

stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO
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CENTER
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JUNE, 2012
VOLUME XIX, NO. 10

Register NOW For Peace Camp Discount!

By KEN SCHROEDER

Peace Camp in the forested Sierra, June 22-24, now includes several new activities. Friday offers a long hike, led by John Lucas and Mike Chiavetta, for those who can leave early in the morning, spend the day hiking and arrive at camp in time for dinner. Modesto Junior College student/athlete and poetry slam veteran Jealinda Mills will share her poetry and lead a workshop, "Expressing a Personal Epiphany." Jealinda is one of the top ranked junior college jumpers in the state and recently placed 2nd in northern California in the heptathlon.

Artist/muralist Linda Knoll will lead campers in the creation of a peace mural. Linda's painting, "The Oak Path," recently won a category 1st place at the Central California Art Association's spring show. She is the author and illustrator of the book, *Over in the Valley*. Modesto teacher Jana Chiavetta will lead a workshop exploring "What is

Peace?," starting with ourselves. Jana has been a trainer with the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program.

All this is in addition to the immigration workshop with community organizer Homero Mejia and immigration attorney Solange Altman; a star walk with naturalist and teacher Tim Smart; memorable meals by Deborah Roberts and crew; songs led by musician and teacher Scott Gifford; campfires, a talent show, short hikes, recreation and young people's activities.

This 30th annual Peace Camp is at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Road off Hwy 108 past Pinecrest. The camp features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins, platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers help in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work.

Peace Camp. cont. p. 2

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Join the next Move Your Money Action on June 2!

By JOHN LUCAS, 99% Spring local Action Committee

The next Move Your Money action will be again at the McHenry Ave branch of the Bank of America, 3416 McHenry Ave. in Modesto from 11AM to 1 PM on Saturday, June 2. Signs will be provided and we will be handing out flyers explaining our actions and where and how people can move their money from the Megabanks to credit unions and community banks.

The 99% Action Committee met on May 16, 2012. It was agreed that we would keep our local Move Your Money Actions going. In the future we want to contact public institutions and private businesses to urge them to move their money to credit unions and local community banks. *We could use some people interested in working on this. We have a lot of ideas but they need people to follow through with them.*

Meeting participants also agreed to write a letter to the Modesto Bee about what the banks have been up and/or to urge people to move their money.

We need to show that there are people in our community who care and will fight back and pressure these megabanks that are "too big to fail" to change the way they operate. They will only respond when economic pressure by the people is put upon them to change. They may control the US government but they don't control us!



ACTION: If you can't make the action on June 2, write letter to the local media, or to local and national government officials. If possible come to the demonstration AND send a letter.

VOTE YES on MEASURE T
on JUNE 5TH!

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Sunday June 3, 2012

8:00 a.m. — Noon

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2. _____ City/State: _____ Zip _____
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1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____
3. _____ Age _____ 4. _____ Age _____

Total x \$60 ----- \$ _____

Infant (ages 0 - 3) _____ Age _____ **NO CHARGE**

Early registration discount by June 3: subtract \$10 per person _____ (-) \$ _____

I need vegetarian meals _____ Voluntary Donation for scholarships \$ _____

Special Health needs, allergies, etc. _____

Special needs for cabin assignment: _____

I can offer/need a ride Friday _____ Saturday _____

GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

**There is an additional \$15 fee for each person
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Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

Note: If adults bring children not their own, the parent/legal guardian of those children must complete and sign a separate parent authorization.

For camp information and scholarship availability:
Call Ken Schroeder, (209) 569-0321.

Peace Camp

from page 1

Families and individuals are welcome.

The \$80 camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Young people 18 and under are \$60, children under 3 are free. Early registration, before June 3rd, entitles registrants to a \$10.00 per person discount. Partial scholarships and day rates are available. Registration forms are available in this issue or at www.stanislausconnections.org where they can be printed and mailed.

Campers may arrive any time after 2:00 p.m. on Friday. The camp opens with supper at 6:00 p.m. and closes at noon on Sunday. Directions and other information will be mailed to participants before camp.

Information: Ken Schroeder, 209-569-0321, kschroeder70@yahoo.com

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A People's Guide to the Federal Budget

By MATTEA KRAMER

The National Priorities Project is thrilled to announce the release of our new book, *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget*. Call us idealists, but we at NPP believe that a little information goes a long way, and that a book can change history. *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget* is a friendly, down-to-earth handbook for Americans of all ages and backgrounds who want to have a voice in our democracy and ensure the U.S. federal budget reflects their priorities. The Guide is a comprehensive resource on what every American should know about how our government raises and spends our tax dollars. From history of the budget process to detail about the ongoing conflict in Washington, from charts explaining where every federal dollar goes to simple explanations of budget terminology, this book covers it all. This guide includes up-to-the-minute numbers and explanation of President Obama's 2013 budget request. Understanding the federal budget is essential. Our elected representatives make choices that impact not just us but our children and our children's children. We need to be in this debate for the long haul, if we are to build the kind of government, and the kind of nation, that truly reflects our values. National Priorities Project (NPP) is a non-profit research organization that makes our complex federal budget transparent and accessible so people can exercise their right and responsibility to oversee and influence how their tax dollars are spent. Find NPP at www.nationalpriorities.org. *A People's Guide* is available at http://www.interlinkbooks.com/product_info.php?products_id=2966

99% Spring Movement comes to Modesto

By ERIC CAINE

(This article appeared first on April 29, 2012, on the author's website: www.thevalleycitizen.com, which covers current important local issues.)

Saturday, April 28, a plucky band of Valley citizens participated in the "Love Modesto" event by protesting the injustice which enabled big bank executives to haul down millions of dollars in bonuses while their policies punished working people throughout the nation. The demonstrators assembled along the curb in front of the McHenry Avenue Bank of America, eliciting sporadic honks of support from a constant stream of passing cars.

A local offshoot of the national, "99% Spring" action group, members waved signs that read, "Too Big to Fail," and, "Move Your Money." They were hoping that big bank customers would move their money into smaller banks and credit unions to signal their disapproval of policies that brought the nation to the brink of financial failure.

Spokesman Dan Onorato, a retired Modesto Junior College English Professor, said, "In my block alone, three families have lost or are about to lose their homes. We're near ground zero for the foreclosure crisis and we're hoping that protests will encourage the big banks to change their policies."

While the Modesto demonstrators included between fifteen and twenty participants, nationwide the "99% Spring" coalition claims 100,000 members, including luminaries like Teamsters Union President James Hoffa, United Auto Workers President Bob King, and Mary Kay Henry of Service Employees International.

A statement composed by Onorato and fellow protestor John Lucas read in part:

Our "Love Modesto" action arises out of compassion, an integral part of any genuine love—compassion for all those in our community who because of the banks' callous pursuit of profit lost part of their life savings or struggle with foreclosure and related financial worries.

Demonstrator Michael Abbott claimed that Bank of America is involved in over 760 local lawsuits, most of them involving foreclosure actions.

If nothing else, the willingness of Modesto's determined band of "99% Spring" members to protest the banking scandal should prompt Valley citizens to reflect on our "ground zero" foreclosure status. We routinely send anti-government and anti-regulation politicians to our state and national capitols, and then complain that we're neglected by government. Even free market guru Alan Greenspan has admitted that the banking crisis was in large part due to deregulation, yet most of our local politicians continue to campaign against government in general and especially against government oversight.

Northern San Joaquin Valley citizens routinely volunteer, donate, and give to any number of charities and community benefits. Their outpourings of generosity aren't limited to "Love Modesto" occasions; they are year round events. Nonetheless, our status as the "Appalachia of the West" should remind us that some problems are too big even for generous hearts.

"Our government's been bought by big money," said Dan Onorato last Saturday.

He and his fellow demonstrators are trying to remind us that government should be by and for the people. It's a lesson that shouldn't have to be relearned.

Protest Bank of America, June 2 & 16

By DAN ONORATO

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has been actively involved in organizing the local 99% Spring Action group. In early April, under Ken Schroeder's leadership, we held a training workshop in Nonviolent Action attended by over 30 people, so we could engage in subsequent public actions to put pressure on the megabanks. Our immediate focus is to get customers—individuals, businesses, and institutions—to move their money from Bank of America (and the other megabanks) into community banks and credit unions. We're targeting BofA first because it holds the most foreclosures and has some of the worst practices.


Our long-range goal is to help create a just and sustainable

financial system. One step to deal with immediate suffering is to pressure the banks to reduce loan principals to market value. A more long-range step is to bring back an updated Glass Steagall Act that will once again prevent commercial banks from engaging in speculative trading. The 1999 repeal of that 1930s law, created to prevent another Depression, is one of the main circumstances that precipitated the current economic crisis. A further step is to break up the huge megabanks. After all, we know where too big to fail will lead.

The big banks and investment companies get a humongous bailout, the CEO's and the other corporate gamblers reward themselves with plushy fat bonuses, and then these staunch defenders of the market unleash their lobbyists to pay off politicians and gut any federal efforts to regulate banking.

Our democracy is under siege from the plutocrats. We must stop them. Their reckless greed and arrogant power threaten all of us. Here are two things we all can do:

- 1) Contact the media and politicians at every level with appeals to bring back the Glass-Steagall Act and break up the big banks; and
- 2) Join our "Move Your Money" protest against the Bank of America on June 2 in front of the bank on 3416 McHenry (near Sylvan) (11:00AM – 1:00PM) and on June 16 from 10:00AM – 12:00PM) at the BofA branch across from the Farmers Market.



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Canning 411

By JENIFER WEST

It's canning time again! There are so many advantages: You know exactly what's in food you've canned yourself. Once you've accumulated a few inexpensive pieces of equipment and some jars, you'll end up saving quite a bit. Every jar of, say, home-canned tomatoes, means one less throw-away container in the landfill. It's really not difficult to do. And, unless you luck into a lug of peaches or bushel of tomatoes, it needn't take up a lot of time. So where to start?

First, gather up the equipment you'll need. Although relatively inexpensive, a water bath canner isn't absolutely necessary. (I've seen them for around \$20.) Any cooking pot large enough to allow the jars you're canning to be covered by an inch or two of boiling water will do – I started with the largest pot that came with my cookware set. If possible, rig up a rack or some other means to keep the jars off the bottom of the pot. You'll also want a jar lifter, so you can easily get the jars into and out of boiling water. A canning funnel is indispensable. A lid lifter (magnetic wand) will come in very handy, as well. (You can purchase a kit with all of these items, generally for less than \$15.) Finally, consider a silicone hot pad or two. I recommend purchasing jars at Winco, as they generally have the best prices and, unlike other discount stores, I've never gotten home with any broken ones. Buy jars whenever you buy groceries – they'll stack up surprisingly quickly.

I would also strongly recommend a good reference book. *The Ball Complete Guide to Home Preserving* is excellent. It has all of the basic information, as well as some excellent recipes that will have you canning like a pro in no time. (Find it on Amazon for less than \$20.)

Farmers markets and roadside stands are good options for purchasing produce. We're blessed to live in an area where a lot of food is grown – take a drive out in the country, and you'll most likely come across produce for sale. Either way, the produce should be more reasonable, as well as fresher, than what you'll find in the grocery stores. (For me, this is part of the fun of this sport!)

Beginners should consider fruit, which can be canned in

syrup or made into jam; pickled veggies; or tomato-based products like salsa and barbecue sauce. When canning anything, it is absolutely critical to exactly follow an approved recipe and instructions. High-acid foods like fruits, pickles, and tomato-based products (with an acid-enhancing ingredient like vinegar or lemon juice) are safe for water bath canning. (Veggies, like green beans, carrots, and onions, as well as things like meat, are not – they must be pressure canned, which requires specialized knowledge and equipment.)

Before starting, I always put the canner on and turn up the heat to bring it to a simmer. I wash the jars, adding a couple extra, and lower them into the canner. I put the lids into the water as well (you can simply drop them into the water, put them into a basket designed for use in the dishwasher, or you can purchase a specially designed holder). Wash the rings and set them aside. I arrange a towel on the counter next to the stove, to set the jars on while I fill them. I make sure my magnetic wand and jar lifter are handy as well, along with the canning funnel and a plastic knife. Put a silicone hot pad on top of the towel, and keep the other one handy. The final necessity is a clean, damp kitchen towel (which I put into a clean bowl until I need it).

Strawberry Jam

Adapted from the *Ball Book*

(Makes About 8 Half-pints)

- 7 cups sugar
- 4 tbsp lemon juice
- 8 cups strawberries (approximately)
- 1 package powdered pectin

Measure the sugar and lemon juice and set aside (separately). Rinse the strawberries thoroughly. Remove the hulls and put a layer of them into a large bowl. Crush with a potato masher and transfer to a measuring cup, putting them into a large pot after measuring.

When you have accumulated five cups, stir in the lemon juice. Carefully whisk in the pectin before turning on the heat. When pectin is dissolved, turn the heat on (high) and stir frequently.

When the mixture comes to a full rolling boil, add the sugar all at once. Stir constantly until the mixture comes back to a

full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Set the pot on the hot pad and skim off foam. Remove jars from canner (pour water back into canner; do not dry jar) and set onto towel.

Using the canning funnel, fill each jar, leaving ¼" headspace (I judge this by the rings on the jars, or you can purchase a specially designed guide).

Run the plastic knife up and down around the perimeter of each jar a couple of times to eliminate any air bubbles. Carefully wipe the tops of the jars with the damp cloth (any jam residue will interfere with the seal), and put the lids onto the jars. Put the rings on, tightening just until resistance is felt, then tighten another quarter turn (use the second silicone hot pad for this).

Use the jar lifter to lower the jars carefully, without tilting, into the canner. Bring to a full rolling boil and process, boiling hard, for 10 minutes. When processing time is complete, turn burner off and leave jars in canner for 5 minutes.

Using the jar lifter, carefully remove the jars, again without tilting. Leave undisturbed for 24 hours to allow seal to form. Remove or loosen rings. Wipe jars down if necessary. Label and store. Use within two years.

Music From The Big House at the State

Submitted by RANDY SIEFKIN

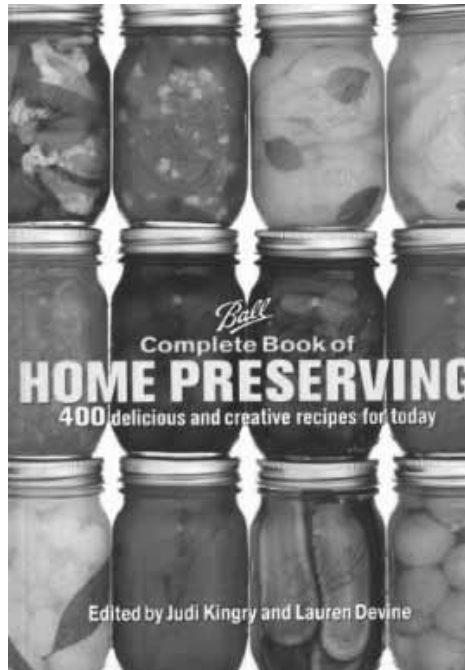
There will be a special screening of the documentary, *Music From The Big House* on Monday, June 18 at 7 p.m. at the State Theatre.

In MFTBH, Rita Chiarelli, Canada's Queen of the Blues, takes a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the blues, Louisiana State Maximum Security Penitentiary a.k.a Angola Prison - what used to be the bloodiest prison in America.

Rita's trip turns into a historic jailhouse performance - playing with inmates serving life sentences for murder, rape and armed robbery. Their shared bond of music, and Chiarelli's ebullient personality, draw striking revelations from the inmates. Rather than sensational stories of convicts, we witness remarkable voices of hope as their love of music radiates humanity and redemption on their quest for forgiveness.

Chiarelli, a gifted songwriter and performer, will be at The State to discuss the film, and recording the soundtrack.

Info. and tickets: <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/526/view>



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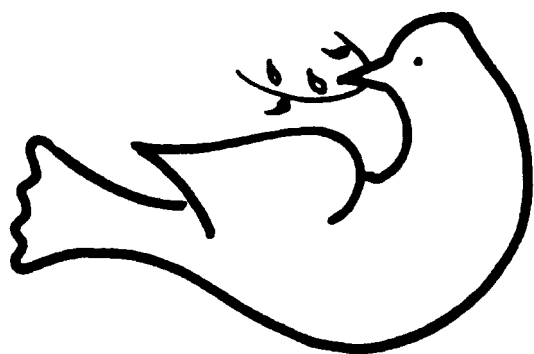
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The 2012 Peace Essay Contest

By **INDIRA CLARK**

The 25th Peace Essay Contest invited 4th-8th grade students to reflect on their own experience observing on verbal bullying. Grades 9-10 focused cyberbullying. Division I entries from 11th and 12th graders, explored the use of social media and technology to promote a particular point of view or agenda.

There were 767 qualifying entries from public and private schools throughout Stanislaus County. *Stanislaus Connections* is publishing each of the winning essays.

2012 Peace Essay Committee: Margaret Barker, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Linda Legace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner, David Tucker.

Sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center, and co-sponsored by the Modesto Junior College Department of Literature and Language Arts



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The Verbal Attack

Division IV

First Place & School Winner

Lakewood Elementary: Ms. Malekos-Quick

By **Aaron Martinez Linares**

It was a perfectly nice day at Sunny Shine Elementary School. All of the kids were playing an exciting game of kickball during lunch recess. Our team was losing five to six. Billy was about to kick the ball and our team depended on him to make a point. As the ball approached his foot, he smacked it far and high into the air. We were all confident that we were going to make the point we needed to stay in the game. However, as the ball came down, someone caught it and Billy was out. Billy's teammate, Tim, became extremely angry and started yelling at him. I could tell by Billy's big watery eyes, that it upset him greatly. As Tim continued to yell at Billy, no one stood up to him. In fact, most of the kids were not even paying attention to what was happening.

Watching Tim yell at Billy bothered me because I had not witnessed this kind of verbal bullying before. I wanted to talk to Tim, but I was too nervous to approach him. I didn't

know what I should say to make him understand that he was out of line. I spent the rest of the day thinking about this situation. I felt guilty because I know I should have done something about it.

Thinking back, I realized what I could have done. I could have talked to Tim and told him what he did was wrong. I could have also defended Billy and then cheered him up. But the best thing I could have done was tell the teacher. If I told the teacher, Tim would have gotten in trouble. Telling my parents would have been a good idea too. They could have given me advice on what I should have done. From now on, if I see someone get bullied I will help them.

This situation made me realize that there are several easy things that anyone can do to prevent or stop verbal violence. First, you can think about what you want to say before saying it to someone. Second, you can stand up for someone when you see them being bullied. Third, you can try not to be sarcastic when someone messes up or accidentally does something wrong. But most of all, you can treat others the way you want to be treated.

"Everyone's the same, so treat them the same."

At the Gallo Center: The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later

Submitted by **Mike Chiavetta**

The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later will be performed at the Gallo Center for the Arts on Friday, June 15th at 7:30 p.m.

On October 6th of 1998, Matthew Shepard was beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming. His torture and murder became a watershed historical moment in America that highlighted many of the fault-lines in our culture.

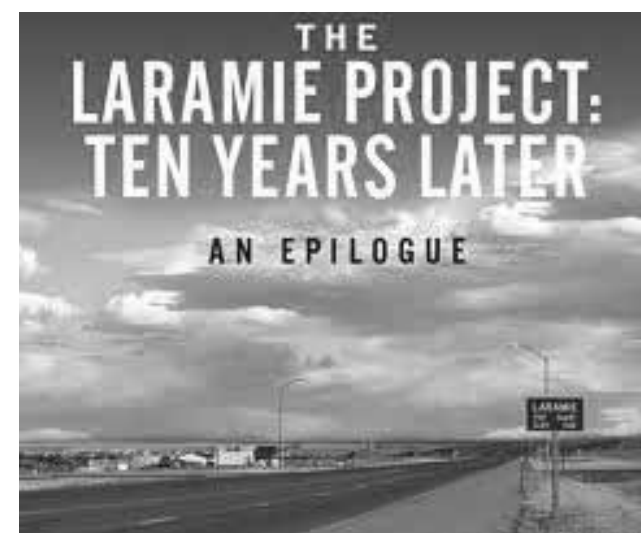
A month after the murder, the members of Tectonic Theater Project traveled to Laramie and conducted interviews with the people of the town. Ten years later, Moises Kaufman and members of Tectonic Theater Project returned to Laramie to find out what has happened since.

Has Matthew's murder had a lasting impact on that community? How has the town changed as a result of this event? What does life in Laramie tell us about life in America since that time?

The Modesto Peace/Life Center invites you to attend this production.

The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later by Moises Kaufman, Leigh Fondakowski, Greg Perotti, Andy Paris, and Stephen Belber. Presented by the New Conservatory Theatre Center, in association with GLEE Foundation of California and Stanislaus County Commission for Women and PFLAG. This performance is supported by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation.

For tickets, visit <http://www.galloarts.org/>



Justice requires action to stop subjugation of Palestinians

BY DESMOND TUTU

A quarter-century ago I barnstormed around the United States encouraging Americans, particularly students, to press for divestment from South Africa. Today, regrettably, the time has come for similar action to force an end to Israel's long-standing occupation of Palestinian territory and refusal to extend equal rights to Palestinian citizens who suffer from some 35 discriminatory laws.

I have reached this conclusion slowly and painfully. I am aware that many of our Jewish brothers and sisters who were so instrumental in the fight against South African apartheid are not yet ready to reckon with the apartheid nature of Israel and its current government. And I am enormously concerned that raising this issue will cause heartache to some in the Jewish community with whom I have worked closely and successfully for decades. But I cannot ignore the Palestinian suffering I have witnessed, nor the voices of those courageous Jews troubled by Israel's discriminatory course.

Within the past few days, some 1,200 American rabbis signed a letter — timed to coincide with resolutions considered by the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) — urging Christians not “to selectively divest from certain companies whose products are used by Israel.” They argue that a “one-sided approach” on divestment resolutions, even the selective divestment from companies profiting from the occupation proposed by the Methodists and Presbyterians, “damages the relationship between Jews and Christians that has been nurtured for decades.”

While they are no doubt well-meaning, I believe that the rabbis and other opponents of divestment are sadly misguided. My voice will always be raised in support of Christian-Jewish ties and against the anti-Semitism that all sensible people fear and detest. But this cannot be an excuse for doing nothing and for standing aside as successive Israeli governments colonize the West Bank and advance racist laws.

I recall well the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* in which he confesses to his “Christian and Jewish brothers” that he has been “gravely disappointed with the white moderate ... who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action;’ who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom. ...”

King’s words describe almost precisely the shortcomings of the 1,200 rabbis who are not joining the brave Palestinians, Jews and internationals in isolated West Bank communities to protest nonviolently against Israel’s theft of Palestinian land to build illegal, Jewish-only settlements and the separation wall. We cannot afford to stick our heads in the sand as relentless settlement activity forecloses on the possibility of



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the two-state solution.

If we do not achieve two states in the near future, then the day will certainly arrive when Palestinians move away from seeking a separate state of their own and insist on the right to vote for the government that controls their lives, the Israeli government, in a single, democratic state. Israel finds this option unacceptable and yet is seemingly doing everything in its power to see that it happens.

Many black South Africans have traveled to the occupied West Bank and have been appalled by Israeli roads built for Jewish settlers that West Bank Palestinians are denied access to, and by Jewish-only colonies built on Palestinian land in violation of international law.

Black South Africans and others around the world have seen the 2010 Human Rights Watch report which “describes the two-tier system of laws, rules, and services that Israel operates for the two populations in areas in the West Bank under its exclusive control, which provide preferential services, development, and benefits for Jewish settlers while imposing harsh conditions on Palestinians.” This, in my book, is apartheid. It is untenable. And we are in desperate need of more rabbis joining the brave rabbis of Jewish Voice for Peace in speaking forthrightly about the corrupting decades-long Israeli domination over Palestinians.



©2009 Jewish Voice for Peace / www.jvp.org — art by Southpaw.org

These are among the hardest words I have ever written. But they are vitally important. Not only is Israel harming Palestinians, but it is harming itself. The 1,200 rabbis may not like what I have to say, but it is long past time for them to remove the blinders from their eyes and grapple with the reality that Israel becoming an apartheid state or like South Africa in its denial of equal rights is not a future danger, as three former Israeli prime ministers — Ehud Barak, Ehud Olmert and David Ben Gurion — have warned, but a present-day reality. This harsh reality endured by millions of Palestinians requires people and organizations of conscience to divest from those companies — in this instance, from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett Packard — profiting from the occupation and subjugation of Palestinians.

Such action made an enormous difference in apartheid South Africa. It can make an enormous difference in creating a future of justice and equality for Palestinians and Jews in the Holy Land.

Desmond Tutu, winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, is archbishop-emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa.

From the *Tampa Bay Times*, <http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/justice-requires-action-to-stop-subjugation-of-palestinians/1227722>

The Strength of Afghan Mothers

By **SILKE BUHR**, World Food Programme Public Information Officer, Kabul, Afghanistan

Afghanistan is no longer the worst place in the world to be a mother, according to a new report by Save the Children. I am at once heartened and shocked by this news. If that respected NGO can show that progress has been made in this country, it must be true, and that is a good thing. But then this means that there is a place where women risk even more to have a child than in Afghanistan. My heart goes out to the women of Niger, the new holders of this soul-wrenching title.

Even before the report came out, we'd been talking a great deal about motherhood in my little office in Kabul. My Afghan colleagues can't tell me enough how important mothers are in their culture, how mothers are honoured, revered and loved. They quote religious references and snippets from everyday life; they speak fondly of protective prayers spoken and understandingly of punishment meted out. They are acutely aware of the sacrifices and hardships their mothers have endured for them.

"My mother is very, very old," one colleague tells me. Turns out she's 65 – the same age as my own mother, who if I described her in those words would probably chase me around the room and make me buy her dinner by way of apology. But when the life expectancy for a woman is, on average, somewhere in the mid to late forties, then even my mother would agree that 65 is ancient.

Since I've been in Afghanistan, just nine short months,



Afghan mother and child. Photo: Center for American Progress

The other morning I visited a training centre on the outskirts of Kabul where we met a group of women learning how to read and write and – incongruously – sew footballs. It's a marketable skill that might help them earn a bit of money on the side in future. One of the women had been married off when she was just ten years old. Her husband didn't want their own daughter to go to school, but she stood up to him and eventually got her own way. There's not even pride in her voice as she tells the story of this monumental victory, just weariness. I can see how in such a situation, WFP's take-home rations for schoolgirls would make a big difference. A monthly can of fortified cooking oil used to seem to me like a small incentive to families to send their girls to school, but if that's what it takes to sway a reluctant father, then so be it.

One of the indicators measured by Save the Children is the number of girls in formal education, which has gone from zero in 2001 to 2.5 million today.

One of the indicators measured by Save the Children is the number of girls in formal education, which has gone from zero in 2001 to 2.5 million today. A useful reminder that we're starting from a baseline so low it can hardly be imagined. Progress is being made in Afghanistan, but we need to ensure that we don't lose the momentum, especially now as donor countries are facing tough economic choices. Afghan women must not be once again left to fend for themselves.

From <http://www.wfp.org/stories/strength-afghan-mothers>

Visit Save the Children at <http://www.savethechildren.org/>

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two of my colleagues have lost their unborn babies. The statistics of maternal mortality in Afghanistan suddenly hit home. It's no longer a number, but the friendly, welcoming people I share an office with every day. They are among the best-earning, best-educated young Afghans in the country, and unlike the majority they have access to the best medical facilities that the nation's capital (or neighbouring Pakistan) has to offer. Even for them pregnancy can be life-threatening. The plight of rural women is even more dramatic. Looking at the figures, it seems that there can hardly be a woman in Afghanistan who has not lost a baby.



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Top Left: Mr. Tony Iafrate with Hadrosaurus bone. Top Middle: River grid for discovering fossils in sand. Top Right: Students mixing plaster for bone casts. Bottom Left: Parent helper with students classifying fossils

Mr. "T's" Big Dino Dig: Place-Based Learning at Caswell State Park

By LYNN HANSEN, Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences/ MJC

Even though dinosaurs became extinct 65 million years ago, that doesn't stop

Salida Middle School (SMS) 6th grade teacher, Mr. Tony Iafrate, from sharing the joy of fossil hunting with his students right in their own back yard. As a participant in the Summit to Sand grant administered by the San Joaquin Office of Education Science and Special Projects, he is determined to show students how science works in the field. His tools are simple. Set up science stations at Caswell State Park, recruit volunteers and teachers to run the stations, bring 3 classes of 6th grade students to a Dino Dig. His creation is a superb example of place-based learning in our community.

When I arrived at the field trip site, students were collecting sand samples from a 1-foot quadrant sample (part of a large 12-foot grid) where fossils were hidden. Each scoop of sand was sifted, and students harvested their fossil finds one cup of sand at a time. Next they moved on to a station where they were given a sack of fossils to sort and classify so they could identify typical marine fossils. At the same time another group of students were learning how fossils were made, and looked at several types of fossils from Mr. Iafrate's extensive collection. Nearby, another group of students were taught how to dig up a bone, wrap and preserve it in plaster of Paris (jacket it) for transport to a museum. Other students were using shells or other marine specimens to make imprints into potter's clay showing how fossil casts are made. Finally, another group of students went on a hike around the riparian forest to learn about this unique ecosystem. As students rotated through each station they were asked to complete field notes about the specific topic covered.

To make this event possible, Mr. Iafrate recruited a cast of helpers. Grandpa William Martin brought his fossil dinosaur tooth that he found while working at the Geer Road Landfill. Enochs High School physics teacher, Mr. Merenda, led the hike and helped students see the different layers of the ripar-

ian forest and the niches found there. Mrs. Orenallas, Mr. Martin and his son directed students at the bone jacketing and preservation station. SMS Parent Mrs. Terry Passion helped students understand how fossils were formed while Cortney Guerra and her cousin Kori Guerra assisted students in sorting fossils. At the river, Columbia College Geologist Glen White supervised the sand sifting experiment to extract fossils from the sediments while several more adults helped at each station as needed.

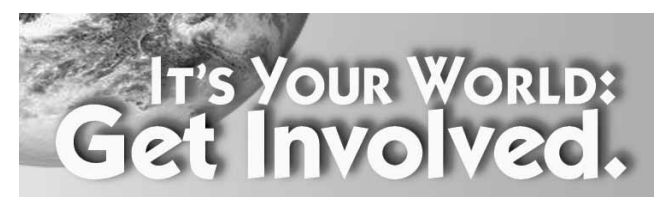
What was especially gratifying to see was that students were learning scientific processes and generating field notes. They were also building upon the field studies foundations learned as elementary students within the Salida Union School District. During this series of activities students

were learning lessons of geology, paleontology and ecology through hands-on activities instead of listening to a lecture or seeing a film. They were functioning like scientists would in the real world.

When I asked them if they liked going to class in the out-of-doors they gave the day a big thumbs up, and one added, "It is hecka hot out here." Mr. Iafrate's Dino Dig is one unforgettable science lesson.

ACTION: There are many ways you can help your own schools and their teachers present effective Place-Based learning. Contact your local school to:

- a. donate your time as an expert or helper for field trips
- b. donate materials needed for the field trip
- c. donate money to pay for field trip transportation



Poet: Karen Mitchell

Raised Catholic, Karen is the eldest of nine children. At age 17 she entered a Poor Clare cloistered monastery where, despite the sensible, early doubts of some of the nuns, she remained for eleven years. After leaving the monastery, Karen attended



Marquette University in Milwaukee and participated in the activities of the Jewish Community Center and volunteered at the Catholic Worker House.

After receiving her B.S. in Psychology from Cal State Fullerton, and her Masters in Social Work from San Francisco State, she and her husband Kent, a school psychologist, moved to Stanislaus County. Since moving here,

Karen and Kent have taken part in anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons protests and became part of a local effort for smart growth in Riverbank.

When Karen turned forty, her interest in spirituality re-emerged. She became fascinated by consciousness and the nature of the Self. She read widely: science, consciousness research, Buddhism, Sufism, Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, and most recently Rudolph Steiner. She met many spiritual teachers, took up daily meditation, and began a book that was the unfolding of some deep and revelatory experiences she had. The book: *Woman Without a Name: a Wisdom Tale* came out in 2010.

She is working on a play about the implications and effects of the dropping of the atom bomb and writes poetry. Karen feels particularly connected to the Spiritual Psychology being evolved by Robert Sardello and his wife Cheryl. They are teaching a way that is heart and body centered, and which perceives the Earth not as an object, but as a spiritual being.



Cleaning Windows

I dream I am a tall building,
a scraper of the sky
with a multitude of windows
to clean and open.

Standing at the base and looking up
I know I can not do the work.
I would have to dangle, exposed
on complex contraptions
I could never entirely trust.
And even if I found the courage
and all went well,
Time would be against me.
I could never get to all the windows
at once.

I awake to my Self.
I am inside the edifice of my body
and it is as if I had eyes all around
and I am the seer
who gazes through them all.
But the Light is overwhelming.

Then a curving tenderness
ever sensing my eye, enwraps it.
The pupil no longer shines nor sees:
enfolded, it becomes the Dark,
newer and nearer than any form
or window.

In some time-free birth
and so gently it goes unnoticed,
the lid eventfully rolls upward and back
leaving the I fully exposed and open.

Within the I
gleaming with the First Sun's light,
the whole world appears -
spotless.

Driving the Loneliest Highway

While driving through the desert,
I saw the Earth
not as hill or stone or bush
but as a Wholeness present to Herself.
Earth gazed upon Her wide and manifold loveliness:
all the landscapes and forms that are part of Her,
and I following that gaze
saw the complexity and richness of my own wholeness.

I knew then that our separation, though ancient,
was not our true origin.
We form but one being
as Fire is one,
but has different elements.

I saw why my deepest experiences
come to life when imagined
in Earth's likeness,
and knew why I've borne a longing for Earth
as if I had not yet arrived.

Driving the loneliest highway
I have finally come home.

Earth Dreaming

Fire!

Not the Singularity's big bang, nor the heating of our
planet's iron core,
Not the human fire-making with wood or bomb,
Not the fire of Seraphic worship.

A new fire
upwelling, surging from Earth's true interior, flowing
everywhere
a Wave of yet unstoried Force,
not flinging us into the vacuum of space or into chaos,
not hurling us over death's threshold into another realm -
though it may seem so.

The new fire of Earth's uplifted and widening motherhood,
her initiation as Creative Force capable of birthing
everything again:
stone, wood, lake, stream, desert, mountain, flower, crops,
gardens,
the rolling hills, the tall-wind blown grasses, the scrappy
bushes, the tired seas.

Earth's new-mother countenance radiates.
Feather, fur, fins, scales, and skin flush with its warming
light.
Water glows, the sky appears rapt, the dark night luminous.

She is dreaming - the Earth,
And Her dreaming will change everything.

She Dreams an interweaving of being, a community of
being
where "I am," is so understood, it is forgotten,
Where "we" is a poor word for such abundant intimacy,
and where "all one," is the appreciative, but shallow
summation of a stranger.

She is dreaming - the Earth
And her dreaming will change everything.

The wild, raucous roaring that sets your heart pounding
and which you call, "fear"
is not from a familiar fire.
Be still.
Sense the budding of your dry and severed parts.
Listen.
Your cells are opening their mouths and blissfully tasting
her dream.

She is dreaming - the Earth - and her dreaming,
and her dreaming in you, will change everything.

Green Tips for A Green Planet: Ecotourism, consider walking your green talk

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Ecotourism, a term first coined by Mexican architect, environmentalist and tourism consultant Hector Ceballos-Lascurain in 1983 and practiced for decades prior to that, has evolved over the years as travelers have become more aware of their impact upon both the environment and local communities worldwide.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (<http://www.ecotourism.org/>) defines ecotourism as, "Responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people."

"Ecotourism is about connecting conservation, communities and sustainable travel, which involves the implementation and participation in responsible tourism activities in accordance with the following ecotourism principles:

- minimize impact
- build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental and social climate

The World Conservation Union (<http://www.iucn.org/>), another leader in ecotourism, promotes similar eco travel principals

- Conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior
- Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of, local cultures and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation efforts

- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Local participation in decision-making
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

Ecotourism seeks to benefit travelers eager to do the right thing, as well as to benefit the natural habitats and cultures visited.

One eco blogger suggests a global standard needs to be established "which will ensure only those committed to the true ethos of ecotourism will be rated and therefore visited."

The blogger goes on to warn future eco travelers to "beware [that] not all ecotourism ventures are what they seem, [nor do they] uphold the principles described above. "Tourism generates over 2 billion US Dollars each day", he adds, "making it the largest industry in the world and a magnet for those only too willing to make a quick buck. He goes on to advise those interested in ecotourism to do a bit of homework on the company through which they book their eco-travels, as too many plough profits into the pockets of investors instead of the local economy or environment.

Finally, he concludes that if a tour is not educational in some way and does not directly benefit the area or people, it is not ecotourism. (Look for suggested ecotourism possibilities in the July/August issue of *Connections* and in the meantime look for ideas of your own to share with readers of *Connections*.)

Ecotourism Travel Guide - Discover a new way of traveling and make a difference.

Volunteering: Personified Empowerment

Often, in the busy-ness of Life I find myself caught-up in my happenings and "to-do's" (the list). To broaden this narrow focus is like inviting a fresh breeze into one's life. The answer is simple. The question is, "How do I break away from the same-ness, status quo, the continuous rut in my life?"

The simple answer is volunteering (another way of investing, tithing/sharing, and "non-monetarily"). Now, if you are already volunteering, perhaps you can use help! Please continue to set this awakened example by volunteering, while encouraging yourself and others. Remember, we don't always "see" tangible evidence of the impact of our untold hours of giving. And yet, wheels are set in motion and standards are set that can reverberate through many generations, numerous lifetimes.

Our time, expertise, and genuine heart-felt love can greatly enhance the quality of life for a non-profit organization, a child, a survivor. So do this: investigate a board of directors position, mentor and or assist in a child's literacy, be there for a victim or perpetrator of abuse. My problems seem rather insignificant when consistently engaging, putting energy into, and demonstrating love in my community. And who knows to what the enriched life/lives will lead? It might just be that in your giving, you receive...multiplied and more! Perhaps, this is how a community thrives.

Carl Stange
Modesto

4th Annual Paddle to the Sea heading to Modesto this June

By KARYN BARNES

The Tuolumne River Trust will kick off the 4th Annual Paddle to the Sea, a month long paddle-a-thon on the Tuolumne River from Yosemite, through the Central Valley, to San Francisco Bay. A handful of paddlers complete the entire trip, and many more come along to canoe or kayak for a day along the way. TRT invites you to join hundreds of other paddlers and our local sponsors to explore the river and wildlife right in our own backyard!

This year's paddle-a-thon will travel through the Central Valley from June 9th-June 20th with a series of flat water canoeing days. These canoe trips are open to everyone - from experts to people who have never been in a canoe before. Children over the age of 7 are also welcome.

In support of the Tuolumne River Trust's local programs aimed at connecting Latino families to the park and the River, TRT is throwing two community parties to welcome the paddlers to Modesto. On Thursday, June 14, Tuolumne River supporters can join the families from TRT's program

in the Airport neighborhood as they welcome the paddlers with a free BBQ and riverside celebration in Legion Park from 3-5pm.

On June 15, supporters are invited to a free lunchtime party at Riverdale Park from 12-2pm, where the paddlers will stop to celebrate the TRT's program in West Modesto.

Paddlers who sign up for the Saturday June 16 paddle are invited to join Tuolumne River Trust staff, board members, and supporters for a free riverside dinner catered by Greens Market and hosted at the Old Fisherman's Club.

Paddle to the Sea also features events outside of the Central Valley area:

A kickoff concert in Groveland, CA featuring the super-hot California Band Nicki Bluhm and the Gramblers on June 2nd

The Grand Finale at Aquatic Park in San Francisco on the Bay on June 30.

For more information, visit www.paddletothesea.org or contact paddle@tuolumne.org



Warm welcomes, all over the county, all weekend.

Julia Bolton Mensinger ©
June 2012

Peace and communication

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

After making two attempts, the first unsuccessful, I have come to the conclusion that interactions between governments and individuals do not promote peace unless the government addresses the individual as an equal. My experience with a branch of the government of Great Britain is, according to my wife, minor in comparison to her experience with the federal government of the United States in a similar capacity. But I think it serves to help make the point.

I landed in Heathrow at the end of April 2012 and enjoyed an amazing reunion with my new wife, Claudine. By that time we had accepted the fact that the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) cost Claudine and myself a total of about US\$3000.00, and delayed our reunion by 8 weeks. The delay forced me to: 1) return to work after giving notice and taking leave (I am deeply grateful my job was still there and my employer was happy to have me back), 2) to rescind my vacancy notice with my apartment's rental office, 3) and cancel my flight. The delay also forced us to hire a UK based lawyer to help with the immigration papers, and caused both of us significant stress.

The source of this passive sort of violence is the set of conditions the UKBA uses to conduct the business of accepting requests for visas and determining whether or not to issue them. At its core, the interaction between individual and government agency is not communication, it is demand for and provision of personal information. UKBA provides no way to access individuals at the New York consulate, so no communication can possibly take place. This situation is

compounded by inadequacies, either intentional or accidental, that plague the process.

Acting on the principle that the UK would be as clear as necessary in its instructions and requirements, Claudine and I set about to file the necessary paperwork for me to immigrate to the UK. Fortunately, the UKBA has a decently designed and seemingly well-documented web site. So I followed directions. We gathered evidence of continuous contact, marriage, residency, employment, investments, insurance, etc. Then we put a package together and, following the UKBA's directions, applied for the Settlement Visa with expedited service for approximately UK£1100.00.

Unfortunately, the UKBA's directions were both unclear and incomplete. No mention was made in the directions to be sure to provide evidence of 5 years of residence in the UK if the sponsor is a permanent resident. Since Claudine is a permanent resident, we were operating under a set of conditions we were not made aware of. For this reason my Settlement Visa was denied. Adding what appeared to be insult to injury, the intake officer at the UK's New York consulate decided that our relationship was invalid for the purposes of immigration.

The intake officer who wrote the letter of refusal repeatedly used the first person singular ("I") form to explain his or her decision. However, the package and the letter contained no information about who this person is or how to contact the consulate directly. After recovering from initial feelings of personal offense, disappointment, and shock, I knew I could resolve the situation to meet the UKBA's reporting requirements and my needs if I could just talk to someone. I even pictured myself as character in a film from the 1930s, walking into an oak paneled office containing a large desk and a bureaucrat. I would take off my Panama hat, sit down in front of the desk, explain my situation and answer a few detailed questions about my plans and the nature of my relationship to my wife.

It was a lovely fantasy, but the system was designed to allow the UKBA in New York to completely avoid that inconvenience.

Since we could not discuss the Settlement Visa application with a human being, our next step was to engage the services of a human being who understood the UKBA's visa system better than we did. Claudine and I interviewed 2 immigration services and 3 sets of lawyers over the course of 4 days. We

settled on a British solicitor local to the Cambridge area and began the process of reapplying.

Our solicitor advised us to wait through the Settlement Visa's appeal period of 28 days and then file for a European Economic Area (EEA) Family Permit. As a citizen of an EEA nation, Claudine has the right, by treaty, to have her family with her. All we needed to do was to exercise this right and inform the UKBA that we intended to do so. So Claudine spent the intervening month gathering as much evidence of her residence history as she could find. Seventeen years of tax documents and pay stubs were included in the final package.

I had another crack at the UK Boarder Authority's website because they require electronic submission before documents can be sent. At that point I discovered why I made the original mistake of applying for the Settlement Visa. Every time I tried to navigate to the correct forms for the EEA Family Permit I was shunted toward the Settlement Visa forms. I navigated three times through their series of drop down menus and links to find the EEA Family Permit form, and even then it was not well labeled. So I was unsure through most of the process that I had even filled out the correct form.

After submitting the form, Claudine and I settled into a slightly deeper state of anxiety and left the decision, as required, to the UK Border Authority. In the end, I got my visa and the right to live and work in the UK for 6 months. But the process inspired me to think about the role of communication in peace.

I have come to the conclusion that peacefulness only occurs between equals because real communication can only occur between equals. Governments need not consider you an equal and so will cause you pain and stress as a matter of course.

I do not know what the remedy is. Maybe we should expect more personal service from our governments and be willing to pay for it instead of demanding a level of efficiency that demands simpler and less human forms of information exchange. Maybe we should think about how to structure government, so that communication between it and individuals is possible when necessary.

In any case the role communication plays in making a peaceful world is worth discussing, and anything that can increase actual communication is worth trying.

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