



Remember MLK on February 12!

By **DAN ONORATO** and **JAMES COSTELLO**

The 28th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration returns this year as a YouTube virtual event on Saturday, February 12, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

For the past 28 years, the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration has had a distinguished history in our community and has presented at Modesto Junior College an array of amazing Civil Rights era leaders as well as current activists who keep alive Dr. King's message of social and economic justice.

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a very special virtual program will be presented. In the spirit of Dr. King, some exciting young people will offer their thoughts on important issues like voting rights and democracy.

Your host, Judge Rubén Villalobos, will help us look back on some of the inspirational speakers that Modesto has had the privilege of meeting and hearing. There will be clips of Yolanda King, daughter of Martin Luther

King Jr., "Good Trouble" Congressman John Lewis, and beloved poet Maya Angelou who spoke to a standing room only audience in the MJC gymnasium in 2001.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award, honoring individuals who have a long history of community service, will be given posthumously to teacher, activist and community volunteer, **Shelly Scribner**, and will be accepted by her daughter, Juniper Scribner. A second award will be given to the **Rev. Dean Dodd** of the Cleansing Hope Shower Shuttle and the Church in the Park for his service to Modesto's homeless.

For the link to YouTube, visit:

<https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/ahc/mlkcommemoration.php>

Organizational sponsors: the Modesto Peace/Life Center; Modesto Junior College; NAACP-Stanislaus; City of Modesto, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department; California State University, Stanislaus; and Blue Shield of California.

New home projects add to homeless problem

By **BRUCE FROHMAN**, *The Valley Citizen*

Logically, new home construction should help reduce homelessness in Stanislaus County. This is not what is happening. With few exceptions, lower income people in Stanislaus County have been priced out of housing and rental markets.

When new single-family homes sell for over \$400,000 and apartments are not being built, the majority of new home buyers in Stanislaus County most likely will come from the Bay Area. Given higher housing prices there, Modesto's new homes look inexpensive.

The Modesto area work force has many low paying jobs, especially in agriculture and the service industry. Someone who earns \$15 per hour or less will probably never be able to afford a \$400,000 home and may be unable to afford local rents. Only local professionals can afford a new home at current prices, and most are satisfied where they are living.

In the 1980's, new homebuilders did most of their product marketing in the Bay Area. Modesto saw its population nearly doubling from 107,000 in 1980 to about 205,000 in 2000. Much of the population increase came from Bay Area immigrants, who snapped up new the new homes because they couldn't afford to buy where they work.

Local developers placed full-page advertisements in San Francisco and San Jose newspapers and ran commercials on Bay Area radio stations. Today, one can still hear such advertisements on Bay Area radio for new subdivisions in Lathrop, the huge project along I-580 in Tracy and Mountain House.

Undoubtedly, the expensive housing going up in Modesto's Tivoli project and Riverbank's proposed Riverwalk project will require marketing to Bay Area citizens. Few

local residents will be able to afford these new homes, with the possible exceptions of those willing to sell their existing residence in order to move.

According to Realtor.com, the average price of a pre-owned home is now \$425,000 in Modesto. As the area median price for a used home is about the same as a new home, real estate sales agents will also need to market resales to Bay Area customers.

Lack of Needed Housing

At the latest count, Modesto has over 2500 homeless individuals. Stanislaus County has committed to providing housing for about 500 homeless via the purchase and rehabilitation of old motels. After the county honors its commitment, the area will have remaining at least 2000 homeless persons with more coming due to inadequate wages and escalating rent that is a result of very limited affordable housing stock and too few new units under construction.

Instead of building housing to serve a customer base that does not live here, we should be building multi-family units that meet local needs. Builders choose projects that they think will optimize profits with the least amount of effort. Local government subsidizes the projects. What is truly needed by the community does not get built. Bad policy results in increasing numbers of homeless throughout Stanislaus County.

Limited Resources versus the Free Market Myth

The difference between single family and multi-family construction is single family can be built more quickly and flipped more

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MAPS spring schedule

MAPS offers free, informative, and engaging community science programs, 7:30 pm. Participate by logging on to an Internet Link: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/maps.php> to sign up for notification of the link.

For archived MAPS talks: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLL81u2WuJbe6joR9r56BIf8UIXFdRXNxe>

February 25: *Weather vs. Climate Impacts on Our Environment*. Family Science presentation. Channel 3 meteorologist Dirk Verdoorn, keynote speaker, will be joined by MJC students for a panel discussion. The presentation focuses on the difference between weather and climate and the impacts climate can have on our environment. Dirk will emphasize the importance of being good stewards of our planet. Dirk Verdoorn - KCRA



March 25: *The Rise and Recent Fall of Sierra Nevada Glaciers*. Greg Stock, Ph.D., Yosemite National Park Geologist, discusses the essential role glaciers have played in shaping the Sierra Nevada. The impending loss of these glaciers will likely have ripple effects throughout the high elevations of Yosemite. **Presentation by ZOOM.**

April 22: *Paleoanthropologist excavations of Homo naledi in the Rising Star Cave*. Dr. Marina Elliott is a biological anthropologist, interested in the Human Journey – how, why and when humans became who we are today. In 2013 she became one of six “Underground Astronauts” on the Rising Star Expedition, which led to the naming of a new hominin species, *Homo naledi*. Discovered deep in a cave in the Cradle of Humankind in September 2013, *Homo naledi* is one of the newest members of the human family. In just 8 years it has become one of the largest assemblages of fossil hominins in the world and is notable for the unprecedented quality and completeness of the remains. Marina Elliott - Wikipedia, How Finding This Human Ancestor Is Making Us Rethink Our Origins | Nat Geo Live. Presentation by ZOOM

MAPS is grateful to the MJC Foundation, SCOE, MJC, the MTA (Modesto Teachers Assn.) and the GVM for generous support.

MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER
Working for **peace, justice**
and a **sustainable future**

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Join Us for the Second in a Series of Livestream John McCutcheon Concerts

By KEN SCHROEDER

The second in a series of livestream John McCutcheon concerts to benefit the Modesto Peace/Life Center. The concert, 50 years of Traditional Music, is Sunday, March 6 at 4:00 PM Pacific Time on Mandolin, an excellent streaming service.

Though John is often thought of as one of the most prolific and powerful songwriters in folk music, his roots are firmly planted in traditional music. As a young 20-year-old he traveled the Appalachians, apprenticing himself to some of the greats of traditional Southern music.

This concert will feature an homage to his many mentors, selections from his field recordings housed at the Library of Congress' Archive of American Folksong, and some very special surprises.

Single concert ticket prices are \$20 single ticket; \$30 family/household; \$10 student; \$5 unemployed; \$50 music supporter. The Modesto Peace/Life Center gets a share of ticket sales. Tickets and info here: <https://boxoffice.mandolin.com/products/john-mccutcheon-50-years-of-traditional-music-livestream-ticket>

New home projects add to homeless problem



easily. Homebuilders don't need to tie up as much capital for as long a period.

Decisions on when and what to build are thus most often based on short-term profit, while ignoring genuine local need. Every version of the Modesto General Plan has zoned for adequate multi-family affordable home construction — and every plan has been amended by each successive city council to deviate from the plan.

Housing for its low-income population is what Stanislaus County needs the most. It isn't getting built because the gatekeepers have chosen to ignore the need.

By encouraging more immigration from the Bay Area, new homebuilders and local governments are not only perpetuating the housing shortage, but also setting up the area for greater shortage and larger numbers of homeless in the future.

The blight and urban decay within Stanislaus County cities and towns seems to be growing as local governments focus on promoting development of commuter housing on the edges of towns rather than on promoting redevelopment

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with multi-family units. This policy is not sustainable and will lead to growth of the homeless population over time.

State and County Budget Surpluses

Budget decisions at both state and county levels seem focused on government-run construction of affordable housing, a task government is ill suited to perform. These entities should be controlling new construction by policy, not by throwing money at projects that are not cost effective for government to undertake.

A more viable solution would be to set up the respective budget surpluses to provide low interest loans to multi-family homebuilders willing to construct affordable housing. The loans could then be repaid when the completed projects are sold to private investors. Taxpayers would not expend any money, but a social good would be achieved.

Good government policy decisions could target locations where multi-family units could be built within redevelopment areas, which would minimize new infrastructure costs and, therefore, minimize the cost to build the affordable housing. A well-run program could create wins for homebuilders, investors, first time homebuyers and lower income workers. The entire community would also win with fewer homeless on the streets, newly rehabilitated areas, and more attractive cities.

Solutions exist. When will those who have the ability to solve our affordable housing problems make a genuine concerted effort?

Eulogy For My Mom, Shelly Scribner

By JUNIPER SCRIBNER

Delivered at Modesto's Congregation Beth Shalom on November 12, 2021

Welcome and thank you all for being here to remember and honor my mom during this difficult time. And thank you to those who are joining us via Zoom. For those of you who do not know me, I am Juniper Scribner, Shelly Scribner's daughter. As many of you know, my mom was involved in many activities both before and after her retirement. Prior to her retirement she worked with children and babies that had disabilities at John F. Kennedy School in Ceres and for many more years within the Merced County School system. She was a special education teacher and loved what she did. She enjoyed working with the children and their families and especially enjoyed home visits where she interacted with the families. She loved connecting with people.

She was always wanting to help people less fortunate than her and instilled that value in me. I remember as a child, she, and another friend, started a children's craft program at a hotel housing many homeless families in the Modesto area. One night a week, parents who were staying at the hotel, could drop off their children for an hour of crafts, snacks, and if we knew a child had a birthday, a spontaneous birthday party with presents and cake. I accompanied her on many occasions to help her volunteer with the kids at this temporary shelter.

When I was growing up, my mom was always very involved in my schooling and extracurricular activities. Even though she was working full time to support us, she took time off to go on some of my field trips in elementary school such as the time we stayed on a boat in San Francisco Bay and learned the life and duties of old-time sailors. Or the time she went to Yosemite with the class when we learned about the pioneers.

Her involvement in my school activities continued into high school where I was involved in the band. I remember she went on a trip to Hawaii with me where the band was scheduled to compete. Even though she was a single mom raising me, she wanted to give me everything she could and didn't want me to miss out on opportunities. I remember fundraising for the band Hawaii trip and for an opportunity to be an exchange student in Japan. Back in the day when this was allowed, we would go to Costco and buy boxes of candy for me to sell at school. I remember selling a lot of candy back then.

When I was around 8, my mom joined forces with Gil, a single father raising his two boys. We became an instant family. They raised us together and watched us grow up. We had many birthday celebrations, Thanksgivings, Hanukahs,

Christmases, and graduations. We were always celebrating something while growing up in our loving home. Gil's sons, Bobby, and John, along with their families are a big part of my life and I am so grateful that my mom met Gil when she did. Sadly, Gil passed away a few months ago.

My mom and I were very close, and words cannot express the love and bond that we had for each other. When I went away to college, she began immersing herself in many activities. She went back to school and earned her master's degree in special education. She also continued her involvement with organizations like the Modesto Peace/Life Center and joined several other organizations.

Most of her activities revolved around social justice, politics, education, the environment, and other organizations that focused on helping others in need and helping the environment. She was passionate about the volunteer work she did. Even after retiring from teaching, she went to work temporarily as a house-mom in a drug rehabilitation place for women who wanted to be reunited with their children.

My mom and I spent a lot of time together, especially in later years. We were travel companions going on tours to Europe, Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and Eastern Europe. We traveled to various states out west such as Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Hawaii, and many more. Each year we went to Rhode Island to see family and saw many of the states on the east coast. Rhode Island was our home away from home where my mom's mother, two brothers, sister-in-law, two nieces, two great nieces and one great nephew lived. The last two trips that we took together were in 2019, pre-pandemic. We saw our family in Rhode Island and went to Poland with Rabbi Shalom Bochner and members of this congregation. We had an amazing time on both trips.

Besides traveling together, we also watched movies on Netflix snuggled up on the couch with a warm cup of tea and a chocolate chip cookie or a piece of pie. We also would enjoy many lunches of bagels and lox, my mom's favorite meal. Or we spent many hours just chatting and enjoying each other's company.

And in case you were wondering, my mom was also a good Jewish mom, always giving me chicken soup when I was sick or if I was feeling down. I had to have at least one container in my freezer for emergencies. She also said that she didn't have much money to give me, but she could give me food. I always told her all she needed to give me was her love, which she did. After I would visit her, she would make sure to send me home with a lot of food. Even more recently when I would go grocery shopping for her, she would try to send some food home with me. I would tell her that I can go to the store anytime, this food is for you to eat. But she would persist and give me at least something so that I did not leave empty handed.

Prior to moving to Modesto, my mom and I lived in Napa. My mom used to make jam with one of her good friends from Napa and continued the tradition after she moved to Modesto. I wanted to learn the jam making process, so we began a mother/daughter jamming session. Each year we would make different kinds of jams. I always wanted to make something new and unique. I remember the first time we made jam together, I asked her if we should wear gloves.



*Celebration of Life for
Shelly Patrick Scribner
June 20, 1942 - November 6, 2021*



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celebrate Shelly's life. Wear your
tie-dye, colorful hats, and
dancing shoes.*

February 20, 2022, 1-4pm
Teamster's Local 948
1222 I Street, Modesto, CA

RSVP by February 10 to Elaine Gorman,
(209) 577-1480, vevado@yahoo.com

COVID Safety Precautions:
Vaccinations/boosters for those
eligible. Negative COVID test for those
not eligible for vaccinations. Masks
required.

I am a scientist, and I am used to sterile techniques, including wearing gloves. She thought that was funny and said no, we don't need to wear gloves. I kept insisting that we should, and she kept insisting that is not how jam is made. I eventually relented and made jam using the semi-sterile non-gloved technique. It was a special bonding time for us both, her passing on a tradition to me, and I am so fortunate that we were able to jam together a couple of months ago.


I could go on for hours about my mom's amazing life and would be happy to tell more stories another time. For the last couple of years, we spoke on the phone every day and shared our daily experiences with each other. We texted every morning when we got up and every evening before we went to bed. She was my number one advocate and supporter and always gave me advice when I asked or even when I didn't ask. She was a strong, independent woman who loved helping others and I admired her greatly. She was generous with her love and time and a role model to many, especially for me. She was so accepting of everyone and incredibly honest and genuine. I was so lucky to have her for my mother. I miss her so much and will cherish all our time and memories we had together. My mom was my best friend.

Thank you all for being a part of my moms' life. It gives me comfort to know that she had so many people supporting her over the years. She inspired me to work on making this a better planet and I hope she inspired you as well.

One last thing, my mom wanted to have a celebration of life with dancing, singing, good food and loud music. And she wanted it to be happy. So, to honor her wishes, I am hoping to organize an event for February, specifically during almond blossom season, so please be on the lookout for that. If anyone wants to help organize, I would totally appreciate it. Thank you.

Note: The Celebration of Life will be held on **February 20, 2022, 1-4pm**, Teamster's Local 948, 1222 I St., Modesto, CA. **COVID Safety Precautions:** Vaccinations/boosters for those eligible. Negative COVID test for those not eligible for vaccinations. Masks required.

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Salvatore Salerno: Modesto Poet Laureate & Valley Wildlife Advocate

By TOM PORTWOOD

When Salvatore Salerno became Modesto's eighth Poet Laureate in 2021, the City recognized a fine poet and a distinguished former educator – and Mr. Salerno is both those – but, as a longtime President of Stanislaus Audubon, he is also one of the Valley's most ardent advocates for wildlife protection and preservation.

Mr. Salerno's story – one of resilience and persistence – begins not under California skies, but in the Empire State.

"I started off on the low side of life, as they say," Mr. Salerno thoughtfully recounted recently. "I was born in 1947 in the South Bronx, in a neighborhood so poor that they tore it down to build a slum. I had difficulty coming along with what we now call a dysfunctional family but looked to education as my salvation."

Entering high school "rather early" in Manhattan, the young Sal Salerno next applied to the City College of New York (CCNY), which, as he explained, "at that time was available for poor students who had some merit. At the age of 16, I took the exams and received four years tuition-free college. Back then, CCNY was called the Harvard of the Proletariat, which is a term I've always enjoyed. There I met a few teachers who encouraged my interest in creative writing, one of them being James Leo Herlihy, who wrote *Midnight Cowboy*."

But while New York offered much to a budding writer like himself, Mr. Salerno admits that the city had a fundamental "lack of nature," something he particularly longed to experience after attending summer camp one year. "I discovered a whole green world of nature I had never seen before," he reminisced. "So, I did leave New York City, for California. My mother and sister had moved there before me. When I came to California, I hiked the deserts and the mountains. I did a lot of exploring in the late sixties and early seventies, finally settled down and decided to go to school at Fresno State, and take my Master's degree. It was there that I met my now-wife Barbara, who was then finishing her Master's in Art."

At Fresno State, Mr. Salerno encountered a vibrant enclave of poets, headed by the late Philip Levine, who would go on to serve as the U.S. Poet Laureate in 2011-2012. "That was where I first began to have a desire to write poetry and found I had a proclivity for it. At Fresno State, it was good in the sense that I was surrounded by people who were reading poetry and Levine brought in many people I admired, so it was a powerful community."

While he had profited from the experience at Fresno State, better opportunities lay elsewhere for Mr. Salerno, as it turned out.

"Barbara and I got married in Yosemite in 1979," he related. "We packed up Barbara's car, and I applied to the MFA program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, which is where I became a teaching assistant. After a year, I applied to a wonderful program called the Visiting Artists Program in which the North Carolina community college system hired me as an artist to work full-time in the community to do outreach to the schools. That enabled me not only to get a full-time check as an artist, but also enabled Barbara and me to have health insurance and to start a family."

After his time with the Visiting Artists Program had



concluded, Mr. Salerno completed his master's at Greensboro, and he and his wife once again moved across the country – this time with two young daughters in tow.

Once back home in California, Mr. Salerno was able to secure a position at Grace Davis High School in 1987, teaching English, Drama, and Speech Competition. "The first year was indeed grueling, becoming familiar with three separate academic programs," he recalled. "I felt teaching Drama was a creative outlet for me. As my daughters were growing up, I set aside poetry for a while and worked on creating and producing plays, two of which I wrote and were performed by my students on the stage at Davis High School. I produced a total of 24 plays in 12 years there, including a couple of musicals, some classic Agatha Christie plays. We did *Enemy of the People*, *Harvey*. So that was a lot of fun."

Finally retiring in 2008 from Davis High School, Mr. Salerno had spent the previous nine years teaching English to seniors. It was at this point in his life that he returned unimpeded to his two great loves – poetry (and writing generally) and nature.

"I immediately went back into poetry and got involved with the community that Gillian Wegener had created around it locally and began going to the Barkin' Dog for the monthly readings. Because of my desire to hike and spend time in nature, I began to look at birds more closely, and as I was writing about birds, I tried to be very specific about what I was seeing or hearing."

When the Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center first began, Mr. Salerno was one of its founding board members and continues to this day as one of its most active volunteers, hosting a regular Zoom discussion group about poetry books called "Coffee, Tea, and Poetry." Over the years, he has also published several books of poetry, a book of plays, a book of short stories, and two volumes of essays and articles.

"I enjoy writing a great deal and sharing my writing

with other people, Mr. Salerno remarked. "If poetry does anything that other art forms don't do directly it is an eloquent voice for emotions and passions in concentrated, beautiful language. It's not quite music, but it's still a very powerful tool to express our thoughts or feelings on what we are going through in life. Regardless of whether it reaches a few people, or many, it's an essential part of our lives. Poetry is a desire toward song, a thanksgiving or praise-giving, but it can also be criticism and a cry for social justice. It runs the gamut. There is no subject that can't be written about with poetry."

As the President of Stanislaus Audubon for a dozen years now, Mr. Salerno is as passionate about nature and its beauty as he is about the power of poetry to transcend and transform.

"I do believe that we sometimes view our own station in life as primary, and nature as a sort of a backdrop," he stated. "When, in a larger sense, all the things we do as people, including politics, are really temporary when compared to the eternal verities of nature – the sea, the sky, the mountains – all these things are forever above and below us, and we are forever shifting while they remain the same. When the pandemic came, everybody retreated into their homes, and nature sort of replenished itself, came back, and it just was interesting to me to witness this whole surge of life going on. Nature is always there as a touchstone for our lives. It would be good to remember that."

"I should say that by nature I don't mean that we have to go somewhere to get there – we are always in nature, even when we're in the city. Our human nature is part of nature itself. It's our connectedness to each other and other creatures that inspires me to write."

Even as the pandemic continues to be a challenge, Mr. Salerno has been actively pursuing opportunities to write poems in his position as Modesto's Poet Laureate. He's written several already and is currently in the midst of preparing two more. He reflected for a moment when asked about being Poet Laureate: "It certainly makes feel good, especially since I had applied for the position once before, but also to follow in the footsteps of Gillian Wegener and Stella Beratlis, as well as Ed Bearden, and Sam Pierstroff and all the other fine poets who have preceded me as Poet Laureate."

Mr. Salerno had one final thought to add:

"If you are at all sensitive to the century of the environment – which obviously is our century – then be kind and gentle to the environment and seek ways to preserve and protect it. If you are at all sensitive to local community, again, be kind and gentle to people around you, and help when you can. And finally, if you are at all disposed to creativity, continue writing and expressing yourself for the help of others."

Mr. Salerno's books can be purchased at Yesterday's Books and The Great Valley Museum.

Be informed!

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

Mindfulness in Life and Death

Thich Nhat Hanh, who taught mindfulness for decades, approached death in that same spirit.

By BROOKE SCHEDNECK

Thich Nhat Hanh, the monk who helped popularize mindfulness in the West, died in the Từ Hiếu temple in Huế, Vietnam, on Jan. 22, 2022. He was 95.

In 2014, Thich Nhat Hanh suffered a stroke. After that, he was unable to speak or continue his teaching. In October 2018, he expressed his wish, using gestures, to return to the temple in Vietnam where he had been ordained as a young monk. Devotees from many parts of the world continued to visit him at the temple.

As a scholar of the contemporary practices of Buddhist meditation, I have studied his simple yet profound teachings, which combine mindfulness with social change, and which I believe will continue to have an impact around the world.

Peace Activist

In the 1960s, Thich Nhat Hanh played an active role promoting peace during the years of war in Vietnam. He was in his mid-20s when he became active in efforts to revitalize Vietnamese Buddhism for peace efforts.

Over the next few years, Thich Nhat Hanh set up a number of organizations based on Buddhist principles of nonviolence and compassion. His School of Youth and Social Service, a grassroots relief organization, consisted of 10,000 volunteers and social workers offering aid to war-torn villages, rebuilding schools and establishing medical centers.

He also established the Order of Interbeing, a community of monastics and lay Buddhists who made a commitment to compassionate action and supported war victims. In addition, he founded a Buddhist university, a publishing house, and a peace activist magazine as ways to spread the message of compassion.



PHOTO: Duc (pixiduc), Paris, France.

In 1966, Thich Nhat Hanh traveled to the United States and Europe to appeal for peace in Vietnam.

In lectures delivered across many cities, he compellingly described the war's devastation, spoke of the Vietnamese people's wish for peace, and appealed to the U.S. to cease its air offensive against Vietnam.

During his years in the U.S., he met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967.

However, because of his peace work and refusal to choose sides in his country's civil war, both the communist and noncommunist governments banned him, forcing Thich Nhat Hanh to live in exile for over 40 years.

During these years, the emphasis of his message shifted from the immediacy of the Vietnam War to being present in the moment—an idea that has come to be called “mindfulness.”

Being Aware of the Present Moment

Thich Nhat Hanh first started teaching mindfulness in the mid-1970s. The main vehicle for his early teachings was his books. In The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation, for example, Thich Nhat Hanh gave simple instructions on how to apply mindfulness to daily life.

In his book You Are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment, he urged people to pay attention to what they were experiencing in their body and mind at any given moment and to not dwell in the past or think of the future. His emphasis was on the awareness of the breath. He taught his readers to say internally, “I’m breathing in; this is an in-breath. I’m breathing out; this is an out-breath.”

People interested in practicing meditation didn’t need to spend days at a meditation retreat or find a teacher. His teachings emphasized that mindfulness could be practiced anytime, even when doing routine chores. Even when doing dishes, people could simply focus on the activity and be fully present. Peace, happiness, joy, and true love, he said, could be found only in the present moment.

Mindfulness in America

Thich Nhat Hanh’s mindfulness practices don’t advocate disengagement with the world. Rather, in his view, the practice of mindfulness could lead one toward “compassionate action,” like practicing openness to others’ viewpoints and sharing material resources with those in need.

Jeff Wilson, a scholar of American Buddhism, argues in his book Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American Culture that it was Thich Nhat Hanh’s combination of daily mindfulness practices with action in the world that contributed to the earliest strands of the mindfulness movement. This movement eventually became what Time magazine in 2014 called the “mindful revolution.” The article argues that the power of mindfulness lies in its universality, as the practice has entered into corporate headquarters, political offices, parenting guides, and diet plans.

For Thich Nhat Hanh, however, mindfulness was not a means to a more productive day but a way of understanding “interbeing,” the connection and codependence of everyone and everything. In a documentary, Walk With Me, he illustrated interbeing in the following way:

A young girl asks him how to deal with the grief of her recently deceased dog. He instructs her to look into the sky and watch a cloud disappear. The cloud has not died but has become the rain and the tea in the teacup. Just as the cloud is alive in a new form, so is the dog. Being aware and mindful of the tea offers a reflection on the nature of reality. He believed this understanding could lead to more peace in the world.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s Lasting Impact

Thich Nhat Hanh will have a lasting impact through the legacy of his teachings in over 100 books, 11 global practice centers, over 1,000 global lay communities, and dozens of online community groups. The disciples closest to him—the 600 monks and nuns ordained in his Plum Village tradition, along with lay teachers—have been planning to continue their teacher’s legacy for some time.

They have been writing books, offering teachings, and leading retreats for several decades now. In March 2020, the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation, along with Lion’s Roar, hosted an online summit called “In the Footsteps of Thich Nhat Hanh” to make people aware of his teachings through the disciples he trained.

Although Thich Nhat Hanh’s death will change the community, his practices for being aware in the present moment and creating peace will live on.

This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article. This is an updated version of a piece first published on March 18, 2019.

BROOKE SCHEDNECK is an assistant professor of religious studies at Rhodes College, where her research interests include contemporary Buddhism, religions of Southeast Asia, gender in Asian religions, and religious tourism.

From *Yes Magazine*.

KCBP Community Radio Seeks Volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center’s Community Radio Station the “Voice of the Valley” KCBP 95.5 FM needs volunteers to help develop the following programs:

Children • Art • Poetry • News/Journalism
• Education • Health • Science • Social Justice • Multicultural • Music/All Genres

Other Opportunities: Underwriting
• Fundraising/Event Committee • Community Outreach

Contact Jocelyn Cooper,
KCBP Development
Director, (209) 422-0119
kcbpvolapp@gmail.com



The Decline of Unions and the Ongoing Struggle for Workers' Rights

By LAWRENCE WITTNER

Trade union demonstrators held at bay by soldiers during the 1912 Lawrence textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Photograph Source: <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/teacher/DBQlaw2.htm> – Public Domain

During 2021, there were signs of growing militancy in America's beleaguered union movement, as thousands of workers went out on strike at John Deere, Kellogg's, Nabisco, Frito-Lay, Volvo, Frontier Communications, New York University, and Columbia University, as did thousands more from the ranks of union carpenters, hospital workers, airport workers, and coal miners.

Even so, William Scheuerman argues in this new, groundbreaking book, U.S. unions are in deep trouble and, acting alone, they "cannot deliver a resurgent labor movement."

Scheuerman is well-qualified to deal with labor issues for, in addition to his academic credentials as professor emeritus of political science at SUNY/Oswego, he served as president of United University Professions (the largest higher education union in the United States) for 14 years and as president of the AFL-CIO's National Labor College for another two.

The grim picture of U.S. unions painted by Scheuerman in *A New American Labor Movement* is one that many union activists privately acknowledge. Union density in the nation has sharply fallen over the years, dropping from 34.8 percent of the workforce in 1954 to 10.8 percent in 2020. Furthermore, the recent upsurge of strike activity comes as a surprise only because it counters the long-term decline in the number of strikes and strikers in the nation. Rather than being on a march to power, most U.S. unions are engaged in a struggle for survival.

Why has this occurred? Scheuerman argues persuasively that "big business and its cronies are waging an all-out war against organized labor as the last bastion of resistance against corporate hegemony." In this war, corporations have prevailed by closing U.S. manufacturing plants and investing overseas, fiercely resisting union organizing drives, firing union activists, vastly outspending unions in political campaigns, turning labor law against unions, and creating a gig economy.

Nor does Scheuerman let unions off the hook. Frequently, he charges, they have been led by bureaucratic, out of touch leaders, competed with one another for new members, and fallen short of the solidarity that they praise. Indeed, labor leaders have too often mistaken the survival of their own unions "with the survival of the union movement itself." But unions' fundamental problem, he argues, is that, given the corporate-government assault upon them, their "organizational structure no longer serves the mission of the labor movement."

Even so, Scheuerman contends, all is not lost in the struggle for workers' rights, for a variety of pro-labor social movements have begun successful operations outside traditional union structures. And, in this detailed, convincing study, he shows how these movements, frequently working in alliance with unions, are laying the groundwork for a more flexible, dynamic, and effective labor movement.

The new social movements have made particularly impressive gains among the nation's 2.4 million farmworkers—



long plagued by pathetic wages, wage theft, terrible working conditions, miserable housing, and physical and sexual abuse. Deliberately omitted from coverage by the National Labor Relations Act and labor laws in most states, these workers, often immigrants and migrant laborers, have faced enormous difficulties forming unions. Although the small United Farmworkers and the tiny Farm Labor Organizing Committee have had some union organizing success and, as a result, have significantly improved the lives of the small numbers of workers they represent, the most recent breakthroughs for farmworkers' rights, Scheuerman notes, have resulted from campaigns outside the union movement—by the Coalition for Immokalee Workers (CIW) and New York State's farmworker movement.

The CIW, organized in the 1990s to assist Florida's horribly exploited tomato pickers (some of whom were kept in actual slavery), is a non-hierarchical organization, with farmworkers involved in all its decisions, staff wages tied to field work, and all staff members working in the fields from May until September. Recognizing that the growers' pathetic payments to workers often reflected the low price for tomatoes set by major fast-food chains, the CIW launched a very effective boycott campaign against Taco Bell, McDonald's, and other tomato purchasers. In this fashion, the CIW eventually secured

a Fair Food Program that covered 90 percent of Florida-grown tomatoes and significantly improved farmworkers' wages and lives. If the CIW had been a union, Scheuerman points out, this would not have been possible, for unions are prohibited by law from conducting secondary boycotts. Moreover, not all of CIW's boycott partners were fans of unions.

In New York State, a Justice for Farmworkers (JFW) campaign began in 1989, drawing together sympathetic religious, community, and labor groups. Like the CIW, the JFW was not a union. But, unlike the CIW, it sought legislation that would provide farmworkers with the same labor rights enjoyed by other workers in the state. Ultimately, after a lengthy struggle, the state legislature passed a farmworkers' Fair Labor Practices Act in 2019. It guaranteed the state's 56,000 farmworkers collective bargaining rights, the state's hourly minimum wage, overtime pay, a day of rest every week, and eligibility for unemployment insurance, paid family leave, and workers' compensation benefits.

Scheuerman also emphasizes the importance of the rise of worker centers—community-based, nonprofit organizations that, unlike unions, do not bargain with employers but, instead, serve as support hubs for low wage, unorganized

continued next page

from previous page

workers. In the early 1990s, only about five of these centers were in operation. But their number has now soared past two hundred. Thanks to the decline of unions and corporate America's increasing reliance on employing workers lacking a permanent job status, worker centers have become hotbeds of organizing among these new gig workers.

In California, Uber and Lyft rideshare drivers, angry about low wages, working conditions, and classification as independent contractors, created "virtual" worker centers that facilitated demonstrations, strikes, and protests. Thanks to their spirited campaign, the California legislature passed a law reclassifying them as employees, and thus eligible for the rights guaranteed to workers, including collective bargaining. But Uber and Lyft, drawing upon their vast financial resources, pushed through a referendum that scrapped the legislation. Even so, Scheuerman contends, the strategy and the mobilization demonstrated by the drivers indicate the potential power of new approaches to worker organizing and political action.

One of the largest of the new worker centers is the Freelancers Union. Although the name is a misnomer—for, in fact, it is not a union—the Freelancers Union has substantial appeal to the growing number of independent workers in the nation's gig economy, and today claims half a million members. According to a survey, 70 percent of them engage in professional or semi-professional service work. Rather than battling to end these workers' precarious status, the Freelancers Union simply provides them, at a cut rate, with the services that they lack and need, such as health insurance. Although it won a major legislative victory in New York City, where legislation passed in 2017 gives freelancers the right to written contracts, timely payment, and freedom from retaliation, for the most part the organization has avoided political action. This apolitical stance, plus the Freelancers Union's top-down structure and failure to directly confront employers, lead Scheuerman to designate it "an outlier within the developing new labor movement."

The daring struggles of fast-food workers are more in line with traditional norms of workers' collective action and solidarity, although these workers, too, operate outside

the official union structure. In November 2012, hundreds of underpaid fast-food workers from about forty New York City stores walked off their jobs and took to the streets, demanding \$15 an hour and union rights. The Fight for \$15, as Scheuerman notes, "soon became a tsunami spreading across the country to more than 300 cities." Not only were the wages of these workers abysmally low, but they suffered from unpredictable scheduling, wage theft, arbitrary firings, and sexual harassment. Although considerable union money went into the campaign (most notably, \$70 million from the Service Employees International Union), it continues to be almost impossible to organize significant numbers of fast-food workers into unions. Nevertheless, their one-day strikes, civil disobedience actions, and flamboyant public campaigns did lead to substantial wage gains, thanks to state government or corporate action, and also helped convince most Americans to support a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

Observing that these labor upsurges have occurred in industries where unions have found it nearly impossible to organize on a workplace-by-workplace basis, Scheuerman suggests that they point to the need for sectoral bargaining. This industry-wide negotiation of wage and other labor standards for union and non-union workers is common in European democracies, and encourages firms to compete by increasing productivity rather than by cutting wages and benefits in a race to the bottom. Local "shop floor" concerns, he notes, such as work rules, due process, and steps for promotion, can be handled by worker centers.

Scheuerman has other recommendations, as well. Through legislative action, he maintains, the nation should create a strong social safety net and, also, reform American labor laws to "open the door to union membership for the millions who want it." Furthermore, the labor movement should turn to "visionary leaders who will put the interests of workers before the interests of their own organizations," encourage rank-and-file participation in union governance and activities, and work closely—rather than in competition—with other unions.

This is an ambitious agenda, and it is far from clear that it can be realized. A number of questions spring to mind. For example, as union support has often been crucial to the success of the new, pro-labor, direct action social movements, can these movements survive if unions continue to decline in membership, resources, and political clout? Also, what if the federal and state governments, in response to corporate pressure, crack down on the new social movements as

effectively as they have done on the unions? Finally, given the global mobility of capital through banks and multinational corporations, doesn't the successful defense of workers' interests necessitate moving beyond a national labor movement to an international one?

Nevertheless, despite these potential pitfalls, this creative, thoughtful, and well-researched study of the U.S. labor movement gets to the heart of its major problems and potential. In this time of growing corporate domination of the United States and of the world, *A New American Labor Movement* illuminates a useful path forward in the long and difficult struggle for workers' rights.

Dr. Lawrence Wittner is Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany and the author of *Confronting the Bomb* (Stanford University Press.)

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URL to article: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/01/20/the-decline-of-unions-and-the-ongoing-struggle-for-workers-rights/>



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Cooper, jocelyncooper2012@gmail.com

Other volunteers needed!

Buddha's Four Noble Truths
for a 4 Year Old

1. Sometimes people feel sad.
2. Sometimes the thing that makes people sad is not getting something they want or getting something they don't want.
3. There is a way not to be so sad about not getting what you want or getting something you don't want.
4. The way is to not think so much about what you want at all, but instead think about how you can be kind and helpful to your family, your teachers, your friends, other people, animals, bugs, and everything that lives.

StArt
Stanislaus Art Magazine

a bilingual Arts Magazine for Kids and Families
Subscribe at lindaknollart.com/start-magazine

Attention – Stanislaus County Poets: Modesto Poets' Corner Poetry Contest Up and Running

After a regrettable yearlong COVID-related hiatus, the annual **Modesto Poets' Corner Poetry Contest** for **2022** is up and running again.

Sponsored by the Modesto Poets' Corner Committee—a subcommittee of the Modesto Culture Commission—the contest is open to poets of any age who reside in Stanislaus County. There are two categories poets may submit to: **General** (any kind of poetry on any subject) and **Special** (this year's topic is *Gratitude and Hope*). No more than two entries per person, not to exceed 32 lines each. Entries may be two of one category or one of each category.

Entries must be unpublished at the time of submission. No simultaneous submissions of poems to the Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest or other contests, please. The deadline for submissions—either online or by regular mail—is **Friday, March 18, 2022**. After judging and announcement of winners, there will be a readers' reception on **Sunday, May 22, 2022** at the McHenry Mansion—subject to COVID protocols and restrictions.

For additional information about the contest and access the printable submission form, visit <https://www.modestogov.com/558/Poets-Corner-Contest> Welcome, Poets!

Aileen Jaffa Memorial Youth Poetry Contest is Open for Submissions

By **LYNN M. HANSEN, Contest Chair: National League of American Pen Women & MoSt Poetry Center**

In October of 1982 the Poets' Corner Chapter of the California Federation of Chaparral Poets received its charter and became known as the 'poetry center' of the San Joaquin region, later renamed as The Poets of the San Joaquin. Among the charter members was Aileen Jaffa, poet, artist, sculptor and retired agricultural reference librarian at UC Berkeley for 34 years. Author of over 3,000 poems, in 1984 she was the President of the Poets of the San Joaquin, past President of the Piedmont/Oakland Branch of the National League of American Pen Women and prolific writer.

Aileen Jaffa is said to have composed her first poem at age 2 years, nine months, and her mother wrote it down. It is in this spirit of encouraging young writers and to remember poet Aileen Jaffa, the Modesto/Stanislaus Poetry Center in collaboration with the National Association of American Pen Women (NLAPW), Modesto Chapter, sponsors a youth poetry Contest, The Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest, each spring.

Guidelines

To participate, youth must be enrolled in a Stanislaus County school Grades K through 12. There is a \$1 entry fee for each poem, up to three submissions, submitted.

Poems will be judged by adult poets who are knowledgeable

about young people's work. Any poem that shows evidence of plagiarism will be disqualified. Poems may be in any style, but no longer than 24 lines. **No simultaneous submissions** of poems to Poets' Corner or other contests. Two copies of each poem must be submitted: one copy should contain the title and poem, but no identification of the author; the other copy should contain the student's name and a copy of the entry form below, and the \$1 entry fee.

Poems submitted will be placed in categories according to the student's year in school: 1. Grades K-3; 2. Grades 4-6; 3. Grades 7-9; 4. Grades 10-12.

First, Second and Third place winners in each category will receive cash awards from the contest sponsors. Prizes are First place \$25, Second Place \$15, Third Place \$10. In addition, the Modesto Chapter of NLAPW will award a \$60 Aileen Jaffa Outstanding Poem award in each of two combined categories: Categories 1 and 2, and categories 3 and 4.

The **deadline for submissions is April 4, 2022**. Winners of the contest are invited to present their work at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N Broadway, Turlock at 2 p.m. Sunday, May date TBA, 2022.

Complete the form below and attach to each poem. Submit entries by mail to **MoSt Poetry, P.O. Box 578940, Modesto, California 95357** For more information, contact info@mostpoetry.org



MoSt to host Special Workshop on February 26

The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) will host a special Workshop Event on February 26, 2022, facilitated by Danusha Laméris, a stellar poet and educator.


Ms. Laméris is the author of *The Moons of August* (Autumn House, 2014), which was chosen by Naomi Shihab Nye as the winner of the Autumn House Press poetry prize and was a finalist for the Milt Kessler Book Award. Some of her

poems have been published in: *The Best American Poetry*, *The New York Times*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The SUN Magazine*, *Tin House*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and *Ploughshares*. Her second book, *Bonfire Opera*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), was a

finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize, and winner of a 2021 Northern California Book Award.

The 2020 recipient of the Lucille Clifton Legacy Award, she teaches poetry independently, and is a Poet Laureate emeritus of Santa Cruz County, California. She is currently on the faculty of Pacific University's low-residency MFA program.

The Zoom event will begin at 10 am, with Ms. Laméris' session running until 12 pm. There will also be a short afternoon workshop featuring the excellent Gary Thomas. A registration form will be available on the MoSt website (www.mostpoetry.org), with registration fees set at \$15.00 for each participant. Tickets [here](#).



MistlinGallery
Central California Art Association

Discourse of Silence
works by Iraqi artist, Saadi al Kaabi
February 1 - 26

OPEN Tues - Fri 11:30-5, Sat. 12-4 • ccaagallery.org
1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369

Fill out and attach a copy of this form to one copy of each poem

Name _____

Boy _____ Girl _____ Grade _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School _____

Teacher _____ Teacher's email: _____

Title _____

I certify that the above poem is my own original creation

(Signed) _____



Gordon Preston: Poems from *Eggs*

Gordon Preston's poems have appeared in *Comstock Review*, *Cutbank*, *Miramar*, *Rattle*, *Salt*...and has chapbooks from Finishing Line Press, Tiger's Eye, and the open door. A retired elementary school teacher, he is a founding member of MoSt, the Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center, and collaborated with artist Jim Christiansen with "*Woman Nakedly Painting Flowers Drinking Wine*".

These poems are from his 6th chapbook *Eggs*, as noted by Ingrid Keriotis in her endorsement on the back cover, "Preston's poems are delicate appreciation for daily life as seen through the metaphor of an egg." *A Gathering of Voices* is honored to present them below.

The Gift of Eggs

An egg is promising
like a porcelain cup
a shell that shares its heart
with other hearts into the boil
blooming yellow and white
forever photographed frozen
to the eye just as snow
on rocks far away taste
Mother Earth in harmony
as a kitchen is warming
leaves in water to make tea.
Every morning this happens
plates stacked by color
steam rising gracefully
and eggs gathered from that
special basket every woman
carries all her life
ones overlooked
ones that went silent
and ones that grew
inside and blossomed
into our homes.

Summer Eggs

Barefoot gardening under the maple
ferns weeping up in green silence
the daughters you never had
and the begonias splashed
their pink summer party blossoms
like an elementary school celebration long ago.
Everything trimmed pristine
with sunlight upon your shoulders bare
a moving bronze statue genuflecting
watering bulbs and blossoms
as the neighbors arrive to whip
eggs with a touch of milk as if
we were all children again set free
with backyard fruit and a hot iron grill
blending joy and purpose breaking
white and brown shells that grace
the countertop as au naturel
as it is to be.

Gordon Preston

Eggs the open door 2020

First Poem of Spring Eggs

Remember
the touching
oncoming dawn
that no one
would have guessed
a bridge would be built
among natural things
a black tie
lonely oboe
over the back of a chair
white socks
sleeping mice
on the floor near the corner
and the soft wooden boats
your slippers were
just before
another day of fish
began at the end of the pier
with Venus walking
the shoreline
silently on egg shells
dropping her robe
without even a glance
into the mirror.

Egg Harmony

The boiled egg this morning
grew from seeds scratched
up from the farm yard
pecking tiny stars singing of life
little golden boutonnieres
hidden in the soft powder of Mother Earth.
I knew a man who planted trees
for shade, beauty, and for the muscle
of his marriage. Year after year he did this
and brought tea and eggs every morning
to the sunlit window that drank with her
and he.
Always they sat near the green shadows of
their home.
Silhouettes of maple & oak were the girls.
The redwood, a boy.

Sunday Eggs

An egg in the basket is
as the egg is across a dirt road
at the farmer's market or
in the kitchen of My Garden Café
to become sisters
spinning into the fire kettle
as waitress after waitress
mother of all eggs
call out the short orders
to lift up these predawn angels
cradled in glossy ceramic bowls
like yellow clouds like yellow feathers
streaked in their hungry smiles above
golden name tags that read 'Sunny'
as the glow of the moon takes its daily rest
and bells on the back porch begin their
ringing.

Summer in the Sun

Gardening barefooted
under the green maple,
the ferns weep up to you
the daughters you never had
and the begonias splash
their pink-reds, little frosted
summer party blossoms, and you
keeping everything trim and alive
with your hand, and the river water
that you give to the thirsty while inside
this modest home that we have lived
40 years I type music of you to share
at suppertime, friends will descend
from their wooden neighborhood
ladders with anticipation to crowd
into our tiny kitchen with ceramic
bowls full of many sweet
and sour fruits.



Selected Programs on KCBP 95.5 FM, The Voice of the Valley

Streaming on www.kcbpradio.org

PSAs in English and Spanish broadcast multiple times a day about Covid-19 vaccination, produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

NEW PROGRAMS:

The Not Old – Better Show - fascinating, high-energy program of big-name guests, inspiring role models, interesting topics, with entertaining host, Paul Vogelzang – Fridays, 2:00pm

Mars Radio – Hip-Hop Show - Music, interviews from local & regional artists - Fridays, 8:00pm

Bucks Stallion's Radio Transmission Emporium - Cyber Music - Sundays, 1:00 am

I'll Take You There - A musical journey with Modesto's El Comandante - Saturday, 5:00pm; Sundays, 9:00pm. October program focused on Hispanic Heritage Month

Down on the Farm - topics important for our San Joaquin agriculture with Madera organic farmer, Tom Willey - Saturdays, 6am & 8pm.

AREA 5150 UFO RADIO – Saturday night at Midnight.

LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

KeeHive - LaKiesha McDonald talks with men and women who have overcome great odds. Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:00am

I-On-Modesto - John Griffin interviews local people who reveal their inspiring stories. Mondays & Fridays, 10 am and Wednesdays at 9 pm.

Arts of the San Joaquin Valley with Linda Scheller - Mondays, 8:00pm; Tuesdays 9:00 am & Wednesdays 8:00 pm. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp> and on Spotify

Women of the Valley with Linda Scheller and Leah Hassett - 8:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

The Peril and the Promise with Pegasus - Wednesdays, 9:30 pm; Saturdays, 2:30 pm; Listen here also: <https://anchor.fm/>

kcbp-peril. Recent show: interview with Modesto Dr. Juan Solorza focused on Covid-19. In English and Spanish.

Modesto Sound - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) - Wednesdays 11:30am, & Sundays 11:00am & 5:30pm.

Where We Were - Fascinating local history with Felton Daniels. Monday & Thursdays 9am. Friday 8:30pm; Sunday at 11:00am & 4:30 pm.

Local Music Programs

Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA) with Middagh Goodwin – Mondays 5:00pm; Fridays 9:00pm & Saturdays 6:00pm.

Freak Radio with Christian E. Boyett, 6pm Thursdays. Replays Saturdays, 9pm & Tuesdays 11pm.

This is SKA with Middagh Goodwin - Tuesdays, 9 pm; Fridays, 11pm; Sundays, 6 am.

I'll Take You There - A musical journey with Modesto's El Comandante - Saturday, 5:00pm; Sundays, 9:00pm.

Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

Various musical programs during the noon hour: *Oldies, Jazz, Old Piano*.

Sounds Irish Music from County Wicklow - Saturdays, 7:00 p.m.

Dead Air - Hear the Grateful Dead with Corey Daniels. Fridays, 6pm; Saturdays, 3 pm

Attitude with Arne Arnesen – 3:00pm. Political issues.

Sojourner Truth - 4:00pm. Interviews, panels focusing on issues that affect people of color.

Democracy Now! - 7:00pm. Reporting by veteran journalist Amy Goodman.

Flashpoint Magazine - 10:00pm. Politics, social issues, from KQED's Dennis Bernstein.

Children's Programming

Faith in the Valley; Democratic Women's Club of Stanislaus; Valley Improvement Projects; Indivisible Stanislaus; Turlock Black Lives Matter Movement; Stanislaus & Tuolumne Central Labor Council; United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME 3930; Advocates for Justice; DSA Stanislaus; Modesto Church of the Brethren; College Avenue United Church of Christ.

ACTION: Get your local organization to sign on to this effort. How? Email Jim Costello at jcostello@igc.org for information.

Follow closely "Forward Together"— An initiative focused on police-community relations started by the City of Modesto at <https://www.modestogov.com/forwardtogether>. And watch for news about Sheriff Dirkse's "Project Resolve."



Confetti Park - Saturdays 8:00am; & Sunday's 12:30pm.
The Children's Hour - Sundays 3:00pm.

Science

Explorations - Science with Dr. Michio Kaku - 9:00am Sundays.

Big Picture Science - 1:00pm Sundays

Planetary Radio - 2:30pm Sundays

Got Science - 4:00 pm Sundays

Find a complete programming schedule on our website, www.kcbpradio.org



The Youth Navigation Center of Stanislaus County is OPEN! The YNC will provide shelter, housing and comprehensive drop-in services to any youth or young adults in Stanislaus County between the ages of 13-25, experiencing crisis, housing instability and/or homelessness.

Programs and Services

Hutton House: Emergency shelter and drop-in center for teens 13-17. Services include: overnight stay, showers, meals, laundry, resources, referrals, and individual or family meetings.

Pathways: Transitional living program for young adults 18-24. Residents live in a dorm-like setting while working on financial, job, and life skills with the goal of permanent housing.

Low Barrier Emergency Shelter: First of its kind, youth-centered shelter in Stanislaus County for young adults 18-24. The shelter has 24 beds that individuals can reserve for up to 90 days at a time.

Telecare Drop-In Center: Drop-in center for young adults 18-25. Includes access to facilitated support groups, one-on-one emotional support, referrals and resources, computers, and recreational activities.

Outreach and Navigation: Services for youth and young adults 13-25. Includes referral linkage, helping youth obtain vital documents, support in meeting immediate needs, and entry into the Coordinated Entry System.

Housing Services: Services include landlord engagement, housing location, and case management services to keep youth housed.

Telecare Behavioral Health: Provides mental health services to youth ages 18-25. Members will be provided mental health services, case management, medication support and crisis intervention.

Need help? Call 209-527-1441, 24/7 Helpline. <https://www.yncstanislaus.org/>

Modesto needs a Police Review Commission with an Independent Police Auditor

A Civilian Review Committee composed of representatives from various community organizations, including the Modesto Peace/Life Center, has prepared specific proposal documents, modeled upon the City of Davis' successful police review process, which have been sent to each member of the Modesto City Council. Please contact your councilmember and urge support for a Civilian Police Review Board with an Independent Police Auditor To receive a copy of these documents, email Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org

A Community Forum on **Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement for Modesto**, with recognized experts on this issue, was held on February 27, 2021. Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39G3jn10uHU>

Supported by the following groups: Modesto/Stanislaus NAACP, ACLU Stanislaus, Latino Community Roundtable; North Valley Labor Federation; Modesto Peace/Life Center;



Faith in the Valley; Democratic Women's Club of Stanislaus; Valley Improvement Projects; Indivisible Stanislaus; Turlock Black Lives Matter Movement; Stanislaus & Tuolumne Central Labor Council; United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME 3930; Advocates for Justice; DSA Stanislaus; Modesto Church of the Brethren; College Avenue United Church of Christ.

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Remembering Dr. King's Message of Hope in These Dark Times

King's "Testament of Hope" sounds as relevant today as the day it was published.

By **DEDRICK ASANTE-MUHAMMAD**, by *OtherWords*

2022 has begun with melancholy, as our country sees the pandemic reach new heights. Meanwhile our crises of climate, democracy, and inequality seem more entrenched than ever.

All this uncertainty is taking a toll, but uncertain times are far from unprecedented. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke to an equally uncertain time and found hope in recognizing the necessity of radical change.

As we celebrate the national holiday dedicated to King, I always encourage people to take some time to look at his writings—and I especially do this year. In moments like these, I like to revisit one of King's last essays, "A Testament of Hope," which sounds as relevant today as the day he wrote it.

"Whenever I am asked my opinion of the current state, I am forced to pause," King wrote. "It is not easy to describe a crisis so profound that it has caused the most powerful nation in the world to stagger in confusion and bewilderment."

Sound familiar? By

"Today's problems are so acute because the tragic evasions and defaults of several centuries have accumulated to disaster proportions," King continued. These interrelated problems, he continued, have "now merged into a social crisis of almost stupefying complexity."

King specifically named "war, inflation, urban decay,

white backlash, and a climate of violence" alongside "race relations and poverty" as the cascading crises of his day. To that list we could add the pandemic and climate crisis today.

Even more than half a century ago, King believed that the time for small, incremental changes had passed. "The luxury of a leisurely approach to urgent solutions—the ease of gradualism—was forfeited by ignoring the issues for too long," he wrote.

"When millions of people have been cheated for centuries, restitution is a costly process. Inferior education, poor housing, unemployment, inadequate health care—each will require billions to correct," King warned. "Justice so long deferred has accumulated interest and its cost for this society will be substantial in financial as well as human terms."

But for a country weighed down by segregation, inequality, and the Vietnam War, King also knew that the costs of injustice were greater—something that feels even more true today.

"If we look honestly at the realities of our national life, it is clear that we are not marching forward," he wrote. "We are groping and stumbling; we are divided and confused."

In the face of these "deeply rooted evils" and "systemic rather than superficial flaws," King offered a remedy: the "radical reconstruction of society itself"—which King was actually hopeful about, although he knew it wouldn't be easy.

"Humanity has the capacity to do right as well as wrong," King affirmed. "The past is strewn with the ruins of the empires of tyranny, and each is a monument not merely to our blunders but to our capacity to overcome them... That's

why I remain an optimist, though I am also a realist, about the barriers before us."

King's "Testament of Hope" is based on a realist's assessment of the need for political, economic, and moral change. King is clear-eyed that America must embrace radical change—which won't come from the powerful but from the "naïve and unsophisticated."

Hope in radical change, for many of us, seems out of place during this time of tension. Yet there has been incredible change over the last few years. Rather than return to our dysfunctional past, King's "Testament of Hope" points to the need to embrace and advance that change.

As we begin 2022, I find this message as important as ever.

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Dedrick Asante-Muhammed has been a long-time thought leader focused on racial economic inequality. He started his work as the first Racial Wealth Divide Coordinator at United For A Fair Economy. He then went on to work with Chuck Collins at Institute for Policy Studies Inequality and Common Good Program. Dedrick then went on to become the Senior Director of the Economic Department for the NAACP and currently is the Chief of Race, Wealth and Community for the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

What's Happening at MoSt?

The next Second Tuesday Reading will be on February 8, 2022, at 7 pm PT. Featured poets are Kelly Cressio-Moeller & John Sibley Williams and an open mic will follow the featured poets. You can register in advance at this [Zoom link](#).

The Poetry on Sunday Series Reading will continue February 13, at 2:00 PT. Join host Gary Thomas and our featured readers Heather Altfeld and Troy Jollimore. Please check our website www.mostpoetry.org for the Zoom link.

MoSt Poetry Book Club will meet February 23rd at 6:30 pm PT to discuss *Dust Bowl Venus* by Stella Beratis. You may borrow a copy of the book at the circulation desk of the Modesto Stanislaus Library. For more information and the link to register for the online event, please go to [this link!](#)

MoSt will host its annual workshop on February 26. The featured poet and workshop facilitator will be poet Danusha Laméris. [See article, page 8.]



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calendar



february 2022

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

CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.

Science Colloquium, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., MJC via Zoom. To access the program, click <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmaymqgHqzxhsAa0RJmYwVg/>. Resumes in the spring.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science: free MJC science programs. Watch past presentations at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2pMYnCos9w0xwd_5lCw3Pg. Participate by logging on to an Internet Link: <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/sme/maps.php> to sign up for notification of the link. **February 25: Weather vs. Climate Impacts on Our Environment.** Family Science presentation. Channel 3 meteorologist Dirk Verdoorn, keynote speaker, will be joined by MJC students for a panel discussion. The presentation focuses on the difference between weather and climate and the impacts climate can have on our environment. Dirk will emphasize the importance of being good stewards of our planet. Dirk Verdoorn - KCRA

The State Theatre is open! Visit <https://thestate.org/2021/10/new-website/>.

The Prospect Theatre has continuing offerings: Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2021-2022-season/>

2 WED: VIGIL: SAVE OUR DEMOCRACY-SAVE THE VOTE. J St. & McHenry Ave., 3:30 -4:30pm.

3 THURS: Peace/Life Center ZOOM Monthly Board Meeting, 6:30 pm. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org

11 TUES: The Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center invites you to the Second Tuesday Poetry Reading of 2022 on February 8, 2022, at 7 pm PT. Featured poets are Kelly Cressio-Moeller & John Sibley Williams and an open mic will follow the featured poets. You can register in advance at this Zoom link.

12 SAT: Family Open Art Studio, Mistlin Gallery opens its classroom for a hands-on valentine art making afternoon. \$5 per person, no registration necessary. 1015 J Street, noon to 4:00 p.m.

12 SAT: 28th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration -Virtual presentation on YouTube. Visit <https://www.mjc.edu/instruction/ahc/mlkcommemoration.php>

26 SAT: MoSt hosts its Annual Workshop. The featured poet and workshop facilitator will be poet Danusha Laméris. See article on p.8.

regular meetings

SUNDAYS

Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email modestovineyard@gmail.com; All Welcome.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org Food Addicts Anonymous in Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

Village Dancers are not dancing in person but have a Zoom class, every Sunday 3:00-5:00 PM (PST). Lessons and reviews every week are given in international folk dances and are led by different teachers from around the Valley. People from England to Taiwan, New Hampshire to Oregon, Arizona to Denair join us each week to exercise in their own homes to interesting music. Email Judy at JudyKropp40@gmail.com to receive the Zoom number and password.

MONDAYS

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the second Mondays at 7:00 pm. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in this support group for families whose children have died at any age, from any cause. Call 209-622-6786 or email for details: tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com; <https://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org/>

Suicide Loss Support Group: Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, nandrews6863@charter.net.

Monday Morning Funstrummers Beginner Ukulele Lessons. Modesto Senior Center. 10:45am to Noon. Free Scenic and Bodem.

Walk with Me, a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month. Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

Silver & Gold Support Group for mental health and wellness. Catering to the needs of the LGBTQ+ Community. (Age +55). Every Monday 1pm-3pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D Modesto. Contact Kellie Johnson, 209.918.0271 or Sandra Vidor, 209.859.4299.

TUESDAYS

Climate Action Justice Network-Stanislaus meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Link-<https://tinyurl.com/CJAN-FirstTuesday>

Teen Tuesdays every week from June-August, 2-5 pm., Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St. Peer Support, Games & movies. Safe space for teens to socialize, work together on projects, and learn about LGBTQ history. Each week will be a little different as we want YOU (youths) to guide the direction this group will go!" Info: Maggie Strong, Political Activist Director/ GSA Liaison, mstrong@mopride.org, 209-284-0999.

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am – 11 am

NAACP Meeting, King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; email: naacp.branch1048@gmail.com

Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/247655549018387/>

Pagan Family Social, third Tuesdays, Golden Corral, 3737 McHenry Ave, Modesto, 6:00 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

Tuesday Evening Funstrummers Ukulele Jam. Songbooks provided. 6pm to 8pm, 1600 Carver Rd., Donation. 209-505-3216, www.Funstrummers.com.

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

Adult Children Of Alcoholics, Every Tuesday, 7 pm at 1320 L St., (Christ Unity Baptist Church). Info: Jeff, 527-2469.

WEDNESDAYS

Womxns Support Group for Womxn in all stages of life. Join us in a safe and judgment free environment where you can give and receive support for the many issues that we struggle with as Womxn. Every Tuesday from 1pm-2pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto CA (Ages +18). Contact Sandra Vidor-209.652.3961 or Kellie Johnson 209.918.0271

The GAP. A place of support for Christian parents of LGBTQ+ or questioning kids every Wednesday 6:30pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church 1528 Oakdale Rd. Instagram: [thegapmodesto](https://www.instagram.com/thegapmodesto)

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

Merced LGBT Community Center offers a variety of

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: Held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

MEDIA: Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the “Voice of the Valley” also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING, FIRST Thursdays, 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org

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

FRIDAYS

OUT on a Friday Night, a social and discussion group designed for individuals who identify as transgender, Non-Binary, or any identity on the transgender spectrum. Every Friday at 6:00pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto CA. (Ages +18). Contact Katalina Zambrano: 209-412-5436.

Overcoming Depression: small group for men & women. Every Friday, 7:15 pm. Cornerstone Community Church, 17900 Comconex Rd, Manteca, CA 95366, (209) 825-1220.

Friday Morning Funstrummers Band Rehearsal. Donation 9:15am to Noon. College Avenue United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 209-505-3216, www.Funstrummers.com.

Latino Emergency Council (LEC) 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Dale Butler, 522-8537.

Sierra Club: Yokuts Group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 300-4253. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

Mujeres Latinas, last Friday, lunch meetings, Info: Cristina Villego, 549-1831.

Hispanic Leadership Council, 3rd Fridays at noon, 1314 H St., Modesto 95354. Questions? Yamilet Valladolid, yamiletv@hotmail.com

SATURDAY

New HIV support group: +NET Peer Support Group meets at the LGBTQ+ Advocacy Center, every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 12-1pm. Focuses on supporting individuals with their struggles regarding HIV and AIDS. Providing information about community resources, promoting wellness with an emphasis on LIVING! Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto. Contact Vincent, 209.505.2863.

12-Step/Buddhist Meeting starts with a 30-minute meditation and then open discussion. Held monthly every second Saturday, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto at the UUFC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

Free Community Drum Circle every third Saturday, 3 pm, Deva Café, 1202 J. St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. <https://drum-love.com/>

Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. @Friends Coming of Age., 1203 Tully Rd., Ste. B., Modesto. Saturdays 8-9 am. FREE (donations accepted). Info: RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

Divine Feminine Gathering. Join us for a time of ritual, song and conversation as women come together to celebrate one another and the Divine among us and within us. 3rd Saturday of the month, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Stockton, CA. Contact Rev. Erin King, 209-815-0763, orkingenne@gmail.com

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabe Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of every month. Info: Kathy Haynes (209) 250-9961 or email kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month.

Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org
Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.

monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

Merced Full Spectrum meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.lgbtmerced.org/> Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

GLBT Questioning Teen Support Group (14-19 years old), 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, College Ave. Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 7 – 9 pm. Safe, friendly, confidential. This is a secular, non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

Transgender Support Group, 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email info@stanpride.org, or tgsupport@stanpride.org

Mindful Meditation: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Anne, 521-6977.

THURSDAYS

Can We Talk... LGBTQ+ Senior (age +55) Coffee Meet up! Every Thursday @ 1pm at Queen Bean, 1126 14th St., Modesto. Weekly social group to provide connectedness and community inclusion for LGBTQ+ Senior Citizens. Refreshments, snacks provided. Contact Steven Cullen, 559.799.0464.

CA10 Progressive Coalition Monthly Meeting, third Thursdays. Inclusive group of progressive activists to share resources, ideas, and information in order to support all the great organizing work happening in the Valley! Feel free to invite trusted allies. Meet-up and social hour: 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. Meeting: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Follow group on Facebook. Info: Tim Robertson, tim@nvlif.org

Laughter Yoga, Every other Thursday at The Bird's Nest, 422 15th St., Modesto. The dates are February & March 7th & 21st, April 4th & 18th, May 2nd & 16th. 5:30pm-6:30pm. \$15.00 per class. To register, call or text Nicole, 209-765-8006 or visit www.nicoleottman.com

Attention Veterans: Join us for Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am – 11 am

IMCV Grupo de Meditación en Español, cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172.

LGBTQ+ Collaborative Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless noted. Evening meeting, 1pm to 2 pm, Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: John Aguirre at cell/text - (559) 280-3864/ e-mail: jpamodesto@gmail.com

Green Team educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. www.StanislausGreenTeam.com

Third Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 209-529-3369, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

Valley Heartland Zen Group: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

Pagan Community Meeting, 1st Thursdays, Cafe Amore, 3025 McHenry Ave, Suite S., Modesto, 8 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.