

# Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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## Forty years for peace

By DAN ONORATO

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has been working for peace, justice, and a sustainable environment for 40 years! We have been the local leader in some of the most significant issues of our time. Our small, concerted efforts, added to those of others, have helped make a difference. We'll be celebrating our history and all who have participated in our efforts on August 14 (see "article" p. ), but here are the highlights of our peace community's journey.

In 1970, in the middle of the Vietnam War, some members of the Church of the Brethren and others started the Center to provide draft counseling. We helped many young men probe and act on their conscience. We also organized marches, demonstrations, and educational efforts that said repeatedly the war was morally wrong. Despite the Reagan years' attempt to whitewash this tragic folly, history will record, as the late Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara publicly admitted, the peace movement's analysis was accurate. Along with millions throughout the country, we helped bring that devastating war to an end.

In the mid-70's members of the Peace/Life Center created Stanislaus Safe Energy to stop a proposed nuclear power plant outside of Waterford. Then, we became part of a statewide movement to alert and educate our fellow citizens about the dangers and costs of nuclear power. We lost the battle over Proposition 15, but we won the war to halt the nuclear industry in California when the California Legislature passed three bills that, for practical purposes, stopped nuclear power in its tracks. During this period, we initiated the first Solar Faire that promoted energy conservation and renewable, sustainable power sources like solar energy. Only recently has the Obama Administration included nuclear power in its energy mix for the future, so most likely we'll have to re-engage this issue.

In the early 1980's, with the tension mounting between the Soviet Union and the United States, the minute hand on the nuclear clock moved to two minutes to midnight. The

Peace/Life Center initiated the Choose Life demonstrations at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. With our vigils and civil disobedience we became part of a world-wide movement to end the nuclear arms race. This grassroots endeavor, coupled with citizen diplomacy efforts like our Modesto-Khmelnitsky Sister City friendship, helped lift the menacing storm clouds of war, and a miracle happened in 1989. The Berlin Wall was broken down, Communism fell, the Soviet Union dissolved, and in the following years the U.S. and Russia cut back their nuclear arsenals. People like us all over the world were a small but significant part of that momentous change. We helped sow the seeds for the international effort to abolish nuclear weapons, now seeing some advance in the recent U.S-Russian agreement to further reduce arsenals.

During this same period, many of us worked with the local Interfaith Committee on Latin America to stop the U.S.-backed wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua. All over the country, groups like ours carried out educational campaigns and demonstrations that put the breaks on Reagan's militaristic foreign policy in Central America. Our solidarity helped prevent outright U.S. invasion and hastened the pursuit of peace.

The 1980's proved a creative time for the Center. Our summer Peace Camp started in 1983, when we hosted Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* as our keynote speaker. In 1987 we launched our Peace Essay Contest that engages hundreds of elementary and high school students in thinking about nonviolent solutions to problems. In 1988, Argentinian Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel spoke at our Peace Essay awards reception. In 1989, *Stanislaus Connections* replaced our small monthly newsletter, its goal, then and now, to highlight voices and alternative views on important issues.

The 1990's saw us demonstrating on the streets against the U.S. invasion of Panama, the war in the Balkans, and the first war against Iraq. We became intensely involved

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## Remembering Hiroshima 65 years later

Join us at the Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck at Legion Park, Modesto at 6:30 p.m., Friday, August 6. Bring food and drinks to share as we converse and rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. The evening will conclude with a candlelight vigil on the banks of the Tuolumne River.

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## Funstrummers entertain city-wide

By RITA MATTHEWS

It's barely summer but the FUNSTRUMMERS Ukulele Band reports that local organizations are already contacting them for holiday entertainment. FUNSTRUMMERS filled their calendar in May and June and anticipate increased invitations that, as word gets out, this young band is very entertaining for all ages and most events. They delight in group singalongs, call and response songs and simple two and three chord tunes. Their leader involves the band and audience in humorous patter throughout performances.

It hardly seems possible that the FUNSTRUMMERS Ukulele Band will celebrate three years of learning and practicing together in November when they gather for their annual birthday party. In the beginning they were but a figment in the imagination of Norm Nomof who had moved to Modesto but missed having fun with the Grass Valley STRUMBUMS band. Fortified by interest in the (now-defunct) YMCA, a few interested members, including Doris Scanlon and reporter Jeff Jardine of the Modesto BEE, the floodgates opened for an explosion of FUNSTRUMMER membership. Soon they found themselves engaged in several gigs per month, and the dream of a Modesto ukulele band has come true with the FUNSTRUMMERS.

Lorrie Freitas, FUNSTRUMMER musical coordinator, writer, rock star and arranger, joined the band early on and has developed the group into an interesting and popular local entertainment entity. Funstrummers spread joy performing at senior retirement homes, especially Alzheimer units, in elementary schools, for local service clubs and celebrations throughout Stanislaus County, at senior events, in mobile home parks, at anniversary parties, with the Red Hats, reunions. Lorrie likes to accent familiar music but includes various types of music at each gig.

A typical gig may begin with the band wearing "vintage" hats while they play familiar music from the 1930s. Cowboy music such as *SOUTH OF THE BORDER* and *WALTZ AROUND TEXAS* will find the strummers in cowboy hats. Sweet Hawaiian tunes are accompanied by the musicians in colorful leis and their traditional Hawaiian shirts. The band delights in their gig bag contents when they add other hu-



morous costumes such as sunglasses and bizarre hairpieces, then Norm assumes the character of Elvis before we break into rock and roll.

Many gigs are put together specifically for the event. FUNSTRUMMERS has collections for children, Alzheimer units, the Red Hats, cowboy music, singalongs and oldies. We search for and learn specifically requested songs. We delight in yodeling to *COWBOY'S SWEETHEART*, and harmonize beautifully singing *TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS*.

KVIE Ch. 6 in Sacramento has filmed FUNSTRUMMERS. A sample appears at You Tube "Rob on the Road Ukulele." You may see them any time of the day on KVIE or visit <http://www.kvie.org/programs/kvie/robontheroad/video/ukulele.htm>.

One band member, Pete Ball, has videotaped many performances and should any organization care to review one of his DVD's, we would be happy to accommodate. You may also go to the You Tube site: <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=Funstrummers#g/f> or web page: <http://funstrummers.com/1.html> or email [FunstrummersUke@aol.com](mailto:FunstrummersUke@aol.com) or blogspot: [www.funstrummersukulele.blogspot.com](http://www.funstrummersukulele.blogspot.com). FUNSTRUMMERS hosted Modesto's first Ukulele Festival this year on May 1st, and there is a video available.

The band expects a donation for most performances but has no set fee. Donations range from \$50 to \$300, depending on the event and the pocketbook of the donor. Most school performances are free. FUNSTRUMMER musicians receive no compensation for performances. Donations pay rehearsal hall rental, music, and other band expenses. We have purchased several "loaner" ukuleles for use of beginners and children.

Anyone can join this fun-loving and popular band. Rehearsal meetings and play along fun are held on Monday nights at 6 PM at College Avenue Congregational Church and on Friday mornings at 9:15 at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. Band members pay dues to help defray expenses. There are no rules for mandatory attendance at gigs and many members come and go as their lives permit. Norm tutors beginners on Wednesday afternoons at 2 PM at his home, and has helped dozens of FUNSTRUMMERS get started "uking it up" with a little personal encouragement.

**ACTION:** Contact Lorrie Freitas, 505-3216, or Gig-master Rita Matthews, 522-1970.

## Peace/Life Center 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party & Potluck, August 14

By DAN ONORATO

In an era when peace organizations often lose their fire and vanish, 40 years of vital involvement, leadership, and inspiration is a stand-up, whistle and shout accomplishment! As the Modesto Peace/Life Center 40 year story shows (see article p. 1), we haven't been bystanders on the sidelines of history. To the contrary, we've added our energy, determination, and faithful commitment to help bend the arc of history toward justice. Our tenacity and staying power are extraordinary. The friendships we share in our peace community run deep and keep growing. Our pure grit, challenging human inertia for change, is worth celebrating. So please join us at our "Forty Years for Peace" gala celebration in Modesto's Muir Park on Helen Avenue on August 14.

Our festive party begins at 4:00 P.M. with live music from local talents such as Lauren Laverone, Patrick Durr, Dave Hoberg and Craig Mildrum, and the Ukulele Band. We'll socialize, place bets on sack races and balloon toss shenanigans for kids up to seniors, and stroll through colorful displays of the Center's activist history. We'll also vie with one another over who can identify the most images in one of Ken Schroeder's famous picture games, the Who's Who of the Peace Movement.

Between 5:00 - 5:30 we'll start our picnic food fest. At the Center's invitation, the best barbeque gourmets this side of the Mississippi will prepare scrumptious Tri-tip, hamburgers, hot dogs, and veggie burgers for all. In our long potluck tradition, we ask that each family or individual who attends the party bring appetizers like chips and salsa and veggie platters, as well as salad and beverage to share. Salads will range from green, pasta, and three-bean to potato, fruit, or your favorite specialty. Beverages will include water, soda, juice, iced tea, beer, or wine. For dessert the Center will provide cake and ice cream.

Following our feast we'll highlight the event with recollections and reflections from a sampling of people involved in the Center's activities at different points over the years. We'll conclude with drawing our raffle winners. To heighten anticipation, prizes will remain a secret disclosed only at the party. So come, one and all, to celebrate our history and our peace community. We have been and continue to be among Margaret Mead's handful of thoughtful, committed people that help change history. That's worth celebrating!



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# 65 years after Hiroshima: it's time to retire the "Bomb"

By **MARYLIA KELLY**, Executive Director, Tri-Valley CARES

August 6, 2010 marks the 65th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, a second nuclear bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki.

The Livermore-based Tri-Valley CAREs, the Peace and Justice Network and other colleague groups invite all Northern California people of peace to participate in a commemoration at the gates of the Livermore nuclear weapons laboratory.

At 8 A.M. on Friday, August 6, we will gather at the northwest corner of Livermore Lab, located at the intersection of Vasco and Patterson Pass Roads, in Livermore. (Take I-580 to the Vasco Road exit and go south.)

The program will feature Taiko drummers, speakers, including Norman Solomon, and musicians. Following the rally,

we will march a short distance to the Livermore Lab's West Gate, where those who choose will nonviolently risk arrest.

We will observe a moment of silence at 8:15 A.M. It was then, the morning of August 6, 1945, that the Enola Gay dropped a uranium bomb over the city of Hiroshima and vaporized thousands in a flash. Thousands more died agonizing deaths in the days and months that followed. Still more have died and are dying each year of the lingering effects of radiation exposure.

We will gather at Livermore Lab in remembrance and to pledge "never again." And, at the site where "new and modified" U.S. nuclear bombs are presently being developed, our physical presence will proclaim our determination to achieve a nuclear weapons free world.

Our theme this year is "65: Time to retire nuclear weapons." Join us to take a stand to eliminate these weapons at

Livermore Lab and around the globe.

For more information, contact Tri-Valley CAREs at (925) 443-7148 or check [www.trivalleycares.org](http://www.trivalleycares.org), (925) 443-7148; [marylia@trivalleycares.org](mailto:marylia@trivalleycares.org)



"War, want and concentration camps, exile from home and homeland, these have made me hate strife among men, but they have not made me lose faith in the future of mankind. ... If man has been able to create the arts, the sciences and the material civilization we know in America, why should he be judged powerless to create justice, fraternity and peace?"

**Vladislav Krzysztofowicz**

**Note:** No American could pronounce that last name. So Vladislav shortened it to Ladis Kristof, (father of Nicholas D. Kristof, columnist — *New York Times*, June 20, 2010.

## Student Nagasaki-America Peace Project

By **ALEX SKLYAR** and **CAROLINA VAN DER MENSBRUGGHE**

We are 2010 graduates of Colgate University, co-founders of Colgate Global Citizens for Peace and recipients of one of the Kathryn Davis Foundation's Projects for Peace fellowships for the summer of 2010.

The Nagasaki-America Peace Project will consist of a video documentary made on site in Nagasaki, Japan, an official website, and a text and video blog kept during the summer. We hope that our efforts will inspire other students interested and invested in grassroots peace activism and cross-cultural communication to actively pursue opportunities that can make an impact on global peace culture.

We will be on site in Nagasaki from July 2 until August 12 filming, interviewing, blogging, and observing. Our focus is two-fold:

- 1) The response of Nagasaki citizens in the wake of the atomic bombing.
- 2) Nagasaki history and culture beyond the atomic bombing.

One of our main focuses is the vibrant peace activism movement that has resulted in Nagasaki over the past 60 years. Secondly, we are focusing on the stories of post-bombing survival and recovery of the hibakusha and the city. Thirdly, we will be presenting the international history of Nagasaki and its contact with the West throughout the Edo period and before. As part of this third point, we will be presenting the Christian and hidden-Christian history of the Nagasaki area.

We hope that these materials can be used in college, uni-

versity, and high school classrooms across the US to give students and educators better access to the culture and history of Nagasaki, the contemporary peace activism of its citizens, and the stories of the Nagasaki peace activism community that we will capture on film can serve as an example of what students can do themselves, whether it be through the establishment of peace groups at universities, colleges, and high schools across the US, by applying for foundation fellowships such as the Davis' 100 Projects for Peace, or connecting with other peace groups across the global.

**ACTION:** contact us if you are interested in following our blog and/or receiving a DVD once it is made. Email us at: [nagasakiamericapeaceproject@gmail.com](mailto:nagasakiamericapeaceproject@gmail.com) AND/OR [alexs659@gmail.com](mailto:alexs659@gmail.com).

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# Growing our Own: a personal food revolution

By JENIFER WEST

It's difficult for me not to wax poetic while hand-milling the flour for our daily bread. Or running the oats through the flaker, ending up with something on the order of rolled oats – but not the utterly flat, perfectly round kind you buy in the store. These have *texture*, and they're absolutely unbelievable, whether in bread, or granola, or simply as a breakfast cereal. ("Oh," you may groan, "but I don't have *time* for that!" You might be interested to know that I can mill the flour and flake the oats for a loaf of bread in less than 15 minutes – by hand!)

And I'll make no excuses for tossing them both, along with the rest of the necessary ingredients, into a bread machine. Good, homemade bread is truly the staff of life – whether kneaded by hand or the paddle of a modern machine. And knowing that bread will likely be featured in a meal that includes a salad of fresh, brightly colored things grown in our own backyard makes the work even more enjoyable.

There's something deeply satisfying – utterly primal – about being so directly involved in creating the food one consumes on a daily basis. This food nourishes our souls, as it feeds our bodies.

This "personal food revolution" started with an interest in canning – I've been putting up things like salsa and jam for several years. But after a while I wanted a little more challenge, and so found myself pressure canning meats and soups. Eventually, I ended up experimenting with whole grains, as well.

The latter led to the purchase of a grain mill with a flaker attachment which can be operated by hand or attached to a stand mixer (which I admit to doing, if time is short or I'm especially tired). What a difference that's made! My favorite bread recipe calls for whole-wheat flour and rolled oats. I've been milling the flour for awhile now and will never go back to using store-bought, and I finally got hold of some whole oats and put them through the flaker. Wow! NOW I know

## So Easy~So Good: a six-month anniversary report

By KATHRYN HAYNES

In January 2010, an article was printed in the Stanislaus Connections titled, "Calling All Vegetarians/Vegans/Wannabees." You might have wondered what happened since that time. Well, sixteen people came to the first potluck/meeting in mid-January and the group, named So Easy~So Good, has gone gangbusters and has been meeting regularly every month and we have been growing by leaps and (small) bounds ever since.

Along with being a group of people who just want to have fun with like-minded people, this group is also an activist group. We want to let people on the "other side" in on three of the best kept secrets of the day:

- 1) the vegetarian/vegan life style is extremely healthy;
- 2) this lifestyle benefits the environment in many ways;
- 3) it promotes acting as compassionate humans towards ALL living beings making us better human beings.

We have had booths at two events, Earth Day and Green on the Stream, so far this year, and plan on doing at least two more events before the end of the year along with a walk for the Farm Animal Sanctuary. Also in the works is having guest speaker(s) at our meetings, a recognition/awards dinner at the

why they call it the staff of life!

Somewhere along the way, I found myself thinking about our forebears, particularly their understanding of the need to produce as much of their own food as possible. That kindled a latent interest in gardening, which in turn has led to all sorts of interesting adventures.

And the requirement that anything we plant in our yard (front or back) must produce something edible. At the moment, we're seriously considering ripping out our front lawn (the yard slopes, and it's utterly consistent – brown with green flecks, winter or summer). Never mind that we're in the middle of a subdivision, and the guy next door just spent countless hours and who knows how much money terracing his, and replanting it with – you guessed it – lawn: thirsty, high-maintenance, completely inedible lawn. Did you know that lawns were originally status symbols? Planting one showed the world you could afford to devote an area to *not* feeding your family.

So we're thinking about ripping out our front lawn, and putting in things instead that'll grow food. That would require a fence, no doubt – still have to check to see what the city folks might think about that. But we'd like to be able to put some fruit trees out there, without sacrificing all our hard-won fruit to passersby.

As it turns out, there are many plants suitable for landscaping that produce something edible. It just takes a willingness to do a little research, and "plant outside the box."

Besides fruit trees, many other plants can be used both in the yard and in the kitchen. Rosemary and sage make nice shrubs, for example, as do blueberries – and there's a variety of the latter that's been developed for this area. Grapes are another option. Who hasn't admired an arbor covered with rich green leaves, decorated with jewel-bright clusters of sweet, ripe grapes. And because the leaves are edible, you

end of the year and a field trip or two.

A book club was just started by one of the members with the first meeting held last month. We have talked to a locally owned restaurant about having vegan options on the menu: more to come on that. Not a bad start for a mixed group of health nuts, tree huggers and animal lovers. Rumor has it that Sarah Palin wants to join.

Look us up on So Easy~So Good's Face Book page. There is also a Yahoo Groups site which you are welcome to join.

So, please join us for a little fun and a little rising of social consciousness. Even if you are a meat eater and loving-every-minute-of-it type of person or, if you are a vegan or somewhere in-between, all are welcome. But beware, we will do our best to entice you to come over to the light and show you how delightful it is being a mindful eater.

The author is President & Founder of *So Easy ~ So Good*. *So Easy* to be Vegetarian/Vegan ~ *So Good* for Health, Environment and All Living Beings

For information call (209) 529-5360 or email kathyhaynes103@gmail.com

get double the bang for your edible plant buck.

You can also use various edibles as you would annual flowers – moving them in and out as the seasons progress. The savoyed varieties of cabbage, for example, are stunning – particularly when grown in a container with an interesting combination of variously colored lettuces and other greens and maybe a carrot or two, with their ferny tops. Pea shoots, all the rage in Asian cuisine, make a nice, clover-like addition. Some varieties of beans can be trellised in interesting ways, and make lovely flowers. And okra flowers are almost orchid-like.

And then, of course, there are flowers. Many varieties are edible. Just be sure to do your homework and make sure any flowers you're considering sampling are, in fact, safe to eat.

For more information on edible landscaping, check out any of several books by Rosalind Creasy, or use an online search engine.

In the meantime, it would be very worth your time to become more directly involved in your own food production, however that might work best for you.

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# Islamic limits to fighting oppression

By MUHAMMAD FAROOQ KHAN

Peshawar, Pakistan - Whenever terrorism strikes in Pakistan and innocent lives are lost, people wonder which Islamic injunctions the perpetrators abused to justify their acts. The North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, where I reside, has been particularly volatile recently, and people are increasingly appalled by the convoluted logic used by suicide bombers to kill our families, friends and neighbours.

In the last 30 years, there has been an increase in the number of militant Muslim organisations, such as Al Qaeda and Islamic Jihad, that are engaged in self-declared wars against others-whether they be foreign nations, their own governments, or even members of other religious and ethnic groups-whom they see as oppressors. Such misconceptions result from a failure to understand the Qur'an in its proper context and the failure to read the actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, or *hadith*, alongside the Qur'an.

Reading the Qur'an literally, many people consider some verses to be encouraging violence. Often quoted is the verse: "Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged; and God is indeed able to give them victory" (22:39). Many believe this commandment is binding on every aggrieved Muslim, individually or communally, to violently fight against perceived oppression.

The prominent 8th and 9th century Muslim jurists who founded the five schools of Islamic jurisprudence-the Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi'i, Maliki and Jaafari schools-all argue that Muslims cannot wage war without a state or government sanctioning such action. Their argument conforms to the Prophet Muhammad's saying: "A ruler is a shield. War has to be fought under his commandments."

There is logic behind this precept. If each Muslim were allowed to wage war on his or her own, Muslims would be divided without any real binding authority. This would result in complete chaos and anarchy, which runs counter to the very spirit of Islam. Indeed, the Qur'an says, "Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering" (7:56).

A state authority is necessary not only to maintain order for Muslims but also because of the importance and weight of treaties in Islam. The Qur'an advises that where there is a peace agreement between a Muslim and non-Muslim nation, the former must not wage war even if it's to help any oppressed Muslims among the latter: "...Ye have no duty to protect them till they leave their homes; but if they seek help from you in the matters of religion then it is your duty to help (them) except against a folk between whom and you there is a treaty" (8:72).

The reason for this injunction is because positive relations between two larger entities-whether they be countries, states or communities-are vitally important for maintaining overall peace, whereas waging war against another country for the rescue of an oppressed Muslim minority unravels relations and creates discord for the majority.

It was only after the formation of the first Islamic polity in Medina, where the Prophet Muhammad travelled with his companions after leaving Mecca due to persecution, that war was allowed in defence of this emerging state against aggressors. Thus, the Qur'anic verses encouraging people to participate in war against oppressors and aggressors were

The prominent 8th and 9th century Muslim jurists who founded the five schools of Islamic jurisprudence-the Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi'i, Maliki and Jaafari schools-all argue that Muslims cannot wage war without a state or government sanctioning such action.

revealed during the Prophet Muhammad's time in Medina when a state was already established. At that time there was no concept of a national military, so it was imperative to persuade the common Muslim man, on behalf of the state and with its sanction, to fight in order to protect the growing Muslim community.

The Qur'an has always stressed that war is the last option and it should be fought keeping in mind all human values. It says: "God does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who did not fight against you on account of your religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, God loves those who deal with equity. It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of your religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out, that God forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever

will befriend them, then such are the wrongdoers" (60:8-9).

Ultimately, these verses demonstrate that no individuals or non-state actors are allowed to wage war in the name of Islam or on behalf of any Muslim community, local or global. Muslims would do well to return to the sources-the Qur'an and verified *hadith*-to better understand their key messages of respect for international law and the spirit of peace and justice that prevails in Islam.

Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan is an Islamic scholar, columnist and television anchor from Peshawar, Pakistan. This article is part of a series written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews), on the myth that Islam is inherently violent. (CGNews).

Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), [www.commongroundnews.org](http://www.commongroundnews.org)

## Forty years for peace

. . . from page 1

in the movement to stop the U.S.-backed sanctions against Iraq, which the U.N. concluded were responsible for the deaths of over a half a million Iraqi children. In 1994 we also began our collaboration with Tommie Muhammad at the King-Kennedy Memorial Center to commemorate the life and message of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We're still going strong after 16 years, bringing prominent speakers to Modesto who reflect on King's vision in today's world. They've included Civil Rights leaders Rev. Joseph Lowery and Robert Moses; King's late daughter, Yolanda King; actor-activists Edward James Olmos, Danny Glover, and Mike Farrell; and, last year, California political leader Mayor Willie Brown. The Center also participated in the "Day of Respect" effort initiated by Sharon Froba at Modesto High to promote tolerance and appreciation of differences.

The new millennium has seen the Center focusing on the Middle East. In cooperation with the Modesto Church of the Brethren, we've organized a number of educational events on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including a presentation in 2005 by Israeli Robi Damelin and Palestinian Nadwa Sarandah, both members of the Bereaved Parents Circle that promotes understanding and reconciliation. In 2007 we hosted Palestinian filmmaker Muhammad Alatar to show his documentary, *Jerusalem: the Eastside Story*, and recently, two citizens of Israel, Jewish Ofra Yeshua-Lyth and Palestinian Ismail Kharoub. Since 2001 we've vigiled monthly at Five Points against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the lone public voice against U.S. militarism and a profoundly flawed foreign policy. Meanwhile we've extended our outreach at local events like Earth Day and especially in our new Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference that encourages young people to get involved in local organizations working to improve our community and our world.

Serious, goal-oriented work is not all we're about. We could not sustain this work without developing a community of kindred spirits. Over the years, as projects arose

that needed funding, our fundraisers served as community-building opportunities. People enjoying themselves and getting to know others were as important as fundraising. Stanislaus Safe Energy led to the Pancake Breakfast; the Peace Essay Contest led to the Harvest Supper, now the Harvest Gathering; our work to abolish nuclear weapons led to the annual potluck-candle light vigil on the Tuolumne River each August 6, to commemorate the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and *Stanislaus Connections* led to our *Connections* potluck auction each September. Our aspiration to nurture individuals and families in peace making led to our Peace Retreats (in earlier years), our monthly Song Circle, our annual Holiday gathering, and our Peace Camp in the Sierra each June.

Our commitment to deepen peace in ourselves, our community, our country, and our world remains steadfast. We're strengthened by the values and convictions we share, mutual caring and encouragement, and fun together in the Center's community-building activities. We're inspired by the commitment and energy of younger generations who join the effort. And we're sustained by our faith that we humans can do better, that the "arc of the universe bends toward justice." So we face the long haul and carry on, unwilling to be silent spectators on the sidelines of history, but fully aware, as Albert Camus once wrote, that "Generosity to the future lies in giving all to the present."

We're thankful for everyone, past and present, who has added his or her presence, energy, and support to our work and to nurturing our peace community.

Mark your calendars now: August 14, 4:00 - 7:30 P.M., Muir Park on Helen Avenue in Modesto, for a lively party and festive celebration of our first 40 years.

**ACTION:** For a more detailed version of the Center's history, please see our website at [www.peacelifecenter.org](http://www.peacelifecenter.org). Three cheers for Board Secretary Keith Werner for his ongoing work to develop the website. See you on August 14!

# “The Price That We Pay” - Undocumented

By YANA KUNICHOFF, *t r u t h o u t* Report

*First installment of a three-part series on immigration.*

Rita's house on the South Side of Chicago could be any Mexican-American family home - In the corner a big “I love you, Mom!” balloon sags against the wall, a relic of Mother's Day a couple of weeks ago. On the coffee table sits an orange Brain Quest game, and hanging on the wall is a large, framed photo of Rita's eldest daughter, resplendent in her white quinceañera dress. As many people do, she keeps her tax statements for each year in separate, pristine manila envelopes, away from the clutter of the living room and the curious nose of the family's chihuahua.

Rita, a 47-year-old Hispanic woman, may in fact be the blueprint for a growing number of Mexican-American immigrant lifestyles: Rita is an undocumented immigrant, and a taxpayer.

According to her 2009 tax return, the divorced mother of three, who asked that her last name not be used for fear of prosecution, made \$18,295.68 of which \$1,170.41 was withheld for Social Security tax and \$273.73 for Medicare - benefits that Rita is unlikely to ever see.

A poll conducted in 2006 by ABC News and The Washington Post found that a third of all Americans said their biggest objection to undocumented immigrants is their use of “more public services than they pay for in taxes.” Many of these same people oppose comprehensive immigration reform for this reason, and among conservative pundits such as Bill O'Reilly the notion that undocumented immigrants pay tax at all has been derided as “crap.”

But reports by the Congressional Budget Office and the Social Security Administration confirm that undocumented immigrants in fact pay many different types of taxes, including sales tax, property tax, Social Security tax and income tax.

Francine Lipman, a professor of tax law at Chapman University, says the disinformation about the tax contributions of undocumented immigrants can be attributed to both “confusion about the system generally and . . . that we have a history of scapegoating people when times are tough, and maybe also when times are good.”

Lipman's research in her 2006 report, “The Undocumented Immigrant Tax: Enriching America from Sea to Shining Sea,” investigated the position of the low-income, undocumented person in the American tax system.

“Most of our tax system is seamless,” Lipman went on to say, explaining that therefore, “folks don't think about the taxes they pay just for consuming.”

Along with sales tax, which Lipman says immigrants pay

whenever they spend money - and because they have low-income jobs, a high proportion of their salary goes to sales tax because they spend it on taxed products such as food and property - undocumented immigrants also file tax returns.

Lipman first discovered this when holding a tax clinic for low-income taxpayers. “My students were helping,” said Lipman, “and all of the sudden they said Professor Lipman, this gentleman has all these Social Security numbers - and this other number. And that's how I discovered it.”

This “other number,” which Rita and other immigrants who do not have a valid Social Security number use to file taxes, is the nine-digit individual taxpayer identification number, or ITIN.

## The ITIN

The ITIN was first created in 1996 in order to allow the Internal Revenue Service to track the tax returns of individuals who are ineligible for a Social Security number, but who have US-source incomes. With this number, an individual who sends the IRS documents that prove their foreign status and identity can file tax returns and receive refunds.

Despite the lack of definitive numbers, it is believed that most taxpayers who use ITINs are undocumented immigrants, though ITINs are also issued to foreign nationals who make a living from US-based businesses but may not reside in the country. According to the New York Times, about 15 million ITINs have been issued by the IRS since 1996.

The individual taxpayer identification number can also be used to open up bank accounts, to amend returns filed in the past with a false Social Security number, or to file taxes for income earned under a false Social Security number, making them particularly flexible for undocumented immigrants who usually work off the books or may use false Social Security numbers.

According to Robert Palacios, the director of tax services at the Center for Economic Progress, about five percent of clients the Center assists in the state of Illinois pay their tax

returns with ITIN numbers.

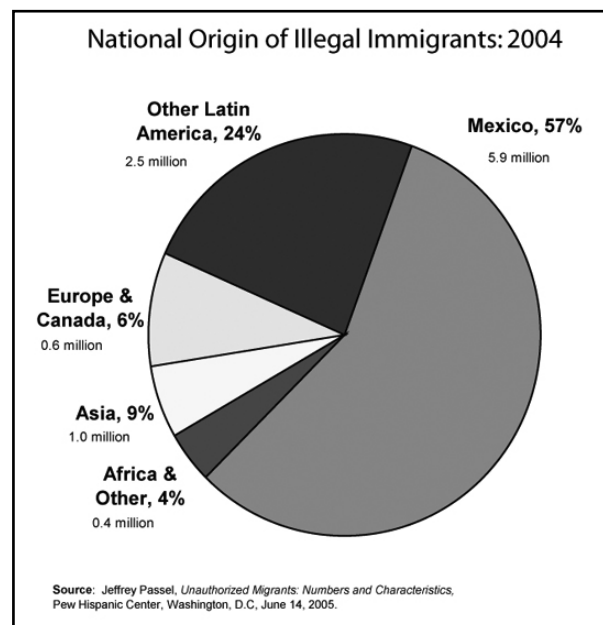
Of the 33,000 clients for whom the Center helped fill out their tax returns in 2009, about 1,400 of them did so with an ITIN number. Another 686 had a spouse who had an ITIN. “I think its pretty impressive that people who are sort of living in the shadows, so to speak, in other aspects of their lives are perfectly willing to pay their taxes,” said Palacios, who has been helping tax payers file in Chicago since 1997.

The manila envelopes in which Rita keeps her tax information display the sticker of the company that helps her file taxes - a firm in downtown Chicago that she pays \$30 per filing. Rita has been in the country as an undocumented immigrant since August 1993, when she left the poverty of her small, rural town in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico to join her husband, who was already living and working in Chicago. She began filing taxes in 1995, soon after she began her job at the plumbing parts factory where she still works.

On her tax form, Rita files with one dependent - her 2nd grade, American citizen son. But when she crossed the border in a van, hiding under a fold-out couch in the back, she brought two others - her five-year-old daughter and three-year-old son. Now respectively 23 and 21, Rita's son and daughter, along with herself, are part of the estimated 11.9 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States, according to a 2008 report by the Pew Research Center - five percent of the nation's workforce.

## Work in the City

In Chicago, undocumented immigrants “seek work at extremely high rates [of] 91 percent,” according to a 2002 study conducted by the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago. For this work, the study found, their average hourly wage is \$7.00 - a dollar less than the \$8.00 legal minimum in Illinois. Relative to





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# Immigrants and Taxation

immigrants with legal status, the study noted, undocumented immigrants report working in unsafe conditions at considerably higher rates. They are also the only immigrant group for which educational attainment does not have significant positive wage effects.

The study, which surveyed 1,653 documented and undocumented immigrants living in the Chicago area, also estimated that “the consumer expenditures of undocumented immigrants in the Chicago metro area generate 31,000 jobs in the local economy and add \$5.45 billion annually to the gross regional product.”

Rita, who makes \$9.50 an hour working 6:30 am to 3:00 pm at the plumbing parts factory, and who takes overtime whenever she can get it, says the 15.4 percent missing from her paycheck is money she sorely needs.

Her daughter works 15-30 hours a week in addition to attending college, and after paying for her school fees and her cell phone bill, puts the money towards household expenses - her eldest son does the same. But even with this, the family lives from paycheck to paycheck, Rita says.

Diego Bonesatti, a community worker with 21 years of experience in nonprofit immigration law and immigrant rights and is currently volunteering to set up a immigration legal clinic at a community center in the Chicago suburbs, says that despite the struggles, there are compelling reasons for undocumented immigrants to pay taxes. It “definitely helps in specific immigration cases for undocumented immigrants - such as Cancellation of Removal [deportation] for non-permanent residents to help satisfy specific statutory requirements,” he says.

Paying taxes is beneficial in cases where there is a requirement to prove good moral character, as it shows both compliance with the law and gainful employment, Bonesatti said, adding that “it also helps in other matters of discretion” where it may help tilt the balance in favor of the applicant.

Furthermore, he continued, the majority of immigration reform proposals, from the Bush-era Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy

Act (STRIVE) of 2007 to the most recent Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America’s Security and Prosperity Act (CIR ASAP) of 2009, have included some form of tax payment to start a path towards legalization. Bonesatti says he expects the final bill, whenever it is ultimately voted on, to have a tax component.

## Out of the System

The assumption of anti-immigrant figure-

heads is that undocumented immigrants are a burden on social services and benefit unfairly from government programs, but until comprehensive immigration reform is passed, undocumented immigrants are disqualified from nearly all means-tested government programs. The sweeping welfare reform bill excluded undocumented immigrants from housing, Medicaid and Medicare-funding hospitalization assistance and food stamps - the only services that are available to them are K-12 education and emergency medical care.

Those who do pay taxes are eligible for tax refunds but not for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a refundable income tax credit for low to middle-income families. By 2009 federal poverty guidelines, Rita’s family lives below the poverty line, which is \$22,050 for a family of four. Based on their financial information, if they were eligible for Earned Income Tax Credit they would receive \$2,780 back for 2009.

Also, because the majority of undocumented immigrants come to the United States during their prime working years, the cost of their education and upbringing has already been paid by their home countries.

According to a study released by the National Council of La Raza, “During their working life, undocumented immigrants in the United States will pay, on average, approximately \$80,000 more in taxes per capita than they use in government services, owing to the fact that they are not eligible to take advantage of almost all of the social service programs offered by the federal government.”

This is the case on both the federal and state level - the La Raza report cites the disclosure of the Texas Comptroller that, in 2006, undocumented immigrants paid about \$424.7 million more in state revenues than they actually used in state services, which included education and health care.

The IRS has also recognized the contribution of undocumented immigrants: IRS Commissioner Mark Everson told a Congressional hearing in 2006 that “Many illegal aliens, utilizing ITINs, have been reporting tax liability [earned] to the tune of almost \$50 billion from 1996 to 2003.”

Stephen C. Goss, the Social Security Administration’s chief actuary, said, “Our assumption is that about three-quarters of other-than-legal immigrants pay payroll taxes.” Other-than-legal is the agency’s term for undocumented immigrants.

According to an article by the New York Times, the Social Security Administration placed W-2 earning reports they received with incorrect information, starting largely in the late 1980s, into an “earnings suspense file.” About \$189 billion in wages were recorded in this file over the 1990’s - two and a half times the amount in the 1980s - and the file continues to grow by more than \$50 billion a year, the article states. This generates up to \$7 billion in tax revenue for Social Security, and \$1.5 billion in Medicare taxes.

“Illegal immigrants account for the vast majority of the suspense file . . . Especially its growth over the 1990’s, as more and more undocumented immigrants entered the work force,”

said Nick Theodore, the director of the Center for Urban Economic Development at UIC.

## Federal Protection

The IRS has in large part kept itself separate from immigration services, and avoided punishing the individuals who shore up the system. According to the Legal Services of New Jersey website, “The IRS takes privacy laws very seriously. The IRS cannot report you to immigration or UCIS for getting an ITIN. A court, however, can make the IRS release information about you if you are in deportation proceedings or under suspicion for terrorist activities.”

Following the raiding of a tax filing office in Colorado in 2009 by the sheriff to find information on undocumented immigrants using fake social security numbers, IRS spokesman Frank Keith, said, “We are concerned when information provided by taxpayers to meet their legal tax obligations is used for purposes other than federal tax administration.”

A projection of the effects of higher and lower immigration patterns on taxes conducted by the Social Security Administration from census and Immigration and Customs Enforcement data in 2007 found that with high immigration the SSA’s combined trust fund would last four years longer than with half the amount of immigration.

A study by the Center for American Progress found that, “Comprehensive immigration reform that legalizes currently unauthorized immigrants and creates flexible legal limits on future immigration in the context of full labor rights . . . would yield at least \$1.5 trillion in cumulative U.S. gross domestic product over 10 years.”

For Rita, the decision to come to the United States and live as an undocumented immigrant has been worth the risk, she says. There has always been food on the table, and her eldest daughter was recently awarded one of the few university scholarships available to undocumented students. Her youngest son, when he grows up, will have all the educational possibilities that this woman who was not educated past the sixth-grade always dreamed her child would have.

Rita’s opinion on the way her hard-earned money is shoring up the shortfall in Social Security taxes while she lives in the shadows of the immigration system? That’s “the price that we pay.”

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# Gandhi in Chico, India, Colombia, Stockton

By JOHN MOREARTY

"Would Gandhi's nonviolence work today?"

In Chico the other weekend, I joined the Saturday peace vigil down at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Main. Eight or nine of us stood with our signs, chatting, waving to friendly honks. Gerda and Dave, sixty-ish, had me sign the book; "This vigil has been going for fifty years; we like to keep a record." I mentioned that I've taught about Gandhi, and Gerda turned to me:

"Yes, but would Gandhi's nonviolence work today?"

"Well, sure," I stammered, "it's working now, all over the world..."

Just then a lean, unshaven young guy on a bicycle rolled up and stopped. He glared at us.

"Why don't you people quit your whining and sniveling? If you had any f—ing guts you'd go out and kill the people who attacked our country. I was an Air Force pilot, and I dropped stuff on them you wouldn't even want to talk about. I say, Kill 'em all, and let God sort 'em out. Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Nuke 'em all, and quit your whining!"

Gerda and I took a few deep breaths. "We're not whining," she said. I asked if he knew about nuclear winter. After a few minutes, he rode off: "Have a great time whining!"

Gerda, Dave and I congratulated ourselves on not losing our tempers. "This was only the second person that angry in seventeen years," she said.

I crossed the corner and said hello to a man about forty who was just rising from his black meditation cushion, next to a sign that read "Buddhist Peace Fellowship."

"I'm a Soto Zen teacher," he said. "I sat on the sidewalk every day for two and a half years, during this Iraq war, and then I wrote a book about it called *Sidewalk*."

I told him about the Asian Buddhist monk we once protested with at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento. He'd been fasting on water for a month, and he sat by the roadside for an hour or two, taking abuse from workers going in to the

base. I asked how he endured that. "Oh," he replied softly, "our teacher taught us to bow to the Buddha in every being."

The sidewalk sitter replied, "We would say, that fellow you were talking to was the Buddha; he came to test the steadiness of your practice."

Ria later told me, "It sounds like he was suffering from post-traumatic stress. Try just repeating a phrase or two, in his exact words. That will show you're giving him your full attention."

In his new book *Put Down Your Sword*, John Dear tells two stories of creative nonviolence.

In India he spoke with Dr. Vandana Shiva, scientist and anti-globalization and environmental activist. She told him, "Environmentalists here started to do with forests what Gandhi did with salt. A huge forest satyagraha campaign was started. Thirty-nine people were killed, but there are forest satyagrahas around the world now. Why? Unjust laws are not meant to be obeyed. We must have the courage to break them nonviolently to protect humanity and the earth."

"When the new world order called 'globalization' was laid out, they wanted to create a monopoly on seeds, control all the farms, and claim patents for every seed. Five companies could control all the food in the world, and so all health. Gandhi opposed England with the spinning wheel by getting people to make their own clothes. So we grow every crop, save all the seeds, and build model farming villages so that we can take care of our own lives."

"The WTO is wrecking the world's agriculture. So this is war, and we are a peace movement, protecting the species and farmers and all people."

John Dear also tells a story from Colombia.

"We drove from the beautiful town of Popayan out into the countryside to visit 'La Laguna,' where half of the Alto Naya community eventually settled after the Holy Week

massacre of 2001. (Within six months that year, over 350 mountain people had been killed by the paramilitaries, who are sponsored by the Colombian army.) The people found lawyers, sued the government, and somehow won the right to a new plot of land, which they eventually claimed. Over 250 survivors now live together in a communal cooperative. They walked us through the glorious fields, surrounded by mountains in the distance, showed us their crops and animals, served us a delicious lunch.

"We have been together here for several years now," one of the leaders said. "Back on the mountain, they have no schools or teachers, but here we have three teachers. For the first three years, we lived in a bullfighting ring in Santander. When the government finally relented and gave us land after the lawsuit, they said only twenty families could come, but we all came and immediately started building our community. Now we grow organic coffee, corn, beans, other vegetables, and fruit, plus we raise cattle."

"We are trying to teach our young people not to give in to feelings of revenge or join the guerrillas. We want to provide new horizons for them, so we started a radio station where they could host their own radio programs."

Meanwhile, in Stockton, the local non-profit Puentes has planted an organic community garden at the county fairgrounds, and is planning more. And the Peace and Justice Network is creating Valley Community Radio, 89.5 FM.

Gandhi is alive and working.

John Dear is a Jesuit priest, Gandhi scholar and war resister who was head of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and leader of the interfaith chaplains' corps in New York City after September 11. His book is called *Put Down Your Sword: Answering the Gospel Call to Creative Nonviolence*. Eerdman's Publishing, Grand Rapids Michigan, 2008.



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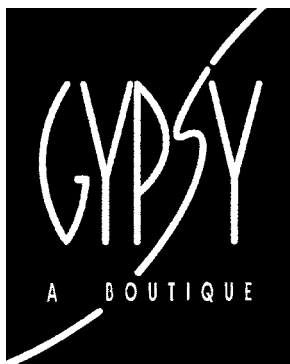
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## Kathy Kelly: Counter terror, build justice

It takes \$1 million a year to keep one U.S. soldier in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, drone strikes and occupation are a way of life in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and longtime peace activist Kathy Kelly (who has spoken in Modesto) just returned from a trip there to see firsthand the consequences for the people on the ground.

Kathy joins Laura in the GRITtv studio to discuss the consequences of a "robotized" U.S. military. She describes the devastation she has seen and the way people are forced to live, and questions the logic of continuing to spend all this money on war.

Watch at <http://www.commondreams.org/video/2010/06/11-1>



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## SEPTEMBER 17, 1862

As a result of the narrow victory of the Army of the Potomac at the Battle of Antietam, which halted a Confederate incursion into the North, President Lincoln had the major Union success in the field he needed to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

Photographer Alexander Gardner took 70 images of the killing fields following the battle, thought to be the first photographs of dead soldiers on a battlefield.<sup>1</sup>



## Tom Portwood

Tom Portwood is a free-lance writer who works with non-profit health care clinics and other agencies. Much of his work is still based in Texas, where he lived for more than 20 years. He has also worked with local agencies, both as a volunteer and as a consultant.

Portwood's creative writing efforts began at an early age and continued off and on through the years until he moved to Modesto in 2003 and joined the *awg* writing group. He credits the group and its fine poets for giving him the confidence to pursue his poetry more seriously.

A CD of several of his poems was produced in 2004 by Zootsutti Music, and he has appeared in *Poets Corner*, *hardpan*, and once before in *Stanislaus Connections*. He loves the game of baseball, and attends the home games of the Modesto Nuts several times a year. He has a wonderful dog named Lucky.



Twenty-two thousand  
seven hundred twenty killed  
or maimed  
in a single day  
by Antietam Creek  
the Dunker Church  
Miller's cornfield

the sunken road  
soldiers  
in their memoirs  
would call  
'Bloody Lane'

blue and butternut  
regiment after regiment  
farmers, drummer boys, store clerks  
bank tellers and common thieves  
all swirled  
into the carnage -

in Gardner's glass plates  
you'll find image  
after image  
of ruined bodies  
their arms, legs  
contorted at odd angles  
some with bellies exposed  
others headless

in makeshift rows  
the corpses rest  
like overripe forgotten fruit  
at marketplace  
along a rail fence  
by an artillery piece  
among the brutalized cornstalks

in some of the photographs  
the burial squads have stopped their work  
to gaze out at Gardner's contraption  
their eyes vacant or half-curious  
a few desultorily sitting in the dust  
beside an unburied corpse or two  
on this September afternoon  
the living seem almost as lifeless  
as the dead

no human voice need echo  
the stillness  
of dry wind  
on summer grass

## BROWN PELICAN (BEFORE)

The brown pelican is the state bird for Louisiana -  
"The Pelican State"

With a majestic wingspan  
of ninety inches  
master of warm Gulf breezes

it skims effortlessly over the waves  
spying for swift-swimming prey - schools of herring  
or mullet

built to soar and glide, to fish  
to plunge like an arrow for the kill  
to immerse itself in air or water interchangeably

it lives in a world where ceaselessly greenblue seas  
dazzling southern skies  
mesh with soft seductive shoreline

a world of wet iridescent life  
sandy marshes swaying with grasses  
teeming with shrimp, crawfish, silverslides

seafood gumbo  
for this fisher king -  
Proud pelican of the Louisiana skies

## BROWN PELICAN (AFTER)

Dripping oily muck from its fish pouch  
Feathers coated, body trapped in iridescent sludge  
Proud pelican blinks - blinks again

Indifferent to our tears

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, Antietam National Battlefield website

WE GET  
LETTERS



## Vendors sought for West Modesto Farmers Market

I was happy to read of the community garden projects offered by Community Church of the Brethren and elsewhere in the county in the June edition of *Connections*.

As I write this, Farmer's Market season is in full swing, and just wanted to note before the end of its twelve week run, the efforts of the students with Project Uplift, and their primary, certified organic produce spot at the West Modesto Certified Farmers Market held every Thursday afternoon at Mellis Park, 3 P.M. to 7 P.M. through August 26. I've been involved with this market the past three years, with supporting group Peer Recovery Art Project, where a real effort to bring affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, activities to the community of West Modesto.

More vendors would be a great assist to this worthy project. Mellis Park is located at 601 S. Martin Luther King Drive. For information call Carole or Barbara at 209-522-6902

**Jim Christiansen**  
Modesto

Stanislaus **CONNECTIONS**, published by the Modesto Peace/Life Center, has promoted non-violent social change since 1971. **Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the center or editorial committee.** **CONNECTIONS** encourages free speech to serve truth and build a more just, compassionate, peaceful and environmentally healthy community and world. We seek to enhance community concern, bridge interests of diverse groups. **CONNECTIONS'** editorial committee views peace as built on economic and social justice and equal access to the political process. We welcome pertinent signed articles - to 800 words - and letters with address, phone number. We edit for length, taste, error and libel. Deadline is 10th of the month. Send articles to Myrtle Osner, 1104 Wellesley, Modesto 95350, 522-4967, or email to [osnerm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:osnerm@sbcglobal.net) or Jim Costello [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).

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# Perceived Value and the Performing Arts

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

We all know that the arts are often the first to fall under the public school budget axe. We also know that they are cut because funding from the state based on average daily attendance declines when income tax revenues decline. As funding declines, school districts are forced to prioritize the lesson content of a school day, and arts are often the first to go.

I wonder if the fact that most people perceive music as a less important subject than mathematics is because of the language we use to describe the activity.

When acquaintances discover that I'm a musician the first question I get is, "What do you play?" The answer is "Mandolin and guitar." But I have been thinking about unintended degradation we all engage in when we use the word *play* to describe the skilled movements of fingers over keys or strings.

The word *play* has many meanings, and the older ones are the most telling. 1) To frolic or to sport. 2) To act frivolously, carelessly, or without thought. 3) To bring sportive or wanton action; as in "to *play* with someone's affections." Even though these usages of *play* have fallen out of fashion, they are the source of the conceptual baggage that goes along with the word as it is used to define what performing artists do.

Children *play*. Their *play* is often exploratory or preparatory in nature. They explore interpersonal feelings and situations by *playing* house. They prepare for adulthood by *playing* with toys that mimic tools, like wooden hammer and peg sets or a child-size plastic lawnmower.

The frivolous, exploratory, or preparatory nature of *play* inherently means that when you ask a musician what he or she *plays*, you are not asking what he or she *works*. You know that children *play*, and you know that when adults *play* they are not *working*. Adults at *play* mimic children, and they can only mimic children for a short time. *Work* must be done first.

*Work* is remunerative: services performed for compensation or products created for a market. *Work* is productive. *Work* is necessary; it satisfies a responsibility. We have families to support, children to raise. *Work* puts food on the table, clothes on their backs, and a roof over their heads.

*Work* is not fun. It takes discipline to stay focused and on task. The requirement of discipline makes *work* difficult sometimes. But as adults we know that the reward is often the result of the work rather than the *work* itself. Sometimes the result is immediately rewarding, like seeing a wall go up or a drain function properly. Sometimes the reward is simply the paycheck that gives you the ability to feed your family.

Some people have to do dirty or difficult jobs in order to meet their familial responsibilities, and those folks deserve as much respect as anyone for doing what they do. This is why trade and service unions make a strong and valid point when they declare that all *work* is honorable. *Work* is not necessarily its own reward.

So not only does the definition of the word *play* contribute to a diminution of the performing arts, the stark contrast

between it and the definition of *work* makes *play* seem even more frivolous. Who has a responsibility to *play*?

So when someone asks a musician what he or she *plays*, the inference is that manipulating the strings or keys of a musical instrument is not *work* because *work* and *play* are mutually exclusive activities. Recall the couplet, *All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy/All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy*. The logic of the statement, which we all assume is both true and accurate, means that you cannot simultaneously *work* and *play*.



Perception aside, being good at anything takes work. We often remark on the talent of a skilled musician, but more often than not that musician has put in years of practice to be able to *play* as effortlessly as he or she does. Practice is not fun, it is *work*: effort put forth to reap a future reward. Scales, music theory, exercises designed to build manual dexterity, and ear training, are the kinds of things that musicians work

at in order to perform Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" with seeming effortlessness. Talent is the label we attach to the result of a great deal of *work*.

Sometimes a musician achieves a level of skill or notoriety that enables him or her to earn a living and support a family. The fickle nature of popular culture and the vapidness of some popular music allow us to denigrate the efforts of some of these musicians, but the fact remains that they are meeting responsibilities and obligations with the incomes they earn. And in that sense pop musicians do *work*.

Then there are the thousands of orchestra members and studio musicians whose efforts, skill and time are rewarded in a much less extravagant fashion than popular musicians. Being the third violin in the Modesto Symphony Orchestra, the Stockton Symphony Orchestra, and the San Francisco Opera Company is a tough way to make a living. Three simultaneous programs a year and a lot of driving make this job a lot of *work*.

In the end, I wonder if we had more specific language to describe the act of making music whether it would be valued more highly in our society. But then if we had already developed that language it might merely be an indication of the esteem our society has for music. So here's our task: find a way to honor musicians and other performing artists the way we honor labor. Maybe that will help keep the arts in our schools.



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# A Simple Way to End This Recession ... Forever

By WILLIAM RIVERS PITT, *truthout* Op-Ed

I found myself walking all over downtown Boston on Thursday to take care of some personal business. It was a beautiful day to walk the city. The sun was shining, everything was in full bloom, the air was warm with a cooling breeze, thousands of people were out and about, and the city was filled with unbelievably powerful and dangerous weapons of war.

Wait, what?

You heard me. I first got hip to what was going on a couple of days earlier. There were full-dress Marines all over the place, which at first made me think there was some kind of Fleet Week thing going on. On Tuesday, I was walking down Massachusetts Avenue to run an errand when the sky was suddenly filled with roaring thunder. I looked up, and what goes bellowing by at rooftop-level overhead but three gigantic gray Osprey helicopters flying in formation toward the center of the city. The pigeons at the corner of Huntington Avenue fell into paroxysms of terror and went wheeling into the air away from the noise, while people on the sidewalks stopped and pointed and stared.

I did some Google searching when I got home and found out that it is Marine Week here in Boston - the absence of sailors walking around should probably have given me a clue that it wasn't Fleet Week - and they shipped in the Ospreys to show them off. Walking through Boston Common on Thursday, I saw one of the Ospreys parked on the green next to an Apache attack helicopter and what looked like a big, fat-bodied, MH-53 Pave Low SAR helicopter. On Thursday, after I walked out of City Hall, I looked down the Fanueil steps to see a big troop transport truck parked next to a massive Howitzer right in front of the old meeting hall. I didn't get around to any other parts of the city, but smart money says there were other war weapons on display elsewhere as well.

The Boston Globe reported it this way:

The war bird flew in low, following easy-to-spot landmarks. It hovered for a moment before landing in a clearing in the middle of the heavily populated city. And then the Marines stepped out.

This was no assault, but rather the kickoff of a week-long show-and-tell on Boston Common by the Marines, armed with smiles and handshakes.

The Marines deplaned from a MV-22 Osprey, a unique tilt-rotor aircraft that can take off and land as either a conventional fixed-wing aircraft or a helicopter.

OK, the selfish part first: I hate the Osprey, and have ever since they were introduced by Bell-Boeing and started killing Marines, who, by the way, call the thing "the widowmaker." Local reporters who were allowed to take a flight in the things had to sign all manner of releases before they took off, just in case one of them crashed again. An Osprey crash in Afghanistan killed four people just last month, in fact. The things don't work, and watching them skim the roofs in my neighborhood made me want to run and hide. I half expected one of them to go sideways and crash into the Hancock building. It really wouldn't have surprised me.

But the larger issue represented by the Ospreys, and by the other war weapons parked all over town, has to do with money that has been poorly spent. One Osprey costs \$70

million, and Bell-Boeing has sold some 450 of the things to the Marines, the Navy and the Air Force. If you don't have a calculator close at hand, that comes to \$31,500,000,000.00. Spelled out, that's thirty one billion five hundred million dollars of your money.

Now, let's see.

The residents of Tennessee and surrounding states had the heavens open up on them last week, causing floods of catastrophic proportions that killed dozens of people and wiped out an as-yet undetermined number of homes. Dealing with this calamity is going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, if not more.

A massive and ongoing oil disaster is threatening the entire Gulf Coast, as well as much of the Eastern seaboard and the ocean beyond if the oil gets into the Gulf's loop current. While British Petroleum is expected to shoulder the financial burden of the clean-up, the damage to fishing and tourism will again run into the hundreds of millions, if not more. For the record, the first of the oil officially made landfall in Louisiana on Thursday, and more is sure to come.

We are still fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both conflicts cost the American taxpayers millions of dollars a minute, and have cost hundreds of billions of dollars already, and that's leaving out the burdens placed on tens of thousands of families whose son or daughter or father or mother or brother or sister was killed or maimed since the invasions were undertaken a decade ago.

Wall Street bandits have raped the futures of millions of people, annihilated their savings and retirement and cost them their homes. Millions more remain unemployed, and require hundreds of millions in unemployment and other hardship benefits, if not more. The Bush administration TARP bailout alone cost \$89 billion, and that's before we get into the cost of President Obama's "American Recovery and Investment Act." Thanks to the evil dealings of the aforementioned bandits, and their facilitators in Washington, DC, it's difficult to argue against the necessity of those expenditures ... but, damn.

The Federal government, as well as all 50 states, have been undertaking a series of extreme austerity measures in order to make up for the financial shortfall the nation has been experiencing during this supply-side, trickle-down, right-wing recession. Taxes on soda drinks, taxes on everything that moves, school budgets pillaged, libraries closed and as many budgetary holes as possible filled with federal money the federal government can't afford to spend.

We are a nation in bankruptcy dealing with a series of disasters and calamities, and we are going to be deep in the hole for generations to come.

But wait, what about those Ospreys? What about the \$31 billion spent on spiffy, dysfunctional helicopters we absolutely do not need, even if they did work? What about the billions stolen by US "defense" contractors in an orgy of fraud in Iraq? What about the \$1 trillion allocated this year alone for the "national defense" budget?

Just dumping the Osprey program would have given us enough money to pay for the disasters in Tennessee and the

Gulf, with a whole lot left over to help those affected by the recession and the Wall Street thievery. Shaving the tiniest percent off the 2010 "defense" budget would feed, clothe and educate every person born of woman in the United States, and we'd still have the most awesomely formidable military arsenal in the history of the galaxy.

But we don't talk about that stuff. We close libraries, cut education budgets, tax everything, and borrow from our children's future instead of tapping into the awesome reservoir of taxpayer cash shoveled into the Pentagon each and every year.

And, oh yeah, we get weaponry scattered across my city that taxpayers can oooh and aaaah at as a booby prize for the trillions they've had stolen from them to pay for a bunch of crap that looks good flying overhead, but doesn't do anything to keep them safe.

Psssst, Mr. Obama: tap the defense budget. We can be out of this recession in the morning.

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<http://www.truthout.org/a-simple-way-end-this-recession-forever59282>

## New record for Modesto Sound

By KAREN REED

Twenty teens showed up at Modesto Sound this week eager to start learning about recording and live sound. In the past years, the studio has had less than ten interns at a time. But 2010 marks the explosion of 20 interns selected, and many more who applied.

"I believe Modesto Sound has a big future ahead of us. As one of the recording engineers, I see this studio expanding at a rapid speed. We're getting more known and popular within the teen crowd," Said Luciano Garnica, Modesto Sound's recording engineer.

The studio has set up booths at events geared toward youth, and hosts events which help local teens become aware of the internship opportunity at Modesto Sound. In April, Modesto Sound was represented at Modesto Junior College's 2nd Annual Performance and Media Arts Fair. In May, they hosted their 2nd Annual Fundraiser concert, held at Gregori High in Modesto.

The internship typically runs for about three months every summer starting in June and ending in August. Interns show up twice a week and are taught skills that are necessary in the music business. Along with learning in the studio, interns venture outside of the studio giving them the opportunity to expand their horizons. They visit places such as the Gallo Center for the Arts, the Fat Cat, Clear Channel radio and Citadel radio stations in Modesto; the Stockton Arena and the Bob Hope Theatre in Stockton; and other local recording studios such as Wave Parade Recording in Ceres.

To find out more, visit [modestosound.com](http://modestosound.com)