

All Area High School Students are Invited to the

4th Annual

Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference

Saturday, September 22, 2012

REGISTER NOW! (See page 2)

Save the Date for the State!

The Modesto Peace/Life Center and the band **Home Grown**, are teaming up for a *fantastic night of music, nostalgia, and fellowship*. This benefit concert is slated for **Saturday, November 3rd** at the historic State Theatre in downtown Modesto.

You, who believe in the mission of the Peace/Life Center, will want to support this memorable fundraising party. \$20 General Admission tickets can be purchased from PLC board members and from the State Theatre box office. Individuals and busi-

nesses will also have the exciting opportunity to sponsor of this event, which includes preferred seating, complimentary Home Grown CD and other goodies. Details will follow in the October edition of Connections.

The Peace/Life Center hopes this rousing fundraiser will enable us to carry on our commitment to educate, motivate and agitate for peace and social justice in our community! **REMEMBER, SAVE THE DATE AT THE STATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD!**

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How to Kill a River: A Media Guide

BY ERIC CAINE, *The Valley Citizen*

Killing a river is the outcome of a systematic process. The key is strict control of public perception throughout the process.

The first and most important principle is to omit any mention of the river except when absolutely necessary. This is the single most important and easily overlooked tactic. While it may be necessary to mention the river, it is imperative that as soon as possible the river be reduced to water only.

Once water is the focal point, the water must become a commodity. The process is simple: convert the water to acre feet and the acre feet to dollars. Only when the water has been commodified will destruction of the river follow as the inevitable result of the systematic application of tested principles of omission.

To extract the full value of the water, it must be made to seem both cheap and abundant. Since most people see water only when it comes out of the tap or garden hose, this is easy to do. While making the water seem cheap and abundant, you must at the same time introduce the fear that unless the water is used up, it will become scarce and expensive.

A few philosophers and pinheads may notice this is internally contradictory. Characterize them as "shrill" and "unreasonable."

Once the water is commodified, there follows a series of crucial omissions. These steps are of utmost necessity. The goal is to obliterate from consciousness any living thing associated with the river.

Never mention mammals, especially beavers. These loathsome rodents have been made popular by televised nature shows and should not be associated with the dying river in any way. Never mention river otters. If pressed to discuss animal life, have ready a set piece on nutria. Refer to them as "water rats."

Mention of birds should be avoided at all costs. If absolutely necessary, refer to "mud hens." Egrets, herons, and ducks should never be mentioned. Never under any circumstances mention Bald Eagles.

While it will be necessary from time to time to mention fish, avoid references to

specific kinds of fish whenever possible. Avoid mention of salmon unless absolutely necessary. When discussing salmon, always use the phrase, "anadromous fish." It sounds foreign and therefore menacing. If you must mention any other fish, refer to carp and smelt. It's okay to use colloquialisms like "bottom feeders" and "trash fish."

Never mention fisheries or fishermen.

In keeping with the dictum to avoid mentioning fishermen, take special care to avoid any mention of trout, trout fishing, trout fishermen, or fly fishing. Trout fishermen, also known as fly fishermen, are practitioners of deception, and thus devious. They are ruthless and implacable opponents who will stoop to any tactic, even invoking law. Like the river itself, they can be defeated only by omission. They must never be acknowledged in any way.

It goes without saying that we must avoid discussion of the quality of the water in the river. If for some reason it becomes necessary to discuss water quality, never use the word, "pollution," especially when apt. Instead, use words like "eutrophication" and "turbidity," whether or not called for. Because only a tiny few know what these words mean, the majority will soon lose interest altogether.

It is now evident that killing a river is almost entirely a matter of removing it from consciousness through a systematic process of omission. Deviation from the fundamental steps in this process gives the river life and results in tremendous waste of a precious natural resource. Decades of research and practical application have taught us how to extract the maximum value from the river. Death of the river is merely a necessary consequence of this beneficial process of extraction.

Eric Caine teaches in the Humanities Department at Merced College. He was an original Community Columnist at the Modesto Bee.

From The Valley Citizen, <http://thevalleycitizen.com/?p=1223>

Ed. Note: Connections readers should bookmark The Valley Citizen in their web browsers. It offers prescient commentary on local issues that affect our lives in Stanislaus County and the Valley. Visit it often!



Register NOW for the Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference happening on Saturday, September 22nd

By MIKE CHIAVETTA

The 4th Annual Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference happens on Saturday, September 22, 2012 at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. **This dynamic conference is open to all area High School Students.** For three years the conference has enlightened hundreds of area high school students to the social justice issues of sustainability, civil rights and community activism.

This year's theme will focus on the provocative issues of **peace and war**. The keynote speaker for this free conference is **Iraqi War veteran Aaron Hinde of Iraq Veterans Against War**. Aaron will focus his presentation on the human costs of war. There will be music, food, workshops and networking throughout the action-packed day. Several area non-profits are scheduled to be present. Habitat for Humanity, Tuolumne River Trust and Stanislaus Society for the Handicapped will be presenting their opportunities for students to volunteer and be involved in their worthwhile

projects. The hope of the organizers is that attendees will be empowered to affect social change in their lives, schools and communities

The best news is that this conference is totally free! All attendees will receive a free t-shirt, breakfast, and lunch, snacks and materials. **But you must pre-register!** So, if you are a high school student, sign up today. Space is limited to the first 100 registrants and spaces go fast. To the adults out there, if you know a high school student who would be interested in attending, please pass this on to them.

Registration is easy. Either fill out the registration form at the bottom of this article or email Michael Chiavetta at one of the following: mike.chiavetta@gmail.com or chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us. Include your name, address, contact information (phone # and email address), the high school you attend and your size in an adult male t-shirt.

Don't wait! Register today for the 4th Annual Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference on Saturday, September 22nd!

Acoustic Concerts to quench Modestans' Thirst for Music

A new acoustic music concert series is starting here in Modesto. The **Great Valley Acoustic Music Series** is the brainchild of longtime Modesto resident Cindy van Empel and Bay Area songwriter Mark Lemaire.

"When you provide people a place to gather and hear songwriters that are both witty and socially conscious, you are helping a community to form. That's what this is about" said van Empel to *Stanislaus Connections*. "And the performance room at Central Grace has this beautiful sound" adds Lemaire. "It's a beautiful concert environment."

Great Valley begins its season with **Keith Greeninger** on Friday, September 21 at 8:00 p.m. at the Central Grace Community Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Admission is ten dollars, and doors will open at 7:30 p.m.



Keith is a seasoned troubadour, multi award-winning songwriter, and unforgettable performer.

A fourth generation Northern Californian, his music has been deeply influenced by his work with Native American and Latin cultures, and his songs cut an honest, hard worn path to places of simple truth about good people holding on to hope and instinct in a world that often tries to strip these things away. Keith's masterfully crafted tunes and powerful presence have earned him the top songwriting awards at the Telluride Blue Grass Festival, The Kerrville Folk Festival and The Napa Valley Folk Festival.

Find out more about the series on Facebook page, Great Valley Acoustic Concerts, at <http://www.facebook.com/GreatValleyAcousticConcerts>.

Mark and Cindy thank the folks at Central Grace Community Church for providing a space for the community to gather. See you there!

4th Annual Social Justice Youth Leadership Conference

Saturday, Sept. 22nd • 8:30 AM- 4:00 PM • Modesto Church of the Brethren • 2301 Woodland Ave. Modesto, CA

REGISTRATION FORM

Deadline for Registration is Monday, September 17th!

Name: _____ High School: _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone #: (Home) _____ (cell) _____

Adult Male T-Shirt size? S M L XL

Important Note: By submitting this registration form you are committing to attending this conference. We are cutting off registration at 100 participants so by registering and then not attending you will deny others from participating.

Mail this completed form to the following address: Michael Chiavetta, 1418 Edgebrook Drive, Modesto, CA 95354

You can also register by emailing this information to one the following address: mike.chiavetta@gmail.com or chiavetta.mi@monet.k12.ca.us

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NOTICE! If You Receive Connections by Postal Mail

The Post Office will raise our mail rate significantly beginning in January, 2013. In order to save much-needed funds, we request that those of you who can, please ask to receive Stanislaus Connections by email as a PDF file instead of a paper printed copy. Change would become effective in January, 2013.

Email Jim Costello ASAP at jcostello@igc.org if you wish to make the change.

Upcoming events at the Stanislaus County Library

By LAUREN HALL, Community Outreach Coordinator, Stanislaus County Library

Modesto Library hosts presentation about bullying

Ruben Sanchez, Clinician M.S., discusses bullying, its types, effects, and consequences, as well as empowering intervention programs, at the Modesto Library, 1500 I St., Wednesday, Sept. 12, 6 p.m. Community members: be a part of the solution to this widespread problem. Light snacks provided by the Friends of the Modesto Library. INFO: Modesto Library Reference Department, 558-7814.

Local Author Fair

Local authors gather at the Modesto Library portico on Saturday, Sept. 15 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for Stanislaus County Library's 3rd Annual Local Author Fair. Meet local authors, discuss, purchase their works and introduce yourself to the local writing scene. INFO: 558-7817.

Peace Bracelets for Families

Explore the meaning of peace through the making of multicultural bracelets with Dr. Iris Haapanen, CSU Stanislaus Associate Professor, at the Modesto Library, Saturday, Sept. 15 at 11 a.m. The workshop will address peer pressure, lack of self-confidence, and bullying through bracelet making. This free family program aims to promote well-being and peace to participating families.

ACTION: For information or to register, contact the Modesto Library Reference Dept., 558-7814.



2013 Peace Essay Contest



In November, 2012, our nation will be holding an election for the office of President of the United States for the four year term of 2013 to 2017. Each candidate makes promises to lead and serve the people of the nation by implementing and supporting various strategies that he/she believes will improve the lives of US citizens and promote stability among the nations of the world.

- DIVISION I (grades 11 & 12)**
(Essay of 500-1000 words)
- DIVISION II (grades 9 & 10)**
(Essay of 500-1000 words)
- DIVISION III (grades 7 & 8)**
(Essay of 250-500 words)

Write a persuasive letter to the President-Elect about a concern you have regarding a particular world, national or community problem that stands in the way of creating a more just and peaceful world. Convince the President that this problem deserves attention and suggest at least three ways that the President could initiate or support nonviolent actions that would address this problem. Be sure to acknowledge the objections others might see in your ideas.

DIVISION IV (grades 5 & 6)

(Essay of 250-500 words)

Write a letter to the President-Elect concerning your hopes and fears about a particular world, national or community problem that stands in the way of creating a more just and peaceful world. Describe at least three ways that the President could initiate or support nonviolent actions that would bring about what you hope for and/or prevent what you fear.

Deadline for entries:

November 16, 2012

For more information, email:
peaceessay@juno.com

Awards

	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Honorable Mention
Division I	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division II	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division III	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25
Division IV	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25

stanislaus CONNECTIONS

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Peace Essay Contest 2013

Rules

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of Stanislaus County or attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
2. Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced. Use one side of white paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly.
3. Give your essay a title. Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. **DO NOT** use a separate title or cover page.
4. Attach a "3 x 5" index card with your name, school, grade, teacher's name and principal's name on the index card. **YOUR NAME SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
5. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
6. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism.
7. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries may be delivered to the **Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2pm-5pm Nov. 14-16**. You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than **November 16, 2012** to:

2012 Peace Essay Contest
Modesto Peace/Life Center
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

Judging

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays.

Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

I. Content:

- A. Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
- B. How well-developed are the ideas?
- C. Does it address the given topic?

II. Style:

- A. Is the essay original and interesting?
- B. Is it written with conviction?
- C. Does the personality of the writer come through?

III. Clarity of expression:

- A. Are the ideas clearly stated?
- B. Is the essay well-organized?
- C. Does it have an effective beginning and ending?

IV. Mechanics:

- A. Is grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
- B. Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
- C. Does the essay stay within the word limit?

First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded in each of the four divisions which have at least 15 entries. In the event that fewer than 15 entries are entered in any one division, all prizes may or may not be awarded in that division at the discretion of the judging panel. Up to three Honorable Mentions may be awarded in each division. Group entries (more than one author) are welcome.

The writer of the best essay in a division from a school which has ten or more entries in that division will be honored as the school winner. All participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Notification of Winners

In mid-February 2013, winners will be notified. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2013 Peace Essay Committee: Peggy Castaneda, Indira Clark, Pam Franklin, Elaine Gorman, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner and David Tucker

This 26th Annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by: Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

Jam Session

By JENIFER WEST

In the height of the canning season, one of my coworkers asked me to show her how to make apricot jam. (Not surprising, since we live in the self-proclaimed Apricot Capital of the World!) So on the morning of the 4th of July, we gathered in my kitchen for a couple of hours of chopping, cooking, and bottling, with a good measure of laughter thrown in. By the time the day arrived, the apricots, waiting on the counter in our service porch, were at the soft-ripe stage – perfect for the use to which we were about to put them.

I've always loved the holidays, when everyone so inclined ends up in the kitchen, chopping, stirring, tasting... And it was a lovely holiday feeling, with everyone talking, a fair amount of joking, and much enjoying of one another's company – with the bonus of leaves on the trees outside and doors open to the cool summer morning. I take a bit of ribbing at work, because of the time and energy I devote to just this kind of endeavor. But I find the work satisfying and rewarding, and hoped that my friends would as well. With so many hands, the preparation went very quickly.

I am privileged to work with an interesting group of women, each with her own strengths, knowledge base and approach to life. And it was a real pleasure to spend time with them outside the confines of "the office." It's a curious thing – we spend so much of our time with the people with whom we work, yet, despite proximity that results in being necessarily (and sometimes uncomfortably) privy to the private details of other aspects of their lives, we get to know them in a more or less one-dimensional way. So it was great fun, spending time with them in a completely different setting, working together on a totally different kind of task.

I sincerely hope you will consider having your own "jam session." For inspiration, below is a modified version of an unusual jam from the Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving. It's guaranteed to fill your home with the wonderful scent of the coming holiday season as it cooks, and would make a very special homemade holiday gift.

Carrot Cake Jam

- Makes about 6 half-pints
- 1-1/2 cups finely grated carrots (peel first)
- 1-1/2 cups chopped cored apples
- 1-3/4 cups canned crushed pineapple, with juice
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice (much better flavor than bottled)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- Scant 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1 pkg powdered fruit pectin
- 6-1/2 cups sugar

Prepare eight jars and lids (it's always wise to prepare a couple extra, just in case you end up with enough jam for more than the expected number – I learned the hard way that it's better to have them ready and not need them than to have to scramble for them at the last minute!): Wash jars, lids and rings. Fill jars with hot water and place in water bath canner or pot large enough to allow them to be covered by 1 – 2 inches of boiling water. Add water just to cover jars. Put the lids into the water, either loose, in a basket designed for use in the dishwasher, or in a holder designed specifically for

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

By LILLIAN VALLEE

76. Walking the Asthma Trail

I am listening to the radio as the August heat wave moves from triple digits into the mid-nineties. The radio announcer adds that the air quality will improve in all Central Valley counties except Stanislaus; here, “sensitive groups” are being asked to stay indoors. The sustained heat and poor air quality have been hard on residents this summer (the clusters of children getting ready for football season in the schoolyard across from my house have vanished these past two weeks), and most of us are looking with longing toward the cooler weather of autumn and the promise of rain that always clears the air. Drought and heat, in California and across the country, remind us that the struggles for good water and good air are of the utmost gravity. For those who know we have to do more than wait for rain to address the problem of air quality and the burgeoning incidence of asthma (among other chronic diseases) among young children here in the Valley, there will be an opportunity to speak out and join forces with people of good will who love this region and want to make it a healthier place.

Beginning Thursday, September 27, healthcare workers and community leaders are “Walking the Asthma Trail” through high-risk communities across six Central Valley counties to gather stories about how asthma and other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity, are affecting people who live in California’s Great Central Valley. These six counties (Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin and Sacramento) have been targeted because of the high rate of chronic disease. The twenty-five communities through which participants will be “walking and listening” have been highlighted due to their high rate of asthma-related hospitalization.

Asthma is a chronic (long-term) disease that affects lungs. If you have asthma, the lung airways are inflamed (swollen) and sensitive, and they tend to react strongly to allergic or irritant particles in the air that you breathe. Triggers can be allergens and infections; work-, stress- or temperature-related irritants; and pollutants, food additives or medications. Nearly five million Californians suffer from the disease, and more than half of this number has an asthma attack each year. Asthma reduces the quality of life for asthmatics and causes considerable economic costs for California. Low-income children with asthma miss twice as many days of school as asthmatic children in the higher income brackets and low-income adults with asthma miss three times as many work days as their higher income counterparts. In California, asthma disproportionately burdens many disadvantaged urban and rural communities and these are often times communities of color. Lack of access to appropriate clinical services and/or medication, living in substandard housing or in close proximity to residential and industrial sources of pollution, occupational exposures to chemicals, and attending schools in disrepair can all contribute to higher rates of hospitalization and mortality.

The **Central Valley Asthma Walk Tour** is being organized by SEIU-UHW to raise awareness about the need to revolutionize the healthcare system in California. The goal is to help create a healthcare system designed to keep us healthy, not just to treat us when we are sick. Governor Jerry Brown has appointed a **Let’s Get Healthy California Task Force**, composed of healthcare providers, industry and intellectual leaders to make recommendations on how to reform the system and reduce the incidence of chronic disease, a major economic driver in rising insurance premiums. It is the opinion of the **Central Valley Asthma Walk Tour** organizers that the health care system is broken, and that the governor’s

task force has the opportunity to make substantial systemic changes in the way communities and institutions address chronic diseases on the rise in the Central Valley. Participants in the walk will offer recommendations on how we can live healthier lives and create better environmental conditions for young people growing up in our region. Topics will range from healthy habits and food to issues of land use.

The healthcare tour of the Central Valley will begin in Fresno on September 27 and conclude in Sacramento on October 4 after eight days of walking and talking to residents about how chronic diseases affect them or someone close to them. Participants who will choose to walk a leg of the trail with a core group of 15-20 walkers will be invited to speak out at mobile “Speak-Out-for-Health” storytelling stations about what residents need to make their communities healthier. Planned are Evening Speak-Outs during which affected community members can acquire information, record their stories, watch movies, and listen to poets. Central Valley Asthma Walk organizers will hold press conferences at hospitals and churches to raise awareness about preventing and managing chronic diseases and will deliver a recorded archive of Tour Stories to Governor Brown’s office on Friday, October 4, 2012.

Please come join me for all or part of the walk and tell your story. I’ll be walking with my family and friends for a healthier California.

Source: “Chronic Conditions Primer: Asthma,” see website address below.

ACTION: To learn more about asthma, find the most up-to-date tour itinerary, or to sign up for any portion of the walk, go to www.seiu-uhw.org/cv. You could also visit Facebook at “Central Valley Asthma Project” and Twitter at @LillyinValley

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Modesto Chapter
Parents, Families, and
Friends of Lesbians
and Gays

Jam session

from page 4

canning. Put the canner or pot on the stove, cover and bring to a simmer. Optional: a silicone hot pad or two will come in very handy – they’re impervious to any water or jam that may get spilled during the process.

Combine the first seven ingredients (through ground cloves) in a large pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, cover and boil gently for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and whisk in pectin until dissolved. Bring back to a boil over high heat, stirring frequently. Dump in sugar all at once and return to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Boil hard, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Remove from heat and skim off foam. (I set the pot on a silicone hot pad, placed on top of a clean towel on the counter.)



Quickly remove the jars from the canner, setting them on the clean towel near the pot of jam. Use a canning funnel to fill the jars, leaving ¼” headspace. Run a knife up and down

around the inside of the jars to remove any air bubbles. Add more jam to any jars with less than ¼” headspace. Use a clean, damp cloth to wipe the rims clean (any jam left on them will prevent them from sealing) and place the lids on the jars. Place the rings on the jars, tightening snugly but without excessive force – the air inside them needs to be able to vent during processing. (I use the second silicone hot pad to hold the hot jars while tightening the rings.) Using canning tongs, lower the jars carefully, without tilting, into the simmering water, making sure they’re covered by at least an inch of water. Cover the canner and bring to a full rolling boil; process for 10 minutes (start timing when it reaches a full rolling boil, and make sure it boils enthusiastically for the whole 10 minutes). Remove the lid and leave the jars in the water for 5 minutes. Remove from the canner, again without tilting, and leave undisturbed for 12 – 24 hours. In an hour or so, check seals visually or by tapping very lightly – unsealed jars will be very obvious – and immediately refrigerate any jars that didn’t seal.

Gardener’s Note: Plant lettuce, spinach, cabbage, carrots, radishes and turnips at two-week intervals for a continuous harvest over the cooler months. Protect delicate young plants from sun as necessary.

Turning towards nonviolence: A response to the Aurora, Colorado movie theater massacre

By JOHN DEAR, SJ

As we grieve for the dead and injured in last month's movie theater massacre in Aurora, Colorado, and join with others to demand handgun reform, we are reminded once again of a greater, more fundamental change that needs to take place among all of us. This horrific violence, and the daily violence we read about, summons us to make a fundamental turn from violence to nonviolence. Every one of us, and every sector of society, needs to make that turn. Without our conversion to nonviolence, we will be forever stuck in the ancient mindlessness and downward spiral of violence. But we need not be stuck. We can choose to be nonviolent people.

Yes, we have to ban handguns and AK-47s. And we need to abolish war, executions, drones, Trident Submarines, extrajudicial assassination, state-sanctioned violence and nuclear weapons. We have a president who starts his day sending his kids off to school and deciding calmly over coffee whom to assassinate. We send drones over Afghanistan, Yemen and Pakistan which terrorize children and kill them like in some nightmarish "Dark Night" horror film. We execute people legally. And in Los Alamos, New Mexico, we continue to build nuclear weapons as if that was a normal thing to do. We hold the world hostage with our nuclear terrorism.

Everywhere we turn we hear of more violence. We feel it in ourselves as if we've been infected by some kind of plague. For the many young people who are not loved, not taught to be nonviolent, not given any hope or meaning in life, not invited to join the nonviolent struggle for justice and peace, the nihilism and insanity of further violence can feel like a natural progression. "Everyone is violent, so I'll be violent, too," many think. They are not taught how to live nonviolently.

It's a wonder there aren't more massacres.

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. both insisted that we need a fundamental internal conversion from violence to nonviolence as the basis for our work for justice, human rights and peace. Each one of us, they argued day and night, has to reject that pull of violence and choose to live a nonviolent life and join the struggle to create a nonviolent world. This philosophical, moral and spiritual turning is the hardest step of all, the most courageous and the most needed. As more and more of us choose active, creative nonviolence as a way of life, we have a chance of creating a more nonviolent society.

Nonviolence needs to touch every area of society, but sometimes, I'm hard pressed to find any areas of society that could be considered nonviolent. Our schools are training grounds of violence; most universities take millions from the Pentagon to train young people to kill. Wall Street mega-corporations seek only to make money for the elite, and leave the poor and needy poor and needy. The media ignores those who teach and practice nonviolence, and highlights violence morning, noon and night to sell their insipid ads. The legal profession has failed to outlaw our weapons, and the medical profession has failed to fight the epidemic of violence. Hollywood glorifies violence, and brainwashes us into thinking that scenes of mass murder are entertaining.

Our politicians serve the culture of violence and war. Only a handful of leaders, like Barbara Lee, John Lewis and Dennis Kucinich, uphold the politics of active nonviolence. And the churches, mosques and synagogues by and large do not teach nonviolence; instead they support through their silence or outright hypocrisy, the culture of violence and war.

All of that has to change. We need the institutions of civil society to become nonviolent and then to advocate societal nonviolence that we can move toward a new culture of nonviolence.

Without our conversion to nonviolence, we will be forever stuck in the ancient mindlessness and downward spiral of violence. But we need not be stuck. We can choose to be nonviolent people.

Our educators need to step up to the plate and become educators of peace and nonviolence. Every elementary and high school, and every college and university in the U.S. and the world should first of all be a training camp for nonviolence, where the methodologies of nonviolent conflict resolution are taught, and the life of nonviolence is modeled. Everyone in the legal profession should help at some level to outlaw war, weapons, and executions, while everyone in the medical profession should join the campaign to fight the cancer of violence. Everyone in the media should commit themselves to highlighting nonviolent conflict resolution, those who teach it, and how to live in peace. Hollywood should risk making inspiring movies like "Gandhi" and "Romero," instead of "Dark Knight" and "Terminator Salvation." And every church, mosque and synagogue should uphold the spiritual teachings of nonviolence, so that members become formed in their tradition of nonviolence and join the global campaign of disarmament and nonviolence.

Of course, every politician in the United States should be leading us toward a new nonviolent nation. Instead of supporting the Pentagon's wars and the Labs' weapons, politicians should uphold the vision of a new culture of peace and nonviolence and point the way there. In their speeches, they should be asking us, "What would our land look like if there were no more guns, no more bombs, no more wars, no more poverty, if we were all nonviolent—and what do we have to do now to help make that vision of peace come true?" We should be working diligently not only to stop all murders, executions and wars, but to make such horrors a thing of the past.

That means, of course, that the Obama administration should refuse to assassinate anyone, bring the troops home from Afghanistan, dismantle our drones and nuclear weap-

ons, cut the military budget drastically, and use those infinite funds to rebuild our nation and world, including through the systematic education of everyone everywhere in the methodologies of nonviolent conflict resolution.

Gandhi and King insisted that nonviolence is our only hope, but that it requires a profound commitment as well as serious movement organizing. They taught that living and advocating the life of nonviolence, given our global addiction to violence, was the highest human ideal. If we are to survive, one day all our institutions, structures, and nations will be nonviolent.

In light of the Aurora massacre, I hope we can each make a new commitment to nonviolence, and do what we can, like Gandhi and King, to teach and practice nonviolence as a way of life—among our families, in our workplace, in our local community, in our religious house of worship, and in every area of civic society, that creative nonviolence might become the new norm.

I find that it helps to use the word "nonviolence," to talk about it with friends, relatives, co-workers, politicians and religious leaders. As a Gandhian experiment with truth, we can ask people how they define nonviolence, how they are becoming more nonviolent, and what they can do to help create a more nonviolent world. Their answers may surprise us.

"Humanity has to go out of violence only through nonviolence," Gandhi wrote shortly before he was brutally shot down. "Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter hatred only increases the surface, as well as the depth of hatred."

"My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop nonviolence," he continued. "The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes until it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world."

Martin Luther King, Jr. said the same thing—over and over, every day of his life. "The choice is no longer violence or nonviolence," Dr. King said the night before government forces shot him down. "It's nonviolence or non-existence."

Rev. John Dear is the author of 25 books on peace and justice, including most recently Daniel Berrigan: Essential Writings. Visit: www.johndear.org



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America after the Sikh temple shooting

By VALARIE KAUR

Oak Creek, Wisconsin - On Friday, I participated in a memorial for the victims of the 4 August shooting in a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I am a third-generation Sikh American, and as the ceremony drew to a close, I tweeted, "May this not be the last moment the nation watches and mourns with us. May this be the start of lasting solidarity."

Now is the time that we, as Americans already embroiled in an increasingly bitter election year, must curb the rise of hate, fear and discontent in our communities and on the airwaves. We must call on our elected officials, media, educational institutions and faith leaders to renew their commitment to a nation where all can live, work and worship without fear.

Hope can come out of tragedy. In the past week, an untold number of Americans learned something about the Sikh religion. People of all ages, races and religions came together at memorials, in numbers far surpassing expectations. Politicians like New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg renewed the call for stronger gun control. Police officers who put their lives on the line to stop the shooting were hailed as heroes.

Now it's time for everyone, as Sikhs believe, to accept the will of God and move forward, and to jumpstart a national conversation about how to transform hate, fear and polarisation in our country.

Sunday's attack was not an isolated incident. It was part of a pattern of hate and violence against racial and religious minorities in the last decade and long before. Since 9/11, Sikh, Muslim, Arab and South Asian Americans in particular have been marked as automatically suspect in our national imagination. Ignorance about these communities combined with a powerful impulse to scapegoat has led to hate crimes, discrimination, bullying, profiling, and prejudice.

The tragedy in Oak Creek can incite all Americans to do more to support Sikhs and other communities targeted by hate. Many have called for tougher laws restricting access to guns after the shooting. While we must pass tougher and smarter legislation, each of us has the opportunity to step up our commitment to human dignity in our own spheres of influence.

Elected officials and political candidates must commit to civil discourse and stop using ethnically and religiously exclusive rhetoric to score political points. We must recognise

Since 9/11, Sikh, Muslim, Arab and South Asian Americans in particular have been marked as automatically suspect in our national imagination.

that hateful political rhetoric reverberates through society and dangerously activates the imagination of those seeking scapegoats.

Congress must pass the End Racial Profiling Act for all people who endure racial and religious profiling. If our government continues to profile in national security, immigration, and criminal arenas, how can we expect more of a person on the street?

The FBI must begin to track hate crimes against Sikhs. We must be able to measure the scope of this problem in order to solve it, and ensure that law enforcement can better serve all communities.

The media must help keep national attention on the causes and consequences of the tragedy in Oak Creek. Already, me-

dia coverage has rapidly decreased. Reporters can commit to following the story, reporting with accuracy, and maintaining relationships with Sikh Americans about their community's issues.

Let's use what happened in Oak Creek as a teachable moment and continue the conversation at home and in the classroom. We must teach students about Sikhism and world religions, starting in primary school. Sikhism dates to 1469 and is now the world's fifth largest religion, with 26 million and counting. Sikhs first came to the United States in the late 1800s and now more than half a million live here. It's time to incorporate all communities' histories into our educational curricula.

More importantly, educators must step up campus interfaith projects that facilitate dialogue and service in all levels of education. We can equip a rising generation to not only tolerate one another – but to engage with one another with curiosity, compassion, and respect. I believe that storytelling has the power to cultivate the empathy that can change the world. Educators can use storytelling through films like *American Made*, *Divided We Fall*, *Dream in Doubt*, and *Dastar* on their campuses, starting this fall on the 11th anniversary of 9/11.

Together, I believe we can respond to this tragedy with lasting solidarity – and, most importantly, change. As Americans, let's set aside the metaphor of the "melting pot" and embrace the metaphor of a "mosaic" – a home where each of our differences are valued and celebrated.

Valarie Kaur is a filmmaker, legal advocate, interfaith organizer and founding director of Groundswell, an initiative that combines storytelling and advocacy. Learn more about Sikh Americans at <http://www.groundswell-movement.org>

Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), 14 August 2012, www.commongroundnews.org

Notes from John McCutcheon

Adagio, my 22-day writing project in honor of Vedran Smailovic's cello-laced vigil 20 years ago in Sarajevo, yielded nearly thirty new songs that are starting to find their coltish legs in concerts. Expect to hear some of these new pieces when I get to your town.

I'm nearing the completion of my next book, *Flowers of Sarajevo*, based partly on Smailovic's story. It'll be out late 2013-early 2014 thanks to Peachtree Publishers.

August was designed to be a close-to-home month. After that, it's a musical landrush. Until then, my sympathies to those of you in swing states. Keep your heads down and your TVs off. It's toxic out there. Get out, get some fresh air, get

some fresh ideas, hear some live music. I'll close with a quote that came to me after the Aurora, CO shootings. It's over my work desk and is by Leonard Bernstein:

"This will be our reply to violence:
to make music more intensely,
more beautifully,
more devotedly
than ever before."

Folk musician John McCutcheon returns in concert to Modesto in a benefit for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, January 22, 2013.

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Trekking the Rivers: Place-based Environmental Education

By LYNN M. HANSEN, Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences, MJC

For months the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has fixed our attention on tragedy and brought into sharp focus what we easily forget: our economy, culture, history and sense of well-being are inextricably tied to the health of the ecosystem. We also have heard generations of fishermen and coastal residents, dependent on these waters for their livelihood, voicing strong opinions that reflect their sense of place.

In our area, sense of place for many is an abstract concept and often undervalued. In my volunteer job teaching science lessons to elementary school children, I notice that students know much about endangered rainforests, structure of coral reefs, plight of polar bears and endearing stories about penguins. But, if I ask these same students to name the river closest to their town, describe a vernal pool, tell me where a local grassland is, or why any of these places are valuable, they often come up with blank stares and silence. They are disconnected from the uniqueness and importance of their immediate environmental surroundings. Simply put most do not have a sense of place.

Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, suggests that this problem arises from children spending less and less time outside exploring nature. On the other hand, David Sobel, Director of Teacher Certification programs at Antioch University New England offers a solution to the problem of disconnection from place by developing a pedagogy known as *placed-based education*. This curriculum is designed to promote learning rooted in what is local: the unique history, ecology, culture, economy, literature and art



of a region. Each year 4th and 5th grade students participate in a curriculum called *Trekking the Tuolumne River* sponsored by grants through the Tuolumne River Trust and assisted by the Great Valley Museum of Natural History.

First, students are prepared by classroom activities like making a working model of the Tuolumne River watershed, playing a food chain game and developing a river health checklist. After this introduction, students travel to Big Bend on the Tuolumne River where they participate in six activity stations. These California State Science Standards based activities include the following: a trail hike introduction to riparian vegetation, testing river water chemistry, observing geology of river sediments and microscopic organisms in water, planting new trees and shrubs to help restore the floodplain vegetation, learning the many plant uses by native people and identifying tracks and scat samples and animal evidence common to the river ecosystem. Students record their observations on data sheets and use these experiences to create poetry, essays and artwork. This fall, a \$20,000 grant from the California Coastal Commission will allow 5th grade students to extend their trek to see the interconnection of the Tuolumne River with other rivers and the ocean.

Trekking the river is also offered to students in grades 1 and 2 at Salida Elementary. Here young students travel to Caswell State Park where they hike, observe wildlife along the river, test the temperature of the water and sand, prepare leaf imprints of riparian vegetation on photosensitive paper, learn to identify animals tracks, hear stories about native people, determine the sediment size and composition of river sand, identify skulls and teeth of different riparian animals and play an exciting salmon life cycle game. Selected fifth grade students become expeditionary guides for their young colleagues at each activity station, giving the older students experience and confidence in sharing their knowledge of the riparian ecosystem. It is not unusual to hear a young student exclaim, "This is the best day of my life!" or "I'm going to

bring my dad back here."

Other examples of place-based education include Oakdale Unified Elementary School District where fourth grade classes study salmon in the classroom followed by a field trip to Knights Ferry to observe spawning salmon and experience science activities at the river. A few classrooms incubate salmon eggs then release salmonid fingerlings into the Stanislaus River as a community service. Several Modesto City schools trek the Tuolumne River as their outdoor education. As of June 2010 the Tuolumne River Trust reports that 30 schools, 128 teachers, 3,600 4th grade students, 350 parent chaperones and over 21,000 visitors to the Tuolumne River Watershed exhibit at the Great Valley Museum have been educated about their local watershed. Also, six outdoor education sites are now being used for local river study: Waterford River Front Park, Fox Grove, Ceres River Bluff Park, Tuolumne River Regional Park and Gateway Park in Modesto and the Big Bend Outdoor Classroom near Shiloh.

Financial and technical support from community partners, a key component of place-based education, include the following: The Tuolumne River Trust, Great Valley Museum of Natural History, East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, Pacific Gas and Electric, Modesto Irrigation District, Oakdale Irrigation District, Department of Water Resources of the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Caswell State Park and the California Coastal Commission. Because of this support, local students experience our local rivers safely and treasure them. This is how stewardship is born.



ACTION: To participate as a volunteer presenter in Trekking the Tuolumne River programs contact Meg Gonzalez meg@tuolumne.org 236-0330 at Tuolumne River Trust or Molly Flemate flematem@mjc.edu 575-6196

at the Great Valley Museum of Natural History, Modesto, California.

FURTHER READING:

Sobel, David. 2005. *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities*. The Orion Society, Great Barrington, MA. 115 pages.

Louv, Richard. 2008. *Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Algonquin Books, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. 343 pages.

Hansen, L and Meg Gonzalez. 2004. *Trekking the Tuolumne River*. Great Valley Museum of Natural History /Modesto Junior College.



of a region. Initially young students (age 4-7) are introduced to empathy with the natural world; lower elementary students (age 7-11) engage and explore nature; middle school students (ages 11-14) effect social action in the form of community service projects. According to Sobel's theory, such experiences provide knowledge and connectedness foundational to sustainability not only of the ecosystem but the community. Developing a sense of place then, empowers people and motivates them to be problem solvers instead of powerless, unbridled consumers.

Within our region there are several examples of such educational programs. **Salida Elementary School** has become a poster-child for place-based environmental education. The entire school (grades 1-5) participates in outdoor education activities linked to community service and involving local



Woman of the Future

Woman possessed,
of emeralds,
bells and mud,
woman possessed,
of miracles and tears,
sky-scraper of old pains,
and a sunset in crisis,
red dawns,
woman possessed
by monsters
and moribund demons
impregnate the future,
in a sacred tabernacle,
impregnate the future,
a pale mantle,
of a fleeting sky-scraper,
ghosts of the terror,
woman possessed by Hephaestus,
punctuated by Zeus,
female who is jealousy,
I call to you; I conjure thee to the present,
I call aloud,
screaming in childbirth,
I claim you,
I conjure thee,
I call you crying,
I conjure thee to the present,
woman of the future.

Hopes

Hear, woman, if you dare,
without asking you twice,
without mentioning old or new accounts,
if you dare
to get undressed with lies,
to end the indecision that covers,
that hides the reality,
that covers the stupid reality,
that more than once,
drowns the existence,
I know you are a strong woman, brave,
a woman of sun and moon,
of evenings and dawns,
you, strong and valiant woman,
would dare to break the barriers
high and low
rivers and seas
and precipices
you would dare to detoxify the soul
and become lasting and ethereal,
and to become, forever, life and death,
valiant woman,
woman of all and of no one
you would dare to break walls
of pains,
of sadness
and of impeccable joys,
today and always woman
you would dare to make the leap
beyond floods and comets,
beyond wars,
hurricanes and the gulf,
beyond one president
or another,

beyond the terror of miners
swallowed by an earthly dissatisfaction,
you, strong and simple and valiant woman,
always a woman,
that I know very well,
genuinely know,
without asking you twice,
you would cross the bridge
you would jump the icy wall
of indifference
of death and desolation
of terror
that covers, blocks, and blinds the globe
you, born millions of years behind,
born now and always,
you, simple woman,
valiant woman,
you would dare
to discover the lies,
to exhume the dead,
to guide us
oh oh oh oh!,
valiant woman,
woman of today and always.

From the book *Experience and Solitude*

Woman of Sun and Moon

She walked for millions of years and still
she walks
She drew in the sand and still she draws
Screaming without screaming
Singing without singing
Leaving the world in two
This and that
Love and hate
Light and darkness
Lies and the truth
White and black
Happiness and sadness
Proximity and distance
Him and you
Me and her
Present and past
South and north
Cold and hot
She was perfect and it continues being so
And she writes on these petrified walls
Drowned present
From this sad today
She screams
Sings and jumps
And interplays with a rainbow that waits
for him
She is tender and beautiful
And always will be
In transparency she will ride the mare
By the captain
And the selfish inferno of sea horses
Are flying by the masterminds of pain
Cultivating for him and for her
For you and for me
Eternal smiles of hope.

A Necessary Scream

What happened, woman! What happened!
Open that mouth and sing,
Screams, if you want woman, scream,
Travel hidden roads and scream,
It goes up hills and mountains,
Travel plains, highways,
Cross continents and cold regions,
Scream, awful screams,
Those screams are necessary to the world,
It is necessary that somebody sings,
Mainly to those hates and these deaths,
And to these weapons and these people,
Those screams are necessary to the world
Somebody will listen to you,
Scream woman,
Somebody will listen to you,
Scream woman,
Somebody will listen to you,
Scream woman,
As it crosses old brains
And the closed arteries,
And the dying hearts
And the trembling bodies already empty,
Scream with force, scream,
Perhaps they will listen to you,
Writhe, if you want,
And the scream goes, and leaves
Squeezing the words
And leave the scream,
Stretch your spine
And the scream goes, and leaves
Many wait, sweetheart
Wait,
The dead of this new war
Will not stop you
The conspiracies of politicians
Will not stop you
The weapons of mass destruction
Will not stop you
Not even all together.
Scream woman,
Do not remain silent,
Crossing the velocity,
Breaking the speed of sound,
Split in two the speed of lightning
But go out and run
That scream of yours, woman,
That which is hidden
Let it go
Onto a hopeless reality,
Opens that mouth and sing,
Screams with force,
Many wait,
Breaking the hate and the despair
Scream with force, woman,
Cross hot areas and cold zones
Cross miles, one or two million
But scream
Do not be quiet,
Walk woman,
All wait,
They wait with hope.



Vielka Solano: Poet

Vielka Solano, a practicing Physician Assistant and poet, was born in Santiago de los Caballeros in the Dominican Republic in 1960 and has been writing poetry around the theme of human injustice for nearly 30 years. She uses her poetry as a national and global cry out against violence, especially domestic violence.

She studied medicine and political science at the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo and completed her studies at the University of California Davis.

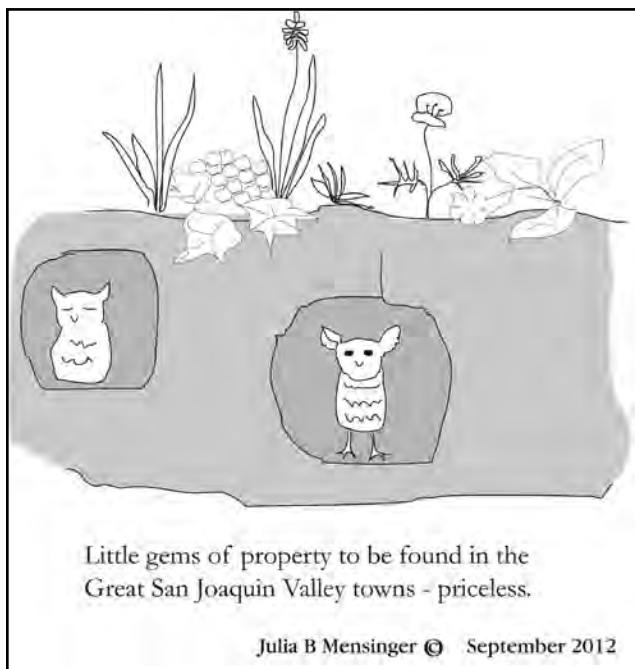
Her passion for helping “neglected humanity” began in her home country as an activist with different political organizations. She is appalled by the statistics of woman affected by domestic violence worldwide. As a Physician Assistant she is reminded daily by her patients of this issue, and her “life goal and dream is to one day eradicate this awful monster from taking over families.” She believes that through her poetry readings she can communicate a message for change.

Poetry from her two published works, *A Woman of Flesh and Verse* (2011), and *Experience and Solitude* (2011), have been read in both Spanish and English in many venues nationally and internationally. Her work has been published in the prestigious *Dominican Republic's Listin Diario* and *Anthology of Poetas Dominicanos* (2011).

Vielka is involved in The Hope Foundation project in Cien Fuego, a barrio in Santiago, DR, struggling to keep children away from landfills and in school. She has used the proceeds from book sales to bring school materials and money to improve the school building. To learn more about this project, visit www.lapreenciondeltrabajoinfantil.blogspot.com [in Spanish] or view the video, “We are the Trash Divers,” on YouTube.

She is working on her third book of poems, which speaks to the emotions and suffering from war.

To contact Vielka, donate toward her work, and/or attend her readings, visit <http://vielkasolano.com>



Green tips for a Green Planet: Green School Supplies

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Pencils and pens and paper... oh my! Recycled notebooks and crayons and backpacks! Staple free staplers, paper clips, rulers...oh my! Lunch boxes and healthy, waste-free lunches!

Now that the kids are spending so many daytime hours back at school, parents can invest time and money insuring that they are spending those hours in a healthy, safe and sustainable environment. The Green Schools Initiative (www.greenschools.net) suggests parents use its Parent Toolkit to track whether schools promote health and well-being with good indoor air quality, limited exposure to toxic chemicals, healthy food service options, and access to recess and physical education." The Green Schools Initiative offers numerous guidelines, programs, networks and specific links for empowering kids and helping to create a green footprint at school sites.

Individual families can make a difference by shopping on-line at sites that provide large selections of sustainable, natural, organic, recycled, eco-friendly products with the health of families and the planet in mind.

Lynn Lavanga on The IdeaMarketers website offers many green school supply suggestions at <http://www.ideamarketers.com/?articleid=3483425>. [Note: Connections cannot reprint them here due to permission issues.]

TreeSmart offers colorful newspaper rolled pencils, and points out that recycling a 2-foot stack of newspapers saves one 20-foot pine tree; <http://www.treesmart.com>

The Ultimate Green Store is a one-stop shopping destination for eco-conscious products of all kinds, and offers school fundraising through its "Save the Planet – Sustain Your School" program. See <http://www.theultimategreenstore.com>

The opportunities for reducing, reusing and recycling school supplies and ensuring a healthy, sustainable school environment are many. Melissa Breyer, Senior Editor at the Care2 Healthy and Green Living website, has written an entertaining article (<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/best-cool-green-school-supplies.html#ixzz24CvM1F8R>) outlining "The Best Cool Green School Supplies."

Join us next month for Green Halloween tips.

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In Memoriam

JOHN MUDIE

December 3, 1929 — May 25, 2012

JANE JACKSON

JUNE 14, 1929 — JULY 30, 2012

Correction

We regret that we left out the source of the article we ran on Tom Hampson in the last issue on page 10. It is from the University of Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters News at <http://al.nd.edu/news/30708-theology-alumnus-strives-for-social-justice/>

Holiday Gift Bags for Women's Prison

By DAVID HETLAND

The Inmate Family Council at the Central California Women's Prison in Chowchilla will once again be distributing gift bags to inmates during the winter holiday season.

Due to the realignment process (AB109), the population of the prison is expected to soar to more than 4000 by December, which represents a huge challenge to the many caring individuals and organizations throughout the local area who work to gather needed items.

You can help by collecting travel/sample sizes of the following: soap, shampoo, conditioner, skin/body lotion, toothpaste and tissue. There's also a need for adult size toothbrushes (individually wrapped), full-size wood pencils with erasers, and unused greeting cards with envelopes.

ACTION: Donated items may be brought to the Modesto Peace/Life Center office (call ahead to make sure the office is open). For more information, contact Shelly (521-6304), shellys833@aol.com, or Dave (388-1608), dhetland2003@yahoo.com

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Craonne; legacy of the Great War

By DANIEL NESTLERODE

Some of the terrible weight of the memory of The Great War is carried by sites in the Aisne department of the region of Picardie in France. You won't find too many American cemeteries (Americans fought mostly farther south in the Marne), but you will find plenty of French National Cemeteries, German and British cemeteries holding row upon row of markers for men who gave their lives in a war that staggers the imagination for both cause and human cost.

Many Americans like to think of The Great War (or World War I) as a brief and righteous foray into Europe that made the world safe for democracy. From a European perspective, it was longer, bloodier, and more ambiguous. By the time Woodrow Wilson had worked up enough fervent support in the U.S. to enter the war, Europeans had been killing each other by the thousand for nearly 3 full years. The human loss and devastation have left a mark on France that is still visible.

Most towns and villages here in northern and eastern France have monuments in central places honoring the sacrifice of local sons in The Great War. Old Craonne does not. It has lacked French residents since 1914 and human occupants since 1917. Whatever monuments it held were destroyed by French artillery nearly century ago.

Old Craonne lies at a small cross roads on the eastern end of the Chemin de Dames, a road that runs west to east across the Aisne, cresting a small ridge between Soisson and Corbeny. Merely a track in the 18th century, it was improved by the local duke to honor and ease the regular passing of two daughters of Louis XV. A plateau on the eastern edge of the ridge, just above old Craonne, played host to a major battle in the Napoleonic Wars in 1814, and by 1914, the road itself became a front line of The Great War and a pivotal point in European history.

Germany held Chemin de Dames and most of the land north of it, including the depopulated village of Craonne, following the First Battle of the Aisne. France needed to retake Chemin de Dames in order to stave off possible direct advances on Paris. General Robert Nivelle planned and executed an offensive to meet that goal in April 1917. As part of that offensive Nivelle ordered a 6-day artillery bombardment on German positions, including Craonne. The village was completely destroyed in the barrage.

While the barrage of Craonne and subsequent battle suc-



cessfully unseated the German command forces in Craonne, the larger offensive failed utterly. Nivelle was blamed for poor planning and too much reliance on heavy artillery. 900 Senegalese, French colonial soldiers, were simply wiped out in an afternoon. 40,000 men died in the first day of battle. At the end of 12 days of fighting, the total losses on both sides amounted to more than 300,000 men. French soldiers who had bravely fought and taken ground away from the Germans on the east end of Chemin de Dames felt ill-used by the French high command, and many of them committed mutiny. Several mutineers shot commanding officers.

After the war, Craonne was rebuilt a single kilometer

southwest of the original site because the original site had been made uninhabitable by Nivelle's bombardment. Today it remains a tiny remnant of the former village. In 1911 old Craonne was home to 600 people, in 1921 new Craonne held only 44. The population is not much larger today. Perhaps it is a victim of the selective memory of nationalist politics. The Allies eventually won The Great War and the debacle of Nivelle's offensive could be swept under the rug of national memory.

But local memory remained intact and the stories of the soldiers who fought and died on Chemin de Dames were kept by people who knew the story should be told. Author, pacifist, and veteran of World War II, Yves Gibeau, bought a small rectory in Roucy, not far from Chemin de Dames, and started examining its history. He highlighted the Chemin de Dames as an example of the pointless excesses of war, and he spent many hours in the ruins of old Craonne.

Gibeau died in 1994 and requested burial in the cemetery at old Craonne. His request was granted, and by 2007 the French national forest service began work on a unique memorial to old Craonne and its political and military roles in The Great War.

The work was completed in three years, and today old Craonne is the site of both a thoughtful and informative war memorial and an arboretum that is houses examples of significant tree species in the world. Among the Thuya, Liquidamber, Cypresses, firs, and pines you will find a Giant Sequoia, a little piece of home away from home for a visitor from California. In the northeast corner is the resting place of Yves Gibeau, who did much to bring the tragedy of Chemin de Dames and old Craonne back to national awareness in France.

The layout of the arboretum follows the boulevards and lanes of the village. Individual trees are marked, as are points of former interest in the town. For example, visitors are alerted to the site of the Eglise St. Martin by a plaque explaining the site and showing the church's position in the old village. And lest you should despair of visiting old Craonne (or any site along Chemin de Dames for that matter) for fear that you will not understand the texts, know that all of the plaques and information panels are translated from French to both English and German.

Picardie carries the weight of these terrible events, but the government of France has begun to share that burden. The Arboretum of Old Craonne is just one example of the good work being carried out all along Chemin de Dames.



Remembering Hiroshima at the gates of Livermore Lab.

Photo: Bill Warner



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