

## Interfaith 9/11 Remembrance precedes "10 Days of Peace" Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference

By PASTOR RUSS MATTESON

An Interfaith 9-11 Remembrance will precede the start of the "10 Days of Peace" at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 11 at Mancini Bowl in Graceada Park in Modesto.

This will be an opportunity to gather as an interfaith community to:

- reflect on the loss of lives to the violence in our world over the last 10 years;
- to pray for and commit ourselves to a more peaceful future;
- and to remember our common humanity and connectedness as people of faith.

Leadership will include members of the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith communities of Stanislaus County (others faith traditions are being invited to participate). The service will end as evening falls, with candle lighting as a sign of hope that we will find a way to move forward peacefully.

The service will open with a welcome,

invocation prayers, and then move into three sections. The first will focus on our connectedness as people of faith. The second will be a time of readings about the way of peace from the different religious traditions. The final section will involve mourning the losses to violence over the past 10 years and will include a spoken call to remember something specific, the ringing of a prayer bell, and a time of silence. There will be about 10 brief spoken statements.

After, we will light candles as a sign of hope, participate in the Jewish prayer known as the Kaddish, and conclude with a song. The service will last about 45 minutes, and the Muslim participants will need to do their sunset prayers soon after the conclusion of the service. Our hope is that many will remain while they pray, and then there will be time for visiting with each other.

By MIKE CHIAVETTA

"I learned how much I can do for my community, and now I will."

"A lot of people were able to get together for something that we feel passionate about, and it nice to meet others with the same interests."

"I met some people and heard a lot of interesting opinions that made me think."

"Everyone is so passionate about what they do, it's inspiring!"

These are just a few of the comments by the 90 enthusiastic and dedicated high school students who attended last year's 2nd Annual Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference. The theme of the conference was "students can be the change that they want to see in the world." They laughed, learned and committed to making the world a better place.

The 3rd Annual Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference will be held at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. on Saturday, September, 24th from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Open to all area high school students, we hope to reach 100 participants this year.

Our keynote speaker will be retired Judge Frank Damrell who will focus on this year's conference theme, Civil Rights, one of the core principals of the Modesto Peace/Life Center, the event's organizer.

Food will be provided by the always-wonderful Deborah Roberts and her crack kitchen crew. There will be music and entertainment during the day. In the afternoon, there will be three workshops for all attendees. Jana Chiavetta will conduct a workshop that will focus on non-violent communication. Bill Dotinga and Tricia Spenker will lead an interactive discussion on the hot topic of the day: Bullying. The final workshop will be the always-popular panel presentation by area organizations seeking student volunteers and encouraging community activism.

One of the "wishes" of numerous past participants and conference organizers is that more students from different high

schools would attend. This is where all PLC/Connections readers can help! Get the word out, pass it along. This conference is for the "progressive" young person who would like to associate with like-minded individuals. This conference is Free and Open to any and all high school students in the Modesto and Stanislaus County area. If you have attended the conference, tell a friend. If you have not attended but are interested, then take

Youth Conference . . . . . cont. p. 2

### INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL . . . . .	2
CONNECTIONS AUCTION . . . . .	3
LIVING LIGHTLY . . . . .	4
RIVERS OF BIRDS. . . . .	5

10 DAYS OF PEACE . . . . .	6-7
MYSTIC ARTS OF TIBET . . . . .	8
GATHERING OF VOICES . . . . .	9
RECLAIM THE DREAM . . . . .	10
BANJO-UKULELE . . . . .	11

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# Local, secular, LifeRing groups help those who struggle with chemical dependency

By TROY SPEARS

Chemical dependency continues to be a serious problem in the United States, but until very recently, the only recourse has been talk therapy and 12-Step groups. New discoveries in genetic biochemistry are making medications possible that can reduce craving and even address the underlying unease that contributes to the desire to “numb out” or “amp up.”

There has also been an increase in secular support groups for people who have difficulties with the 12-Step pressure to confess a “Higher Power” in order to be freed from chemical dependence. LifeRing is one of these secular support networks and has been in active in the Modesto area since January of this year. LifeRing advocates abstinence from all mood-altering drugs and treats sobriety as a skill that participants can develop. Its groups offer a place to share practical experience and to form friendships to buttress the new lifestyle.

But is there a need for another choice?

• Recent developments in many AA meetings forbid members from discussing drug use; some NA meetings have

responded in kind by discouraging discussion of alcohol. LifeRing is open to users of alcohol and other mood-altering drugs without distinction.

• Another unsettling development in 12-Step groups has been the encouragement to quit psychiatric medications - sometimes with disastrous consequences. LifeRing is science-friendly and does not discourage prescribed medications.

• Toronto AA recently garnered world attention when it expelled two agnostic AA groups; many other 12-Step groups approve Toronto's action. LifeRing welcomes believers and nonbelievers because the issue isn't addressed in its meetings. The focus is kept on human solutions and human relationships.



**ACTION:** LifeRing meets in Modesto, near Modesto Junior College, on Tuesday and Friday at 6:30pm in the Jana Lynn Community Room at 500 N 9th St. There is also a women's meeting in Modesto

on Wednesday at 6:30pm. LifeRing in Turlock meets near Stanislaus State on Monday at 7:00pm in the Raley's Event Center, 2900 Geer Rd. A Manteca meeting is held on Sunday, 10:00am, in the Sierra Building at the Kaiser CDRP Center at 1789 W Yosemite Ave.

For information, visit [www.ModestoLifeRing.Org](http://www.ModestoLifeRing.Org), or leave a message at 209-526-4854. You can also find online support and information at LifeRing's world website - [www.LifeRing.Org](http://www.LifeRing.Org). Email Modesto LifeRing at [modestolifering@gmail.com](mailto:modestolifering@gmail.com)

## CBS Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Live World/ Jazz/Classical/Acoustic Music

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Sunday Afternoons at CBS has a world of high energy live Jazz, World, Classical, Acoustic music to share with the Modesto Area during the series' 20th Anniversary season.

The 2011-12 community based six-concert series begins on September 18 with The Bills, Canada's foremost roots band [www.thebills.ca](http://www.thebills.ca). The season continues with the James Robinson Group - Jazz, Latin, Classical, World) [www.james-robinson.com/](http://www.james-robinson.com/) on October 23; Doreen Ketchens, the Queen of New Orleans Jazz, [www.doreensjazz.com](http://www.doreensjazz.com) on November 13; Eli Lester and the Modesto Blues and Jazz Gathering on January 15; Grace Lieberman and Friends, A Musical Valentine to the Community on February 12; and Jayme Stone's "Room of Wonders, Juno Award winning banjo master on March 11, <http://jaymestone.com>

All six community-based (non-religious) Sunday concerts are held at 3 p.m. at Congregation Beth Shalom, 1705 Sherwood Ave. Season tickets (\$60 adults, \$50 seniors/students and \$5 for children when purchased with adult tickets) and single tickets (\$20 adults, \$15 seniors and students, \$7) are available by calling 571-6060 or at the door. Group tickets can be arranged in advance. More information? Visit [www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts](http://www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts) or on Facebook (check us out and become a friend).

## The 2012 Peace Essay Contest is now open

The flyer for Divisions 1 & 2 (Grades 9-10 and 11-12) is at [http://www.peacelifecenter.org/docs/PeaceEssay2011\\_Div1\\_2.pdf](http://www.peacelifecenter.org/docs/PeaceEssay2011_Div1_2.pdf)

The flyer for Divisions 3 & 4 (Grades 5-6 and 7-8) is at [http://www.peacelifecenter.org/docs/PeaceEssay2011\\_Div3\\_4.pdf](http://www.peacelifecenter.org/docs/PeaceEssay2011_Div3_4.pdf)

## Youth conference

from page 1

a chance! Register early, space is limited. The deadline to register is Monday, September 19th!

To register, email your name, email address, high school, phone number, and your T-shirt size [Adult Male] to Michael Chiavetta at [mike.chiavetta@gmail.com](mailto:mike.chiavetta@gmail.com) or [chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us](mailto:chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us), or mail your information to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134 Modesto CA. 95353-0134.

Finally, the Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference is an expensive undertaking for the Modesto Peace/Life Center. We have limited funds, yet we see this endeavor as an important outreach to area youth. In our ongoing attempt to reach and motivate today's youth in the core principals of the Center, we ask for your monetary donation. The past conferences have cost about \$1000 each, much of it paid by the Center and by donations and sponsorships. If you or your organization would like to help finance this vital youth activity, please send your tax deductible donation to the Modesto Peace/Life Center. (Attention: Youth Conference) at the address above.

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## News from John McCutcheon

By KEN SCHROEDER

We get an extra chance to see John McCutcheon this fall, as he appears in Livermore on October 9, performing a one-man show, "Joe Hill's Last Will." This folk musical tells the story of labor activist/singer-songwriter, Joe Hill, who inspired workers throughout the U.S. and Canada to strike and unionize through the power of his music. A Swedish-American immigrant, Joe Hill was a champion of immigrant and labor rights, and his words lived long after his unjust imprisonment and eventual execution in 1915. The performance is Sunday, October 9, 4pm at Asbury Methodist Church, 4743 East Ave. Tickets \$15-20 at [www.asburylivepresents.com](http://www.asburylivepresents.com) and 925-447-1950 ext. 4.

From John's latest newsletter: "I spent most of July trying to raise my debt ceiling and watching Dysfunction on Parade in our nation's capital. I don't think there are 535 more mathematically challenged individuals on the planet. And the amazing thing is that, based on years of history, we'll vote most of them right back in next year. It's becoming more and more apparent that it's a lot more difficult to govern when many of those who are charged with that duty are there based entirely on what they are against, rather than what they are for. Tea, anyone?

...So let me get this straight: a confluence of corruption and greed in the financial marketplace tanks the entire economy, we bail out the crooks responsible, they end up getting huge bonuses again a year or two later, the housing market collapses, unemployment soars, and we blame...teachers?

Stay cool, stay calm, and stay connected. And remember, be it weather or politics, this too shall pass."

SAVE THE DATE: Set aside Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2012 for John's 11th Annual Modesto Peace/Life Benefit Concert at the Modesto Church of the Brethren. Check out the mp3, "Too Big to Fail" at John's website, [www.folkmusic.com](http://www.folkmusic.com)



# Kaiser Permanente, Modesto Peace/Life Center team up for Annual River Cleanup

By KARLHA DAVIES

Each Summer, our little urban river is visited by families, fishermen and members of the community who come to enjoy the serene beauty of the Tuolumne...to swim in her water or enjoy a BBQ along the Tuolumne River Regional Park. Unfortunately, some visitors forget to take their trash with them. On Saturday September 17th at Legion Park from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the Tuolumne River Trust, Kaiser Permanente, the Modesto Peace/Life Center and hundreds of volunteers will "team up" to help pick up trash along the rivers bank and also float the river by canoe to pull out tires, shopping carts and other debris from our waterway.

"This year marks the Tuolumne River Trust's 30 years of river protection, and we hope to that an unprecedented number of volunteers join us to not only for the cleanup but for an morning of enjoying our local river and park," said Karlha Davies, Community Engagement Manager for the Tuolumne River Trust. "With only two staff members in the Central Valley office, we rely on volunteers who love their river and the support of local businesses such as Kaiser Permanente and local non-profits like the Modesto Peace/Life Center who understand that it only takes a small amount of effort to keep the Tuolumne clean and safe for us all."

This is Kaiser Permanente's first year in supporting the efforts of the Tuolumne River Trust. Their support will allow the Trust to reach out to more volunteers and promote environmental stewardship in our community. The cleanup also aligns well with the Modesto Peace/Life Center's "10 Days of Peace" community service activities.

Local businesses are encouraged to bring teams and set up booths at the event. Tuolumne River Trust will launch its canoe fleet for volunteers on a first come first serve basis to clean up river debris. Volunteers are encouraged to bring along small boats or canoe's to help with the clean up and stay to enjoy the river with fellow volunteers following the clean up. There will be plenty of work to do on the nearly two miles of shoreline as well. So, roll up your sleeves, bring your gloves and a picnic for your team of volunteers or yourself and have lunch in the park.



**TEAMING UP FOR THE TUOLUMNE**  
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To volunteer, log on to [www.tuolumne.org](http://www.tuolumne.org). For additional information, booth inquiries or raffle donations, contact Karlha Davies, at 209.236.0330, via email at [karlha@tuolumne.org](mailto:karlha@tuolumne.org). For more information on the Modesto Peace/Life Center's "10 Days of Peace," visit [www.stanislausconnection.org](http://www.stanislausconnection.org)

## About Tuolumne River Trust

The Tuolumne Trust is the voice for the River. We seek a healthy and vibrant river that is teeming with fish and wildlife and safe for drinking, fishing and swimming and will be held in trust as a refuge for our children and grandchildren.

# Don't miss the Connections Potluck Auction, Sept. 9!

By DAN ONORATO

The 20th Annual Stanislaus Connections Potluck Auction, on Friday, September 9, awaits you beginning at 5:00 p.m. or so at 629 Ila Way, Modesto. There is a \$25.00 donation at the door (or whatever you can afford).

Trumpets announce your arrival, drums roll in expectant greeting, late summer breezes draw heat away from the earth to welcome you. You enter the enchanting environment of John Frailing and Maria Arevalo's home. You feast on culinary delights prepared with love by all who attend. You enjoy the camaraderie and lively conversation of like-minded seekers of a better world. You enjoy the antics and down-home good fun of our renowned duo of auctioneers, John Frailing and David Rockwell.

Hucksters for a good cause, with each new treasure John and David entice, cajole, wheedle, and charm. Bid for that relaxing weekend retreat in Twain Harte; that dinner for four prepared by legendary wizard of taste and presentazione, Dona Alicia; those Yoga lessons to limber body and soul. How about an original Roman Loranc photograph, or a day sailing on San Francisco Bay?

You leave happy, enriched. You go home with your "treasure," but far more importantly you have shared an enjoyable evening under the stars with good people. And you have helped support your local peace, justice, and environmental newspaper.

Start planning your potluck specialty, and join us!



**ACTION:** We need auctions items or services. To donate, contact Dan Onorato, 526-5436, [onoratod@sbcglobal.net](mailto:onoratod@sbcglobal.net), or Jim Costello, 537-7818, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).



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# Plight of the Honeybee

By JENIFER WEST

Our garden is growing riotously, at the moment. The tomatoes, which we admittedly planted too thickly, have begun to produce abundantly. The peppers are peppering, the marigolds are keeping the pests away, there are baby watermelons and tomatillo plants covered with blossoms, and the squash have spilled out of the confines of their assigned raised beds, enthusiastically taking over every square inch of bare ground. Dotted with large, orange flowers, our squash patch is a magnet for bees. Even the occasional bumblebee, which sounds remarkably like a 747, is attracted to our buttercup squash and pumpkin vines.

I have to say that the sight of those ladies determinedly going about their apian business cheers me. Having read that bees are disappearing at an alarming rate, I find it comforting to know that we're providing gainful employment for them. Though as a child I feared them (a sting would send me to the doctor's office, after which I'd be stuck on the couch for days, the offended body part elevated and swathed in ice packs), I now understand their critical role in the production of the food we put on our tables.

So seeing them buzzing around our garden fills me with hope, and a deep appreciation for these creatures who work so hard and die young (the average worker bee lives only a few weeks). I was surprised to learn that there are 20,000 known species of bees, only a few of which produce honey. The European honeybee is responsible for most of the pollination and honey production on this continent, although there are others that make honey, as well.

Unfortunately, populations of honeybees are declining. One factor, which may have multiple causes, is Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which occurs when 30 – 70% of the population of a hive dies off. Some of the possible causes include viruses and parasites. Chemicals routinely used in commercial agriculture definitely play a role. Another factor in the decline of honeybee populations appears to be due to increased human population: more buildings and asphalt mean fewer plants, and therefore fewer flowers. This, in this writer's opinion, is yet another good reason to grow a garden in the backyard. In providing food for our families, we can also help provide food for honeybees.

To help honeybees, we must understand a bit about them. As a language enthusiast (my formal training was as an interpreter for the deaf), I'm fascinated by the dance-language they employ. Bees use a combination of dance and scent to communicate where to find food. Perhaps not surprisingly, when scientists experimented by blocking the scent of the flowers, bees were able to locate the general area, but were unable to find the food.

There can be up to 100,000 bees in a colony, and they can travel several miles to find food. They will visit from 150 – 1,500 flowers to gather enough nectar to fill their "honey stomachs" (a pouch where the nectar is held) and gathering pollen in the process, before returning to the hive. Dandelion, clover and alfalfa are major sources of both pollen and nectar for bees, as are borage, goldenrod, lemon balm, lavender and mint. Bees use nectar for energy and pollen for food, and most of the pollen gathered is used as food for larvae. Bees



collect 66 pounds of pollen per year, per hive. Honeybees account for 80% of all insect pollination, and without them, there would be a whole lot less food available to humans.

In winter, bees stop flying when the temperature hits 50 degrees, and will form a cluster to keep warm. To generate heat, they shiver. This brings the temperature in the center of the cluster up to just over 80 degrees. And they rotate positions, so that no bee becomes too cold. Bees will consume 30 – 100 pounds of stored honey during the winter, and a total of between 120 and 200 pounds of honey per year.

Bees "swarm" (a group containing a queen, workers and drones leaves the hive en masse) in order to create a new hive, which provides a way for the colony to reproduce itself. Contrary to popular belief, bees in swarms are generally not dangerous, as they do not have stores of honey to protect.

Despite nuisance laws, there is a trend toward backyard beekeeping. Given the right circumstances (a fence at least 6 feet tall, a pond or other water source, a new hive ready and available for times when swarming is likely to occur, and good general management practices), bees can be kept in urban settings with virtually no danger to one's neighbors.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the healthiest bees are those found in the wild, as well as those kept by backyard enthusiasts. They don't experience the stress of being moved, and are less likely to encounter the agricultural chemicals that commercially-managed bees do.

Fortunately, even those of us who are unable or not interested in keeping bees in the backyard can help. Growing an organic vegetable garden is one way. Planting lots of flowers, particularly those that produce nectar (honeysuckle, among many others) and an abundance of pollen, will also help our apian friends.

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# Rivers of Birds, Forests of Tules: Central Valley Nature & Culture in Season

By Lillian Vallee

## 75. Wellspring

For many teachers, summer is an opportunity to enter another time, removed from the slightly frenetic schedule of the academic year. If one is a teacher whose trade is language, summer is an opportunity to graze in books, to refresh language or to escape from it, and to wrestle with the articulation of one's own life in relation to the world and to course goals for the fall. This kind of cultivation and incubation is critical because whether we admit it or not, WHO we are in the classroom is often more important than WHAT we teach. The culture of inquiry and integrity we create has long-lived repercussions. I have been reminded of this repeatedly in 2011—a year in which various groups are celebrating what would have been Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz's one hundredth birthday. Before Milosz received the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetry in 1980, he was a professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley, and that is where my contact with him began in 1971. He was my professor and mentor, and I have been thinking a lot about what I learned from him because now I am his age and my students the age I was then. What did he teach me that had lasting value?

I have been thinking a lot about this because the educational world, just like the financial world, is being rocked by scandals, dishonesty, ideological wrangling, and widespread cheating on standardized tests by students and teachers in response to various pressures to quantify learning outcomes. Some of these trends hold teachers responsible for what students do not learn and absolve young people of agency in the development of their own resources.

As a Polish poet, Milosz assumed he would be doomed to obscurity ("Wrong Honorable Professor Milosz/Who wrote poems in some unheard-of tongue"), but as a professor, he believed he could pass on the most important things he had learned in a rich and tumultuous life: "Now I am not ashamed of my defeat./One murky island with its barking seals/Or a parched desert is enough/To make us say: yes, oui, si." He was not a very systematic teacher but effective in modeling an active intellectual life and engagement with the issues of his day. He was disarmingly honest about his own failings and self-deceptions: "The history of my stupidity would fill many volumes," he writes in a poem in which he settles accounts with himself.

His generosity and compassion allowed him to be openly moved by a line of poetry (I can still hear his voice catching and see him struggling for composure) and would not allow him to divorce himself from the world, even if this meant lowering an occasional standard. Once when he and Robert Hass were translating a kind of rant about Sarajevo, Milosz said, "I know this isn't a very good poem, but I would rather be a little ashamed than to be silent." He had the patience and tolerance to deal with bright young people whose arrogance often matched their ignorance, and he recognized and delighted in intelligence and goodness, no matter how embryonic.



Source: Polish Book Club of Seattle

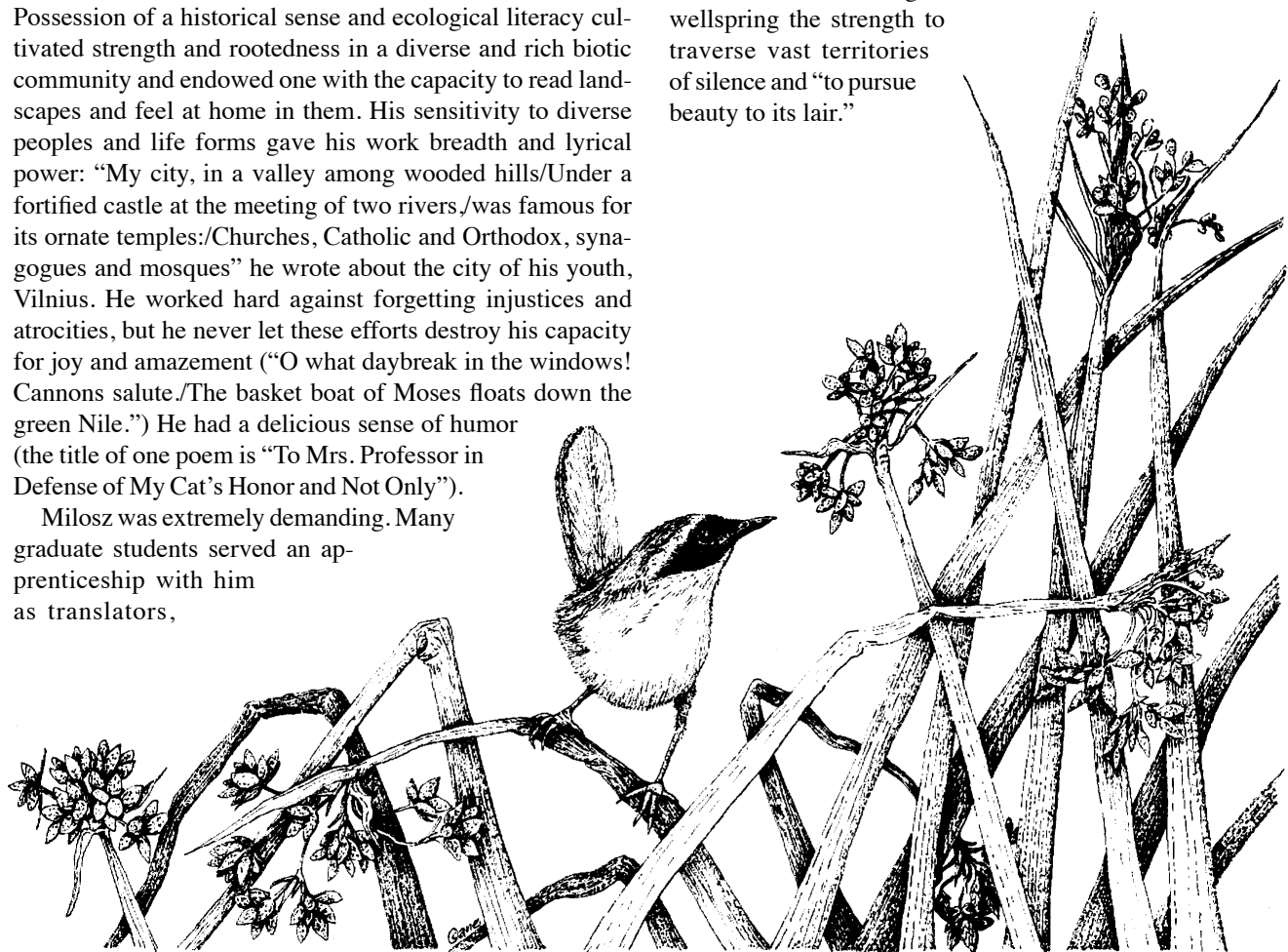
Even though Milosz wrote in Polish, at the core of his work was ethnic Lithuania, and I learned from my poet-teacher about the primacy of attachment to place, what some have called "geopiety," that is, a profound and abiding respect and reverence for life, old knowledge, kinship with other living things. Informed regional loyalty could be a powerful antidote to blind (and usually destructive) nationalist fevers. Possession of a historical sense and ecological literacy cultivated strength and rootedness in a diverse and rich biotic community and endowed one with the capacity to read landscapes and feel at home in them. His sensitivity to diverse peoples and life forms gave his work breadth and lyrical power: "My city, in a valley among wooded hills/Under a fortified castle at the meeting of two rivers./was famous for its ornate temples:/Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, synagogues and mosques" he wrote about the city of his youth, Vilnius. He worked hard against forgetting injustices and atrocities, but he never let these efforts destroy his capacity for joy and amazement ("O what daybreak in the windows! Cannons salute./The basket boat of Moses floats down the green Nile.") He had a delicious sense of humor (the title of one poem is "To Mrs. Professor in Defense of My Cat's Honor and Not Only").

Milosz was extremely demanding. Many graduate students served an apprenticeship with him as translators,

and I remember how hard it was to match his work habits and to attain his standard of accuracy in articulation. He was not pedant but he did not coddle students either. I remember his saying that school was an artificial and easy environment; the world was a much tougher place and he was blunt in criticizing shoddy work, laziness, self-defeat.

Do not fear failure, he would say, because poetry is the art of failure. Reality, its complexity, eludes language. Nonetheless, one pursued reality and one's vocation with a daily doggedness. "The quality of a writer," he wrote, "is measured by his resilience, his bounce on the trampoline." From him I learned that poets make good teachers because they see the world in all of its richness; they have a way of obliterating the rigidity of separate disciplines, of making whole very disparate pieces of experience; poet-teachers encourage "laborious truth," and affirmation in the face of despair; they work hard to get the world right: "I said so little./Days were short./Short days./Short nights./Short years./I said so little./I couldn't keep up./My heart grew weary./From joy./Despair./Ardor./Hope./The jaws of Leviathan/Were closing upon me...."

Friends have called Milosz a "jack of all knowledges," a polymath, "an old growth forest." I am grateful that I was given an outsized model of how to be, how to write, how to love the world so that forty years later I am still drawing from this wellspring the strength to traverse vast territories of silence and "to pursue beauty to its lair."



# 10 DAYS OF PEACE

On the 10th anniversary of 9-11, The Modesto Peace/Life Center and other community organizations have initiated the "10 Days of Peace" to promote peaceful ways to relate to each other and to foster actions for world peace, leading up to the International Day of Peace on September 21.

The "10 Days of Peace" beginning on September 11 precedes the International Day of Peace on September 21 with public events described in this section of **Connections**. The Center has designated a theme for each of the other days that involves actions we all can take to promote peace, equality, openness and acceptance of all. We invite the entire Modesto Area community to attend the public events and become engaged in the suggested daily actions.

## Sunday, 9/11

Interfaith 9-11 Remembrance Service (see article page 1). 6:30 p.m., Mancini Bowl, Graceada Park, Needham Avenue, Modesto

## Monday, 9/12

"Get Your Peace on Day." Wear peace related clothing, and be prepared to explain what the image or message on your clothing implies. "10 Days for Peace" T-shirts can be purchased at the public events. The main purpose is to set the tone for the next 10 days.

## Tuesday, 9/13

"Introspection and Poetry Day". This is day in which you can do something personally that makes you a more peaceful person. It could be meditation, prayer, or peaceful activity, or read a book or article. You decide!

"A Gathering of Voices" poets will read peace poetry as part of the Second Tuesday Poetry Reading at the Barkin' Dog, 940 11th St., Modesto, beginning at 6 p.m. Come early for a great dinner.

## Wednesday, 9/14

Civic Engagement Lecture Series: **"Muslims and their Faith: Beyond the Misconceptions."** Attend the free public talk by Ameena Jandali, founding member of the Islam Networks Group of San Jose at 7 p.m. in the Modesto Junior College East Campus Forum Building Room 110. Jointly sponsored by the MJC Civic Engagement Film and Lecture Series and the Modesto Peace/Life Center. A discussion will follow.

Since 1993 Ameena has talked at major universities, hundreds of schools, churches, and other venues on Islam and related subjects. She's also delivered cultural competency trainings to healthcare providers and conducted trainings for police departments in the San Francisco Bay Area, appeared on numerous TV and radio programs and presented at interfaith panels and events, including conferences at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union. She teaches a class on Islam at San Francisco City College. She received her M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and her B.A. in History from the University of Illinois.

## Thursday, 9/15

"Communication Day." Write a letter to your Congressman, to the editor of your local paper or to a long lost friend; make amends with someone with whom you have been in contact.

The goal is to send peace messages and practice communicating in a peaceful way.

## Friday, 9/16

"Fast for Peace Day." Give up a meal for world peace and then donate the proceeds to a worthy organization. (Suggestion: Consider helping to defray the costs of "10 Day of Peace" activities with a contribution to the Modesto Peace/Life Center to help further the organization's peace/justice/sustainable environment work in our area and in the world.

## Saturday, 9/17

Teaming Up for the Tuolumne: A river and park clean-up. 9 AM- 12 PM at Legion Park. Coordinator: Tuolumne River Trust. More information can be found on page 2.

Pride Day at Graceada Park, Modesto 8:00 AM- 5 PM

## Sunday, 9/18

"Family Gathering/Make a Plan Day." Plan a family dinner or get-together at which your family can focus on developing a plan of action for the coming year to promote a more peaceful, respectful world.

## Monday, 9/19

"Random Acts of Kindness Day." "Pay it forward" today and into the future. Go out of your way to spread peace and kindness. Open a door for someone, volunteer, do a chore for your neighbor, think before reacting, let the other guy be "right." "Put a smile on your face and show the world all the love in your heart!" - Carol King.

## Tuesday, 9/20

"Green Peace Day." Start today to take on one new thing each day or week or month to be green. First Reduce...then Reuse...then Recycle. Big or small, do something to change the planet. Ride your bike to work or school, recycle, take a walk, eat lower on the food chain (vegan or vegetarian), wear organic. These are only a few examples.

Peace on earth begins with you and me. The suggestions above are just the beginning; it takes small steps to start a great journey. Commit and recharge during the "10 Days for Peace"!

## SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE PICNIC & SONG CIRCLE beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Graceada Park** (see article next page).

**"Don't ask what Peace can do for you, ask what you can do for Peace."**



Look for  
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## COMMUNITY PEACE BUILDING PROJECT: 10 Days of Peace

The Community Peace Building Project is a seven-foot high asymmetrical structure intended to focus our attention on what each of us can do to help create peace in every moment of every day. The structure, made of four large to small three-dimensional stacking squares placed in different configurations at events during the "10 Days for Peace" and throughout the year, asks us to respond to a simple question: What will you do to build peace in your home, society, or world? Event participants will be encouraged to write their response on multi-colored flags that will hang from the structure. Participation is meant to elicit action, small or large, to promote peace in some area of our lives, and invites reflection upon the creation of a public consciousness that each of us is not alone in our commitment toward making a better, more peaceful world.

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# Celebrate the International Day of Peace with a picnic, a song circle, poetry, and good friends

The concluding event of the "10 Days of Peace" is The International Day of Peace Picnic and Song Circle at Graceada Park in Modesto on Wednesday, September 21 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The International Day of Peace was established by the United Nations in 1981 and was celebrated on September 21, 1982, the day declared as the permanent day for International Day of Peace in 2002.

Come to Graceada Park to celebrate with others locally and around the world to make our world a more peaceful and just place to live. Bring a blanket and picnic dinner to the park. The Peace Center will provide an International Day for Peace cake for dessert. The "Funstrummers Ukulele Band" will perform, peace poems will be recited by local poets, and everyone will be invited to sing songs for peace.

## International Day of Peace Community Sing-a-long September 21, 2011

Music can be transformative and encourage peace and unity throughout the world. We can be singing the same songs all around the planet as part of our collective dream for peace.

If we are going to realize peaceful coexistence, one of the things we can do is think the thoughts that lead to that action. The program starts with the concept that we are all beautiful just as we are. Acceptance and understanding of others is facilitated by the idea that we all have the positive intention and natural instincts for self-preservation and living socially.

Everything is Beautiful

Somos El Barco (Spanish verse)

I'd Like To Teach The World To Sing

All humans want safety and security so they can be free to develop their potential and pursue their passions. We want to create a place where our children can play and flourish.

May There Always Be Sunshine (Russian Verse) (Signing)

This Little Light of Mine (Signing)

Many cultures have been scattered or destroyed because fear and victimization led to the villainization of a people. Yet, we are hopeful that we can rise from the rubble motivated to survive and excel.

Light One Candle

Vine and Fig Tree (Yiddish verse) (Round)

Despite our knowledge that physically destroying people wreaks so much havoc in people's lives: death of soldiers, their families pain of loss, life-long post-war suffering. There are other ways to bring people into the circles where

resolutions can be addressed, we continue to struggle.

Blowin' In The Wind

Ain't Gonna Study War

No More

Bring 'Em Home

When hearts and minds come together for a common purpose amazing things can happen.

Just My Hands

Step By Step

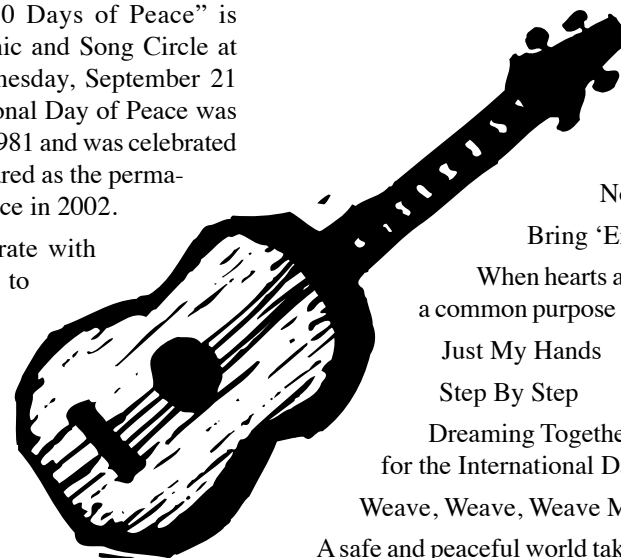
Dreaming Together (An original song written for the International Day of Peace)

Weave, Weave, Weave Me The Sunshine

A safe and peaceful world takes more than dreaming. We have glimpses of truth and peace in our own lives. It takes action, determination and commitment to keep peace and love in our families and daily lives.

We Shall Not Be Moved (Gospel)

Let There Be Peace On Earth



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# Mystical Arts of Tibet at The Gallo Center for the Arts

By JIM JOHNSON

The famed multiphonic singers of the Drepung Loseling Monastery will perform their acclaimed Sacred Music/Sacred Dance show at the Gallo Center for the Arts on Friday September 30, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mary Stuart Rodgers theatre. This extraordinary performance includes traditional Tibetan costumes, masks and instruments.

Tickets for the performance are \$10/15/25/45. This showcase of Tibetan music and dance is endorsed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a means of promoting world peace and healing through sacred performance art. A special school performance, recommended for grades 5-12, will be presented Wednesday September 28, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. Student tickets are \$5. Tickets are available at (209) 338-2100 or [www.galloarts.org](http://www.galloarts.org)

Drepung Loseling Monastery was established near Lhasa, Tibet in 1416 as a spiritual institution dedicated to preserving and transmitting the ancient Buddhist scholarly and contemplative traditions. At its zenith it was the largest monastery in the world housing more than 1,000 monks.

Following the Chinese communist invasion in 1959, Loseling was closed and most of its monks were either killed or imprisoned. Some 250 escaped to India to establish a replica of Loseling in order to continue the training program and thus insure the preservation of their ancient arts.

## Mandala Sand Painting at the Gallo

The Monks will be in residency at the Gallo Center for the Arts from September 27-October 1. They will create a Mandala Sand Painting in the lobby of the Center. This is a free event open to everyone in our community. The Sand Mandala Painting is a sacred, symbolic act of "Healing the earth." In Tibetan, this art is called "dul-tson-kyil-khor", which literally means "mandala of colored powders."

Millions of grains of sand are painstakingly laid into place on a flat platform over a period of days. Formed of a traditionally prescribed iconography that includes geometric shapes and a multitude of ancient spiritual symbols, the sand painted mandala is used as a tool for re-consecrating the earth and its inhabitants. Community members may take part in the sand painting process at a special table. Also, a special area will be available for groups wishing to meditate during the mandala's creation.

Traditionally, most Mandalas are destroyed after their completion as a metaphor of the impermanence of life. The sands are swept up and placed in an urn to fulfill the function of healing; half is distributed to the audience at the closing ceremony, while the remainder is carried to a nearby body of water, where it is deposited. The waters carry the healing blessing to the ocean and, from there it spreads throughout the world for planetary healing. During the closing ceremony, community residents may join the monks at the Gallo Center for the Arts and from there we will caravan to a local park.



# A Main Street Contract: Time to Heal America

By MARTI SMITH, RN, National Nurses United

Driving down McHenry Avenue these days nearly brings tears to my eyes. The shuttered businesses, the poor people pushing grocery carts and waiting for buses – what has happened to our town? Unfortunately, this scene is all too familiar in towns and cities across America.

In 2008, the financial markets began to collapse under the weight of what we now know to be speculative betting based on mortgage-backed securities, now fondly called "Toxic Assets." Where once banks had been careful to approve solid mortgages in order to make certain of repayment, now those mortgages were being bundled and sold in lots on Wall Street. The bank's incentive to thoroughly vet mortgages was gone – they were paid off upon sale of the mortgage. Many well-known and previously respected Wall Street firms actively marketed these "toxic asset" sales to consumers like us, while at the same time betting against them, knowing they were toxic.

The Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), signed into law by George W. Bush, saved the big Wall Street firms and the banks with \$850 billion of our taxpayer dollars, leaving the rest of us in the cold. As the economy tanked, people lost their homes and many also lost their jobs. Without revenue coming in, the government is now charged with "fixing" the budget deficit.

In February of this year, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker blamed public workers' pensions and health benefits for the state's huge budget deficit, nearly immediately after signing into law huge corporate tax breaks for Wisconsin businesses. In an enormous attack on the working class, he drastically reduced public workers' rights to collective bargaining, while at the same time, increasing their contributions to their pensions and health benefits. The people of Wisconsin rose up in a stunning organic movement. Nonetheless, similar legislation has been proposed in many other states. Nationally, our social safety net – Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security retirement and disability are threatened.

We at National Nurses United, refuse to permit Wall Street and Wall Street funded politicians continue to sacrifice the poor, the marginalized, the disabled, and the elderly to the altar of Wall Street profit. We are reframing the argument, placing the blame where it properly belongs – squarely on the shoulders of Wall Street, taking advantage of massive deregulation of the markets beginning in the 1980s.

We believe American values are best reflected in the following platform:

1. Universal access to health care, through a single-payer system (Medicare for all);
2. Access to good, affordable public education;

3. Jobs that pay a living wage and the right to collective bargaining;

4. Retirement with dignity – no cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security;

5. Decent shelter and protection from hunger; and

6. A Just Taxation System where everyone, including corporations and Wall Street, pay their fair share.

To implement our grand vision, we are working with like-minded organizations to reframe the dialogue. The first step is to eliminate the shame and shine a bright light on those responsible for our crumbling society.

Do you have a story to share? Have you or someone you know suffered due to foreclosure, job loss, program cuts, lack of access to health care? We need to hear your voice. Please email me your story at [msmith@calnurses.org](mailto:msmith@calnurses.org)

Our next step is to work towards a financial transaction tax (FTT), which would tax non-pension related financial transactions at the rate of 0.01-0.05%. We expect this tax to bring \$350 billion dollars annually in revenue. That money can be used to repair and rebuild our country.

Information: <http://www.nationalnursesunited.org/affiliates/entry/msc1>



## Hill 8-8-1

It was just some hump in the middle of Nam  
 With orders to take it in John Wayne fashion  
 Where many a G.I. went to his maker  
 While some general drank cold beer and ate croissants  
 with cream cheese and ham

It's a dull guilt that cuts through me now  
 Why was I so lucky to miss that war  
 I was warrior material at the time  
 Yet I was able to avoid it somehow

I languished in the comfort of my ignorance for years  
 Until a television program stripped away that defense  
 Showed me the senseless pain, suffering, death,  
 P.T.S.D., depression, alcoholism, addiction, suicide  
 and tears

Life is so simple, yet complex you see  
 To young soldiers on a mountain in Viet Nam  
 Spilling their blood, their guts, their brains  
 As a shield for atrophied capitalist humanity

Don't get me wrong, for I do not complain  
 I went to college, got a good job, a home and family  
 Didn't even protest that young boys gave so much  
 To protect and save me from their misery and pain

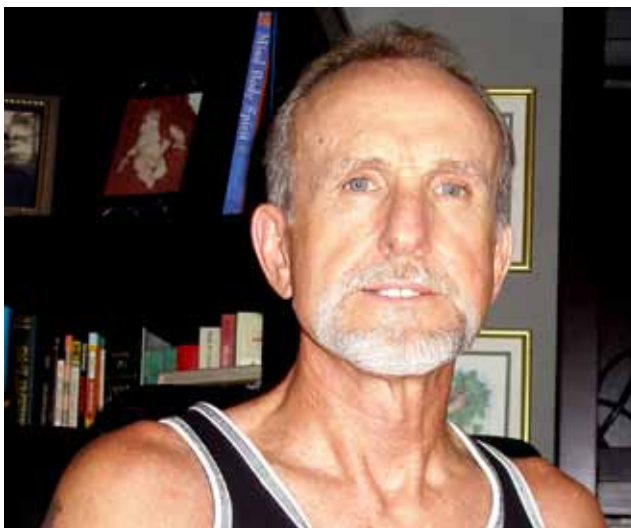
Old Glory showed its colors, unfurled its symbolic truth  
 Wrapped around so many caskets headed for home  
 While on Hill 8-8-1 an eerie silence had descended  
 Where innocence was sacrificed along with America's  
 promising youth

Face with courage the irreparable damage that was done  
 Cry no more tears, feel no more shame  
 For those young men of valor,  
 both American and Viet Cong  
 Lost,...not just killed in the senseless campaign for  
 hill 8-8-1.

## Fed Up

Americans  
 Are just about fed up  
 With endless war  
 We're weary  
 And don't want  
 To see no more  
 No more mothers crying  
 No more innocent children dying  
 No more deadly weapons firing  
 No more tortured prisoners  
 No more eternal hatred envisioners  
 No more bloated defense spending  
 No more lives brutally ending  
 No more sorrows  
 No more no tomorrows  
 No more  
 No more war!

## Mike Killingsworth



## Dark Wall

The dark wall  
 Etched with great care  
 Stood strong and warm  
 In the cold December air

When I touched it  
 Warmth oozed out into me  
 Like the freshly spilled blood  
 Of the brave and the free

How dare it be warm  
 Standing for such deep pain  
 Washed with so many tears  
 Where stark and frozen memories remain

Then it came to me clear  
 As heat escaped through tiny holes  
 That the warmth coming out  
 Was the energy of innocent souls

Warriors had struggled  
 Given all their tomorrows  
 Left spouses and families  
 To live with their sorrows

What does it mean  
 This black wall naming those who are missing and missed  
 War is such foolishness  
 With young futures the risk

How complex the reasons  
 Fears we must face  
 When defenders come home dead  
 From a hell-distant place

Pain is the grey  
 Black is the healing  
 That stands at the wall  
 With the warm feeling.



## Like Sheep We Are Led

They tell us what our values are  
 That we are supposed to fight for them  
 But, when everything is said and done  
 They get the rose  
 We get the thorny stem.

We are nothing if we are not sheep  
 Being told to know our history  
 However, do not look too deep  
 For surely you will erase the mystery  
 Of the wealth and power that they keep.

Bah bah black sheep  
 Your votes quite often do not count  
 Trickery and deceit is their political game  
 Their Supreme Court master you cannot surmount  
 So retreat to your fitful sleep.

You poor and middle classes  
 Mired in your ignorance, your petty differences  
 While they laugh at your silly asses  
 Better get it together and change things  
 Before your opportunity passes.

Big changes came  
 After the sixties  
 When rulers were scared of revolution  
 By Black Panthers, Students for a Democratic Society, the  
 Anti-war movement  
 Whose members now embrace a materialistic solution.

In New Jersey they say "Forget about it!"  
 As for me I'm gonna shout it  
 Get off of your lazy, apathetic asses  
 You poor and huddled middle classes  
 Before they forever decide your fate  
 The time it is a gettin' late.

# A Contract for the American Dream

By VAN JONES, Rebuild the Dream

*"I have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream."*

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
1963 March on Washington

Preamble: We, the American people, promise to defend and advance a simple ideal: liberty and justice ... for all. Americans who are willing to work hard and play by the rules should be able to find a decent job, get a good home in a strong community, retire with dignity and give their kids a better life. Every one of us - rich, poor or in-between, regardless of skin color or birthplace, no matter their sexual orientation or gender - has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is our covenant, our compact, our contract with one another. It is a promise we can fulfill - but only by working together.

Today, the American Dream is under threat. Our veterans are coming home to few jobs and little hope. Our young people are graduating off a cliff, burdened by heavy debt, into the worst job market in half a century. The big banks that American taxpayers bailed out won't cut homeowners a break. Our heroes; firefighters, nurses, cops and teachers - are being thrown out onto the street. We believe:

**AMERICA IS NOT BROKE.** America is rich - still the wealthiest nation ever. But too many at the top are grabbing the gains. No person or corporation should be allowed to take from America while giving little or nothing back. The super-rich should now pay full taxes - and help create jobs here, not overseas. Those who do well in America should do well by America.

**AMERICANS NEED JOBS, NOT CUTS.** Many of our best workers are sitting idle, while the work of rebuilding America goes undone. Together, we must rebuild our country, reinvest in our people and jump-start the industries of the future. Millions of jobless Americans want to become working, tax-paying members of their communities again. We have a jobs crisis, not a deficit crisis.

To produce this Contract for the American Dream, 131,203 Americans came together online and in their communities. We wrote and rated 25,904 ideas. We identified the 10 most critical steps to get our economy back on track and restore the American Dream:

**INVEST IN AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE.** Rebuild our crumbling bridges, dams, levees, ports, water and sewer lines, railways, roads and public transit. We must invest in high-speed Internet and a modern, energy-saving electric grid. These investments will create good jobs and rebuild America. To help finance these projects, we need national and state infrastructure banks.

**CREATE 21ST-CENTURY ENERGY JOBS.** We should invest in American businesses that can power our country with innovative technologies like wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal systems, hybrid and electric cars, and next-generation batteries. And we should put Americans to work making our homes and buildings energy efficient. We

can create good, green jobs in America, address the climate crisis, and build the clean energy economy.

**INVEST IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.** We should provide universal access to early childhood education, make school funding equitable, invest in high-quality teachers, and build safe, well-equipped school buildings for our students. A high-quality education system, from universal preschool to vocational training and affordable higher education, is critical for our future and can create badly needed jobs now.

**OFFER MEDICARE FOR ALL.** We should expand Medicare so it's available to all Americans, and reform it to provide even more cost-effective, quality care. The Affordable Care Act is a good start and we must implement it - but it's not enough. We can save trillions of dollars by joining every other industrialized country - paying much less for health care while getting the same or better results.

**MAKE WORK PAY.** Americans have a right to fair minimum and living wages, to organize and collectively bargain, to enjoy equal opportunity and to earn equal pay for equal work. Corporate assaults on these rights bring down wages and benefits for all of us. They must be outlawed.

**SECURE SOCIAL SECURITY.** Keep Social Security sound, and strengthen the retirement, disability, and survivors' protections Americans earn through their hard work. Pay for it by removing the cap on the Social Security tax, so that upper-income people pay into Social Security on all they make, just like the rest of us.

**RETURN TO FAIRER TAX RATES.** End, once and for all, the Bush-era tax-giveaways for the rich, which the rest of us - or our kids - must pay eventually. We must outlaw corporate tax havens and tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. Lastly, with millionaires and billionaires taking a growing share of



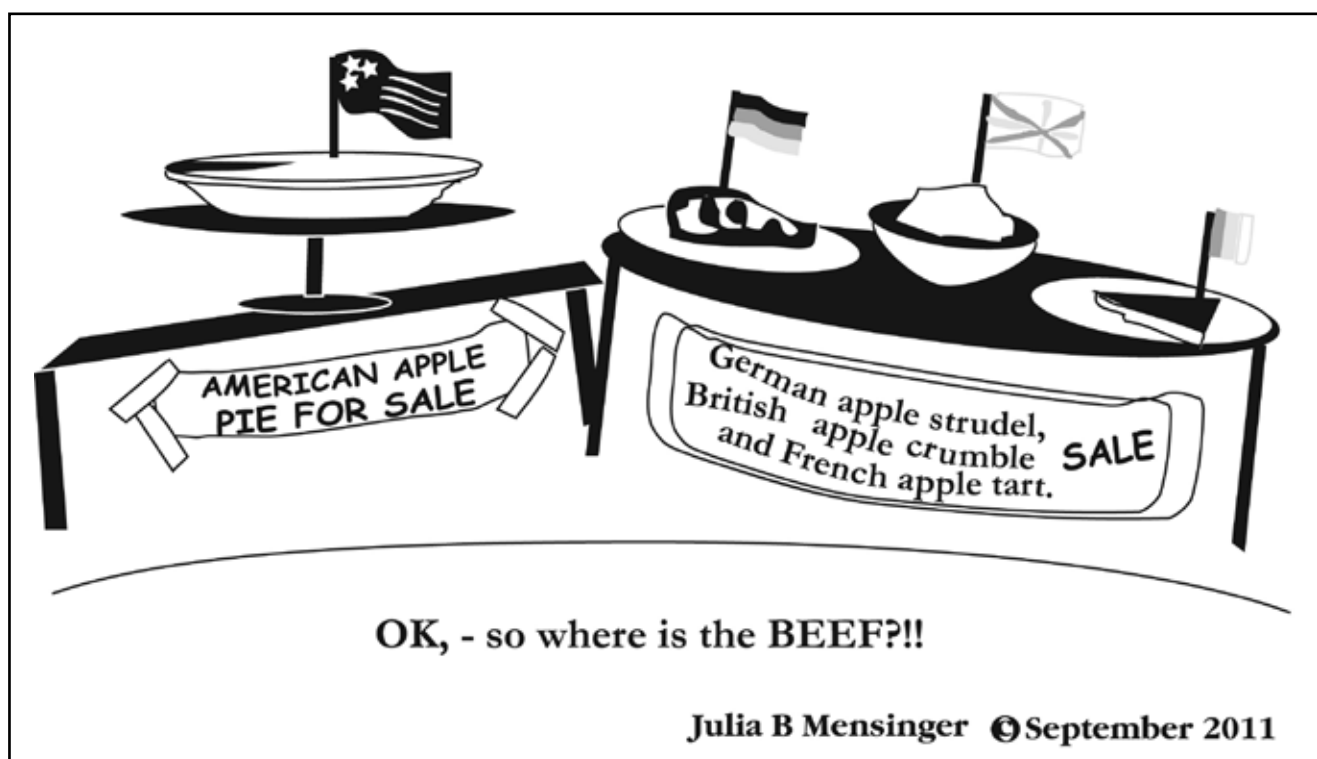
our country's wealth, we should add new tax brackets for those making more than \$1 million each year.

**END THE WARS AND INVEST AT HOME.** Our troops have done everything that's been asked of them. It's time to bring them home to good jobs here. We're sending \$3 billion each week overseas that we should be investing to rebuild America.

**TAX WALL STREET SPECULATION.** A tiny fee of 1/20th of 1% on each Wall Street trade would raise tens of billions of dollars annually with little impact on actual investment. This would reduce speculation, "flash trading," and outrageous bankers' bonuses - and we'd have a lot more money to spend on Main Street job creation.

**STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY.** We need clean, fair elections - where no one's right to vote can be taken away, and where money doesn't buy you your own member of Congress. We must ban anonymous political influence, slam shut the lobbyists' revolving door in D.C. and publicly finance elections. Immigrants who want to join in our democracy deserve a clear path to citizenship. We must stop giving corporations the rights of people when it comes to our elections. And we must ensure our judiciary's respect for the Constitution. Together, we will reclaim our democracy to get our country back on track.

To sign the contract go to: <http://contract.rebuildthedream.com/>





# Tale of a banjolele

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

"If you like a ukulele lady, a ukulele lady like-a you..."

It came packed inside two boxes, swaddled inside a bubble wrap blanket, and cushioned by Styrofoam peanuts. But it has no significant monetary value. Banjo-ukuleles, sometimes called banjoleles, have never been sought after. Even when they were being made in large mid-western musical instrument factories they were novelty items, nearly toys.

However, this particular banjo-uke belonged to my grandmother, Helen Louise Nestlerode, and it was an instrument she played her entire adult life. She played it around the campfire and in the kitchen while Jana, her youngest daughter, washed dishes. None of Helen's children took up the uke, but Jana made sure that the instrument her mother used to serenade the family remained intact.

I never heard my grandmother Helen play or sing, she was always busy with one thing or another around the house. In fact, she never gave me an inkling that she was musical. (Indeed when I took up the guitar, I thought I was the first in my family to do anything musical in at least 3 generations.) I first saw her banjo-uke laying at the bottom of a closet in my grandparent's big old house in Elmira, New York. I was 21, my grandfather had recently died, and she was hoping I might find a memento of him somewhere in that chamber of artifacts.

I was enchanted by the size and novelty of the banjo-uke, and brought it out to show her. I was surprised to learn it was hers and she wanted to keep it. I can remember thinking, "Wow. I had no idea."

Years later, after Helen died, I asked about it. But no one

seemed to know where it was or what had happened to it. The news saddened me a bit. Musical instruments are frail uncertain things. Ignorance of instruments often leads to wild over-estimation of their monetary value. But I was not worried that someone had attempted to profit from the sale of grandmother's old banjo-uke. I was worried that it had found its way to the bottom of a discard pile or been snapped but by a stranger at the estate sale.

I heard nothing about it for more than 15 years, so I just assumed it was gone.

A few summers ago I was back east for a family reunion, when my aunt Jana brought out her the old Mauna Loa banjo-ukulele. She must have had it all along. I was both relieved and surprised. Jana sought my knowledge regarding its proper upkeep and possible value (negligible).

Her boyfriend had strung the thing with steel guitar strings and securely wound those strings tight to the tuning machines. The strings weaved in and out of the tuning machine postholes making it impossible to remove them without some serious cutting. I was afraid that any tool capable of cutting the guitar strings might also damage the fragile old friction tuners. Worse, the strings, when tuned to pitch, were effectively folding the poor little thing in half. And the tension had already damaged the original animal skin head.

In the end, all I could do was take the tension off the strings and suggest that my aunt take the banjo-uke to Vintage Instruments in Philadelphia. That is the last time I saw it or heard about it until about a month ago when the old banjo-uke arrived at my front door.

The email came from out of nowhere. Did I still want Helen's banjo-uke? Absolutely. A week later the little Mauna Loa was freed from the confines of its shipping container and resting on my lap.

The first thing I noticed were the nylon strings, tied by experienced hands onto the tail-piece and wound around the tuning pegs. Second I noticed the synthetic banjo head. A pity really, but better than leaving the original damaged skin head on the instrument. Aunt Jana had followed my advice: an expert had brought the instrument back from near collapse.

Musical instruments more than other inanimate objects seem to become the repositories of our memories. Cheap guitars and toy ukuleles reflect the feelings we have about the people who played them in our lives. They remind us visually and aurally about the people who played them.

"Barney Google" may have been a throw away, silly song



for my grandmother. But the fact that she sang it to her children made a deep impression on them. It became a treasured memory. After she died the only extant connection to those memories was her old, nearly discarded and abused, banjo-ukulele. It is the instrument she used to make those memories.

Receiving this instrument is an honor bestowed upon me by my aunt. It is not an insignificant thing for most of the members of my family. Like an African Griot, I have been given the responsibility of stewarding my aunts and uncles' memories of their mother and carrying the tradition of touching lives with music.

The best way I know to honor the memory of Helen's music is to make sure that the instrument on which she made that music continues to ring. If I don't it will become an inanimate object and lose connection with the life and love it has held for more than 70 years.

A few minutes after I cracked open the boxes, I set Helen's uke up on a bookshelf and snapped a picture. Then I sent Aunt Jana an email that included the photo letting her know that her prize had arrived safe and sound 2600 miles west of where it had started. Now it is incumbent upon on me to play the thing, a happy responsibility.



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