has a good understanding of the Bible and the Christian faith and has long been doing this. The kids like him because he’s just a normal guy. He’s cool and relatable, telling stories from his life that the kids can connect with. He communicates simply so everyone can understand and is good at sharing lessons from his experiences and wisdom from God’s word.”

“He always has a positive, upbeat approach and really cares for them. He loves ministering to them and talking to them. I think that comes through to the kids—he genuinely cares for them, and they see that. They like it when we come in because they can open up to us and pour out their hearts.”

Mejia notes that Pastor Martinez is helping kids facing serious charges, such as murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, gun charges, battery and assault. “We just want to share with the kids that there is hope and that God can change lives. I think Pastor Jorge is getting that message across.”

David Sepulveda is one young man who Pastor Martinez has impacted. “I’ve known him the whole time I was incarcerated for two and a half years. When I first got in there, it was really stressful, but with him by my side, he helped me turn my life around to God. It was a great time whenever I saw him; we talked about God or what I was struggling with. He really helped me get through those years.”



Pastor Jorge Martinez: Inspiring change and motivation for the youth at Stanislaus County Juvenile Hall. (Photo: Melba Martinez)

There were important lessons Martinez taught him. “Even though bad things happen in life, you must find the positive in them. Even being incarcerated, there is something positive because it gives you a chance to change and learn from your mistakes. I learned not to do it again and to do better.”

Sepulveda is now attending college and studying business administration. “I feel more optimistic. Before incarceration, I never thought about going to college. He

Truth

Their Truth

Let me introduce myself.
I am a fact checker.
Facts are so important.
Did you know 3000 years
of archeologic digs have
unearthed Biblical history?

Your Truth

You choose to believe
the rants and untruths of a mad man.
Facts are of no importance
In your purview.
You thrive on false claims
and conspiracy theories.

My Truth

I open to the hope of seeing
the biggest picture,
the compassionate heart,
the acceptance of personal responsibility.
I seek the balance of fact,
fiction, openness and respect.

OUR TRUTH

Together
Their truth, your truth and my Truth
Blend together like a foreign language.

TOGETHER

We can learn that language,
seek TRUTH, and BE IT.

– Tina Arnope Driskill

Undocumented Immigrants Contribute Nearly \$100 Billion in Taxes a Year

From the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

Immigration policies have taken center stage in public debates this year, but much of the conversation has been driven by emotion, not data. A new in-depth study from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy aims to help change that by quantifying how much undocumented immigrants pay in taxes – both nationally and in each state.

The study finds that undocumented immigrants contributed \$96.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes in 2022 – a number that would rise dramatically if these taxpayers were granted work authorization.

Other key findings:

For every 1 million undocumented immigrants who reside in the country, public services receive \$8.9 billion in additional tax revenue. On the flip side, for every 1 million undocumented immigrants who are deported, public services stand to lose \$8.9 billion in tax revenue.

Providing access to work authorization to all current undocumented immigrants would increase their tax contributions by \$40.2 billion per year, to \$136.9 billion.

More than a third of the tax dollars paid by undocumented immigrants are toward payroll taxes dedicated to funding programs – like Social Security and Medicare – that these workers are barred from accessing.

Similarly, income tax payments by undocumented immigrants are affected by laws that require them to pay more than otherwise similarly situated U.S. citizens; as one example, they are often barred from receiving meaningful tax credits like the Child Tax Credit or Earned Income Tax Credit.

Six states – California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey – raised more than \$1 billion each in tax revenue from undocumented immigrants living within their borders.

In a large majority of states (40), undocumented

immigrants pay higher state and local tax rates than the top 1 percent of households living within their borders.

“This study is the most comprehensive look at how much undocumented immigrants pay in taxes. And what it shows is that they pay quite a lot, to the tune of nearly \$100 billion a year,” said Marco Guzman, ITEP Senior Policy Analyst



and co-author of the study. “The bottom line here is that regardless of immigration status, we all contribute by

paying our taxes.”

Of the total \$96.7 billion in taxes paid by undocumented immigrants, most – \$59.4 billion – was paid to the federal government while the remaining \$37.3 billion was paid to state and local governments. Slightly less than half those state and local contributions are through sales and excise taxes (46 percent or \$15.1 billion), while 31 percent (\$10.4 billion) are through property taxes and 21 percent (\$7 billion) are through personal or business income taxes.

While this study is the most comprehensive analysis of taxes paid by undocumented immigrants, it is worth noting that it does not attempt to quantify broader impacts that flow from the increased economic activity created by these individuals. Taking those economic ripple effects into account would likely reveal undocumented immigrants to have an even larger significance to public revenues than is documented here.

This study is another reminder that undocumented immigrants are contributing to our economies and our shared public services, and that immigration policy choices made in the years ahead will have significant consequences for public revenues.

Contact: Jon Whiten, jjon@itep.org

Modesto Threshold Singers

We are the local chapter of Threshold Choir International (Thresholdchoir.org).

We sing at the bedside when someone nears the end of their journey on this physical plane. We also sing at a few skilled nursing facilities and Board & Care homes for those with dementia. Our chapter meets on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County (2172 Kiernan Ave, Modesto, CA 95356).

We are looking for additional singers who love to sing, feel called to volunteer service, and can match pitch and blend their voices with the other singers. We train new singers in our Core songs and train for singing at bedside before a new singer goes to a home for a true Threshold event.

Please email, text, or call our director, Bernadette, if interested.

DrBearsong@aol.com

Coping with Holiday Grief Workshops in Modesto and Stockton

The holidays can be challenging when a loved one is no longer with you to celebrate.

Join Prime Care Hospice Chaplains Bernadette and Dale to learn coping strategies related to loss and honor your loved one with a personalized ornament. There is no cost to attend this workshop.

If you have questions or want to register with us, please call (209) 888-1942.

Saturday, Nov. 9, from 10 a.m. - 1 p. m.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto 95356.

Saturday, Nov. 16, from 10 a.m. - 1 p. m.

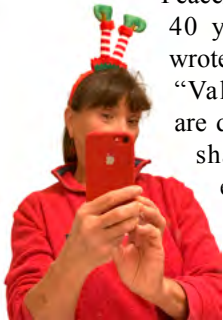
Rio las Palmas Assisted Living, 877 East March Lane, Stockton 95207.

CEASEFIRE NOW
CEASEFIRE NOW
CEASEFIRE NOW
CEASEFIRE NOW

MOVE ON

Elaine Gorman: Valley Poet & Hiking Guide Author

Elaine Gorman taught science at Mark Twain Jr. High School and Roosevelt Jr. High School in Modesto, retiring in 2009. She is a Certified California Naturalist and Yokuts Group Sierra Club outings leader. She is an avid hiker and backpacker and spends as much time as possible in the Sierra Nevada, Sierra foothills, Bay Area, and the San Joaquin Valley, exploring the wilderness and nature with her hiking pals. Elaine has been active with the Modesto



Peace/Life Center for over 40 years. She recently wrote a local hiking guide, "Valley Ventures." We are delighted that she has shared several of her excellent poems in this issue of *Stanislaus Connections*.

Abbotts Lagoon

Escaping Valley heat
we drive to the Marin coast.
Refresh, rejoice, rejuvenate.
Cool moisturized morning,
at kiosk of natural history
trailhead beckons.
Let's hike through
water and sand
flowers and feathers.
Quail family on fence unconcerned
with our desires,
we observe and whisper.

Cobweb thistle,
fuzzy pale gray
shingled flower stalks.
Flower heads' shocking
magenta burst
lures insects with nectar.
Bees dive deep,
swim in pollen paradise.

Great Blue Heron fishes
the lagoon
squawks and lifts off,
joins the conference of egrets.
River otter playfully rubs face in sand.
Fierce predator, take a break
from the hunt.
Pelicans, watch out!

Our toes dig into beach.
Every muscle, down to the pinkiest,
pushes against sand grains
carried downstream, uplift
by tectonics, shift
with tide and wave, sift
between our fingers:
feeling time slip away.

Sister Leanne

Fist in stomach, knot in throat,
Driving south on Highway 99
Barely seeing the valley landscape
of malls, subdivisions, industry,
Finally rich soil.

Born blue-eyed blonde-haired
A smiling angel.
Becoming a lithe, towering
Force to be reckoned with.
Independent, strong-willed
Bit of a demon.

Turning east toward Tehachapi,
The green hills grazed
by sheep-shaped rocks.
Resist the pull to Kohlen's
Windmills whirl me forward.

Justin arrived, a bundle of
Energy, barely contained by mom's
Hands and grandma's words.
You are artful, artsy, crafty
Classes at valley college
Graphic artist.
Double L Bar, Lucille and Leanne
San Fernando Valley.

In the Mojave, a parade of trucks.
Falcon, Knight, Desert Star,
Evergreen, Lucky Wheels.
Twenty Mule Team town of Boron
Dusty brown, drab green, creosote
Disc 3 audiobook Rest Area
Sore butt, stiff limbs, wind-tangled hair.

The desert called to you.....
Nevada, then Arizona
Tending bar
Life with Shane.
Rivers, lakes, sand rails,
Boats, RVs, wild fun.
Crazy Thanksgiving with elk
Dug from fire pit, 3 turkeys stuffed,
Garage and yard
Full of neighbors, family, and friends.
Old Dad, Badger, Blind Hills

Washes full of dry sand.
Volcanic red and brown rock.
Rough, zig-zagged peaks,
Sparse, spare, wide open.
After the summit
The homestretch.
Lights of Needles
Distant Topock
Colorado River.

Properties kept you busy,
Handywoman, business woman
Superwoman.
Keen and tough
Admired by younger sister,
Now at your bedside.

Granite

I am conceived near center earth.
Growing to high-rising cliffs
forming Yosemite Valley.
Water, ice, gravity
work to loosen my grip.
Bump, bounce, skid
To rest along the Merced.
Eons of seasons pass.

My granite toes in river's
froth and foam.
Pick-up sticks of
cedar and pine
drifting down river
from Little Yosemite Valley
pile against me.
Sand at my feet captures
passing coyote, deer, lizard.
Mica and quartz
twinkle in moonlight.

Douglas-fir cone falls
rolls into crack.
Steller's Jay perches,
grass seed on foot drops
into crevice.
After rain, it swells and sprouts.
Ants scurry, find bits of life
build more ants.

Patchwork cloak of lichen —
grays and greens of every hue—
catches her eye.
Soft lips, thighs press
upon unyielding surface.
Cheekbone accepts hard rock.
Gentle hand sweeps
through moss and rests in peace.

Along the Stanislaus, with Covid

Seeking comfort, healing, inspiration
I walk along the Stan,
match my gait
with slow-moving water.
Eyes brighten
to sparkle-flash.
Nature's many languages —
Avian, aeolian, fluvial.

Giants of riparian forest
Cottonwoods guard the banks,
Deltoid leaves are broken hearts.
Box elders, thousands of
miniature helicopter wings
scattered in mistletoe-draped branches.
Valley oak leaves,
speckled with blood-red
drops — wasp galls.

Glowing white Datura trumpets
whisper music to insects,
fill the air with magic.
Lush wild grape hangs,
obscuring companion trees,
clusters of unripe green berries
will soon beckon
jays and raccoons.

Looking up, I watch
dozens of White Pelicans,
feathered pterodactyls,
create v-shaped patterns
in the sky.
Streamers of glittering light,
arthropod webs,
form messages in oak branches.

Bright shine at far bank
attracts my attention.
With binoculars,
gleaming turtle's shell
comes into focus.
Alarmed, it drops
into the Stan.
River otter, hidden in shade,
gazes at me from across the river.
I lower the binoculars,
and signal my gratitude.

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

Streaming on 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

Letters From An American - 2:00 pm., Monday through Thursday, 2:30 Fridays. Trenchant reporting and historical analysis by Heather Cox Richardson.

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-renown 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.

Vib'n 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/kcbpwtv> 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

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



Plankwalker Studios Presents Rockin' with MJC!

Rockin' with MJC students that is. KCBP 95.5 FM Community Radio proudly presents a series of 25 one-hour music shows created by Modesto Junior College Students as part of their Film, Television & Electronic Media (FTVE) class under the instruction of Janeiro Freeda.

For all you night owls out there, our show kicks off at 1:00 a.m. every Saturday (right after Cyber Stallion), with repeats at 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays and 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. And the best part? A brand-new program will be waiting for you each week.



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Illegal Immigration in the San Joaquin Valley

By **ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen**

Over the twelve years from 2010 until 2022, California's total immigrant population increased about 3%. The portion of undocumented immigrants in that total declined from 28% in 2007 to 18% in 2021. That's compared to a 14% (or 1.2 million) increase from 2000 to 2010, and a 37% (or 2.4 million) rise in the 1990s. These figures are from the [Public Policy Institute of California \(PPIC\)](#).

For those who want raw numbers, the [PEW Research Center](#) charts the decline in total numbers of California's unauthorized immigrants from 2.80 million in 2007 to 1.85 million in 2021.

From 2019 through 2022, most states' illegal immigrant population stayed steady. Six states — Florida, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Maryland — showed “[significant growth](#)” in illegal immigrant populations. During that same time period, California's illegal immigrant population [decreased by 120,000](#).

Part of California's decrease in total undocumented immigrants was due to the decrease of undocumented farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley. Over the decade from 2010 to 2020, the total number of farmworkers hired specifically for crop production declined by 20,000.

According to a [2022 report](#), the Labor Department's most recent [National Agricultural Workers Survey](#) shows that in 2017 and 2018, unauthorized immigrants accounted for only 36 percent of crop workers hired by California farms. That was down from 66 percent, according to surveys performed 10 years earlier.

The majority of California's farm labor works in the San Joaquin Valley, which produces a larger portion of the nation's food than anywhere else in the world. Part of the decline in unauthorized workers in the Valley has been due to the hiring of workers with H-2A visas. H-2A visas are typically good for a few months, usually during harvest times when the need for workers increases.

The overall decline in California's illegal immigrant population thus includes a decline in immigrant farmworkers, both legal and illegal. That decline in farmworkers is due to factors like crop changes and mechanization, among others.

Like the rest of the state, the San Joaquin Valley suffers from an extreme housing shortage. If unauthorized immigration were the cause of that shortage, it would seem to follow that declines in such immigration would result in a rise in housing inventory. That has not been the case, obviously. Instead, as illegal immigration numbers dropped, housing shortages increased.

Farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley

There has, however, been a significant increase in lawful immigration numbers nationwide, “[from 24.1 million in 2000 to 36.9 million in 2022](#).” The growth was driven by a rapid increase in the number of naturalized citizens, from 10.7 million to 23.4 million.” Some of that growth occurred in California, obviously.

Nonetheless, if anything is clear from the facts, California's and the nation's housing crisis is not due to hordes of illegal immigrants crossing our southern border as claimed by some of our candidates for office. But anti-



immigrant rhetoric never has been about facts, and it's even more fulsomely deceitful today.

In the past, the “illegal” tag for immigration was an attempt to provide cover for the nativism, racism and xenophobia that have characterized incendiary political rhetoric at least since the American Civil War. That the cover provided less concealment than a negligee on an elephant didn't matter. What mattered was stoking mindless mob outrage.

Today, anti-immigrant rhetoric doesn't even bother with the negligee. Today, we have candidates for the highest office in the land spreading vile lies about legal Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio. We have those same candidates twisting very local gang activity in Aurora Colorado into a national crime wave. [Aurora's Mayor, City Council, and law enforcement officials](#) have tried to speak the truth about overall crime in their city, but their voices have been drowned out by the larger platform and louder cries of men willing to achieve power at any cost.

Pastor Martinez: Faithful Advocate for Youth from page 7

made me realize that if I could do more and be better, I should take advantage of opportunities given to me, which motivated me to go back to school.”

He added, “He always tells us before he leaves that he loves us and hopes to see us outside the juvenile hall in the real world, being more successful. It makes me feel happy and humble to know that there are people out there who care about us.”

Another youth he impacted is Devin Keagan Santos, who has become a successful electrician and beef cattle rancher.

Santos emphasized the impact of Pastor Martinez's candid approach and insightful guidance. “He always kept it real and was straightforward about the obstacles we would

The real goal is to stimulate the nativism, racism and xenophobia that have characterized totalitarian movements at least since the late 19th century. The real goal is to replace science, learning and law with prejudice, paranoia and arbitrary power.

Demonizing immigrants with vile lies and outrageous hyperbole doesn't just degrade our national discourse, it divides our nation. The truth is that the San Joaquin Valley agricultural economy wouldn't survive without immigrant labor, nor would major sectors of the nation's economy as a whole.

Unfortunately, truth and justice are under siege. It's going to take the honor and integrity of common citizens to defend them. More of us need to stand up and speak out.

Nations built on lies always turn against the people. Tyranny begins with the most vulnerable and builds to tyranny over all but the chosen few. We may be divided by issues, but every one of us should be united in the defense of the truth.

face upon release. His advice and direction were laid out for us in a religious and strategic manner to guide us on a path to success. It was easy to understand the concepts of wisdom Pastor Martinez presented because of his amazing ability to articulate them under any circumstance.”

He described Pastor Martinez's thoughtfulness and kindness: “One thing I always remember is how he addressed us. In a group, he would call you by name. He would say, ‘Santos, you're going to do great.’ He fed me positivity and assured me I was going to be somebody. That made me realize I was capable and reassured me that I had the ability, no matter the circumstances.”

calendar

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

november

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.
Fri., Nov. 14: Dr. Sarah Wheeler, Lab director of the Yolo-Sacramento Mosquito and Vector Control District. *"Real-time Monitoring of Mosquito-spread Viruses in the Central Valley."* <https://www.eventscribe.net/2023/AMCA/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presenterInfo&PresenterID=1461662>. **Fri, Dec. 6: Isabelle Haddad,** UC Merced Ph.D. candidate. *"The Intersection of Climate Change and Environmental Justice with Central Valley Focus."* ihaddad@ucmerced.edu

Modesto Science Colloquium Fall Semester 2024, 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. **Nov 6: Stephanie L. Bolton,** Ph.D., Director of Research & Education Director and Sustainable Winegrowing, Lodi Winegrape Commission. Sustainable Winegrowing. As one of Wine Enthusiast magazine's "Future 40" for her contributions to sustainable winegrowing and viticulture science, Dr. Bolton will focus on viticultural studies of sustainability, exploring agricultural biodiversity, grapevine viruses, and rootstocks. She will also discuss the LODI RULES program, a pioneering sustainable winegrowing initiative that certifies winegrowers who adhere to over 150 sustainable practices. **Nov 20: MJC MESA Student Teams Research Projects.** Biomass/Biomanufacturing MESA Projects. Learn how scientists and engineers create materials, energy, and products that reduce waste by repurposing biological residues from agriculture and municipal sources. Four MESA student teams present semester-long research projects on different areas and how this area of research can impact our region.

Art at the Kruse Lucas Art Gallery. Carolyn Rossmann, plein air artist, October and November. 525 Tully Rd., Modesto. Open Monday - Friday, 9-5, except holidays.

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

1 FRI: Annual Harvest Gathering. Food, conversation, honoring people for their contributions to Peace/Life Center. Help support KCBP 95.5 FM Community Radio. 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the home of John Frailing & Maria Arevalo, 1125 Edgebrook Dr., Modesto. Delicious Hors d'oeuvres, Good Wines, Coffee and Teas. Donation requested.

5 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.

10 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society presents *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/who-framed-roger-rabbit-112024/>

LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday, January 14: John McCutcheon Concert.

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.

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; 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. 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

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: tcfmodestoriverbank@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, andrews6863@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 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

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: [Thesgapmodesto](https://www.instagram.com/Thesgapmodesto)

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

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

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: Held THE FIRST TUESDAY (except for January) 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, 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:00 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org

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

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/>

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

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

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, Valley Improvement Projects, 1224 K St., Modesto., 7 pm. Info: 209-300-4253. 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, 10th & 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

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

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:jcostello@igc.org) Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.