



# Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

A MODESTO  
PEACE/LIFE  
CENTER  
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## West Modesto minister to receive the 2014 MLK Legacy Award

By DAN ONORATO

"Evangelicals aren't as involved in justice issues as mainline Protestants or Catholics," says Homero Mejía, Executive Director of Congregations Building Community CBC), but "Pastor Wayne," as he's appreciatively called by many, "has been working to help neighborhoods and people in Modesto West Side for 40 years. "He shows up," says Mejía. "He's there. People know he'll stand with them." King Kennedy Collaborative Executive Director Carol Collins echoes this esteem: "He doesn't change in his commitment to the community. He's a caring, passionate person who gives of himself, and he's that way all the time." For his dedication over many years, his vision of bringing people together to work for the common good, and his kind and consistent presence and leadership, the local Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Committee will present its 2014 MLK Legacy Award to the pastor of Central Baptist Church, Pastor Wayne Bridegroom.

The award will be given at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration at Modesto Junior College's East Campus Media and Performing Arts Center on



Saturday, February 1. The free evening program starting at 7:00 PM includes rousing music with the Ware Singers and a short excerpt from the Sankofa Theatre's rendition of "Freedom Riders" that played at the Gallo Theatre in November. The keynote speaker is Civil Rights leader Diane Nash, who, among many other actions, played a prominent role in the 1961 Freedom Rides. The Legacy Award honors an individual or group for their persevering work on behalf

**BRIDEGROOM . . . . . cont. p 8**

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### INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL . . . . .	2	GUANTANAMO . . . . .	7
MLK COMMEMORATION . . . . .	3	MLK LEGACY AWARD . . . . .	8
LIVING LIGHTLY . . . . .	4-5	GATHERING OF VOICES . . . . .	9
INEQUALITY . . . . .	6	BIG BROTHER . . . . .	11

## Great music, silent auction highlight upcoming John McCutcheon Concert

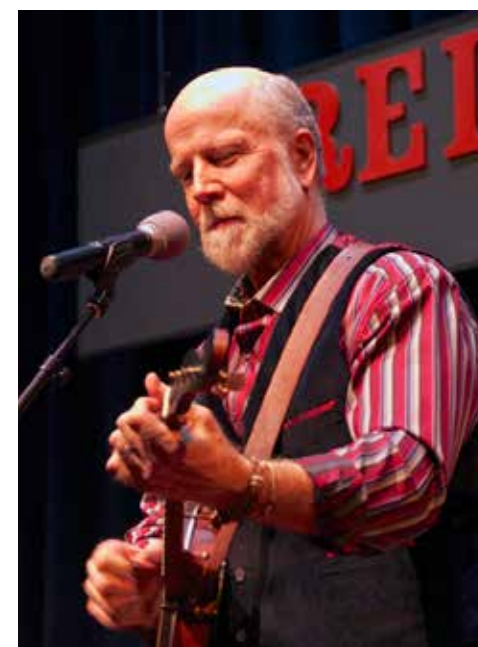
By MICHAEL JURKOVIC

The New Year is here and with it comes the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual John McCutcheon Benefit Concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center. This year, the concert will be held on January 14 at 7pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave.

Last year was my first time attending the event and it was fantastic. The music, the camaraderie, the shared vision and values, the refreshments! These are just some of the great reasons to come out and celebrate. This year we are adding another reason: There will be a silent auction before the performance and during intermission. Come check out some great items to bid on. I had the privilege of meeting John after the concert and he is such a wonderful man. I've been looking forward all year to this exciting moment.

Expect to hear some songs from the new album "22 Days." John explains, "22 Days began as an homage to my friend, Vedran Smailovic, the "Cellist of Sarajevo," who, in honor of 22 people killed by a bomb in a Bosnian breadline, played for 22 days in a row at the bombing site. 20 years to the day of the beginning of Smailovic's action I sat down for the same number of days, at the same hour every day, to write. There was no goal, no album in sight. I simply wanted to write and see what happened. Over 30 new songs is what happened. With a couple of exceptions, it is songs from that writing intensive that comprise the songs of 22 Days...they are a diverse lot..."

If the Holidays passed and you didn't get someone a Holiday gift, a ticket to John McCutcheon would be a great way to make it up to them. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door and youth, 18 and under, are \$5. Groups of 10 or more are \$15 per person. Tickets can be purchased by check or cash at



the Brethren Church, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438, or at the Beads of Contentment, 1028 J St., 523-6335. Out-of-towners can call the church to arrange to purchase tickets by mail.



**ACTION:** consider becoming a concert sponsor. In addition to the tickets, your name will appear in the program and you will have reserved seating.

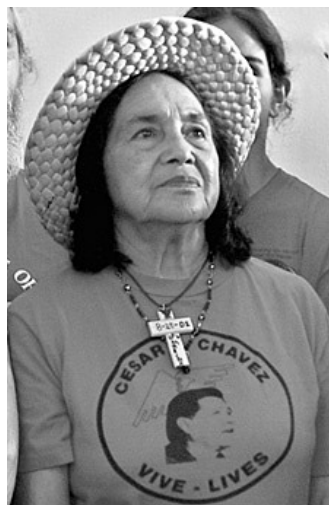
There are 5 levels of sponsorship available:

- Autoharp -- \$40; One ticket**
- Guitar -- \$75; Two tickets**
- Banjo --\$150; Four tickets**
- Piano --\$300; Eight tickets**
- Hammer Dulcimer --\$500 Sixteen tickets**

For more information contact Ken Schroeder, [kschroeder70@yahoo.com](mailto:kschroeder70@yahoo.com), (209) 569-0321. For information on sponsorship contact Michael Jurković, [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.com), (209) 614-1573.

# 19th Annual MLK Birthday Celebration in Sonora

By PAT CERVELLI



Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union with Cesar Chavez, will be the keynote speaker at the Sonora High School Auditorium, Shaws Flat Rd. and Washington St., Sonora, on Sunday, January 19, 2014 at 2:00 pm. This free event includes music and a reception and is sponsored by the Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee. Ms. Huerta will speak on Immigration

and Social Justice. Recently she participated in Fast for Families: a Call for Immigration Reform, fasting for a day at the Bakersfield office of House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-CA). This is in the tradition of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez.

Dolores Huerta grew up in Stockton and graduated from Stockton College, where she earned a provisional teaching credential. Ms. Huerta soon left teaching to organize Central Valley farm workers after seeing their children come to school hungry. After working with Cesar Chavez and organizing the UFW, she became the principal negotiator with the growers. Last year, President Obama recognized her leadership with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Ms. Huerta speaks all over the country and has never ceased her activism in progressive causes.

For information, contact Pat Cervelli, 209-928-3494.

## MJC Science Colloquium Spring 2014

Science Community Center, Room 115, West Campus, 3-4 p.m.

Contact Person: Richard Anderson 529-5182, andersonr@mjc.edu

**Jan. 29:** Garry Hayes, MJC Geologist, “**Into the Great Unknown: A Geologist Floats the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.**”

**Feb. 5:** John Buckley, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, “**Last summer’s massive Rim Fire in the Yosemite region: its far-reaching effects on wildlife, water, and recreation.**”

**Feb. 12:** Minda Berbeco, National Center for Science Education, “**Climate and Evolution in the Classroom.**”

**Feb. 19:** Dr. David Martin, “**The International Trade in Reptile Skins: How Policy and Science Meet through Forensics.**”

**Feb. 26:** Teri Curtis’ MJC Zoology class members, “**Term Report Animal.**”

**Mar. 5:** Javier Castillon, Dir. Research, Duarte Nursery/Dry Creek Labs: “**Plant Science and its Application in the Modern Nursery.**”

**Mar. 12:** Richard Serros, MJC Art Professor, “**Art on the Science Building**”

**Mar. 19:** Robert McGrew, MD, Cornerstone Family Medical Practice, “**The Importance of Your Vaccinations.**”

**Mar. 26:** John Carter, MJC Economist, “**Cap and Trade: Why and How California is Implementing it.**”

**Apr. 2:** Anjani Thakur, M.D., Valley Vein Health Center, “**Paradigm Shifts in Surgery.**”


**Apr. 9:** April Bird, MJC Biologist, “**Invertebrate Researches at University of Oregon.**”

## Paul Sprawl in concert at Great Valley Songwriters’ Series



It’s Americana. It’s Heavy Wood. It’s Psychedelic Roots. It’s **Paul Sprawl** in concert at Great Valley Songwriters’ Series on **Friday, January 17**, at 7:30 p.m. (918 Sierra Drive, Central Grace Community Church, Modesto). \$10 donation

Paul Sprawl combines percussive guitar techniques with bottleneck, tapping, harmonica, and a baritone voice like the wind reaching out across the desert. His guitar is like crackling fire and riding bandits. His songs tell stories of politics, love and romance, and the downtrodden. Paul has published nine CDs, beginning with his 1999 debut, “Blue Suitcase.”



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## Home Grown at Sunday Afternoons at CBS plus a jam session and “souper social”

By TINA ARNOPOPLE DRISKILL

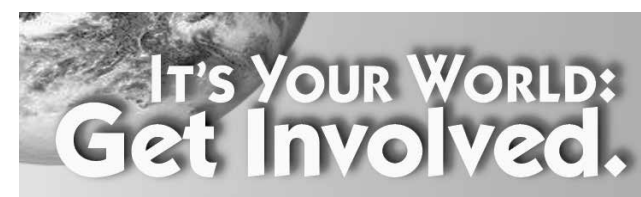
Modesto favorites, Home Grown, will be in concert 3 p.m. January 19 at 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. The afternoon will include a concert of favorites and some lively and unique additions.

Concert goers, especially area musicians, are invited to hang out with the band after the concert for a down home jam session.

An optional “souper social” will be available after the concert so come on over for a warm and friendly afternoon of music and a bowl of hot, homestyle soup and ‘trimmins.’

**ACTION:** Tickets, \$20 adults, \$15 students and seniors, and \$7 children, are available through the Congregation Beth Shalom Office, 571-6060, weekdays between 9 am and 1 pm or at the door. Group rates are also available.

Learn more about this and other upcoming concerts at [www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts.php](http://www.cbsmodesto.org/concerts.php)



LAW OFFICES OF

**ROCKWELL, KELLY & DUARTE, LLP**

1600 G Street  
Suite 203

DAVID N. ROCKWELL

SHARON E. KELLY

JEFFREY DUARTE

MARKUS URSTOEGER

*Attorneys/Abogados*

P.O. Box 0142

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## How you can help the Peace Center by recycling

By JOHN LUCAS

To all groups and individuals interested in helping out the Modesto Peace/Life Center, there is now an easy way to do so.

As of November 2013, the Modesto Peace/Life Center now recycles. Anyone can help this cause. If you don't already recycle, add it to your New Year's resolutions for 2014. This is a very simple way to help the Center and the environment.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has a recycling account at the Modesto Junk Company. All you have to do is gather your recyclable material, bring it in, and tell them that rather than taking the money, you would like to donate it to the Modesto Peace/Life Center. They will give you a form to indicate this. You will need a valid ID (driver's license preferred) in order to complete the transaction. Every month, the Center will receive a check in the amount of all recycled money collected.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center is non-profit and thus depends on donations. This money will go toward ensuring the Center can stay open and continue with its excellent programs. Our various programs and activities include the Annual John McCutcheon Concert, Peace Camp, the Peace Essay Contest, Stanislaus Connections and so much more. Remember, recycling is a great way to give back to the community.

The Modesto Junk Company is located at 1425 9<sup>th</sup> St. Modesto, (209) 522-1535. If you have any questions about the program or want to find other ways to be involved in the Modesto Peace/Life Center, contact Michael Jurković at (209) 614-1573 or by email, [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.com) or John Lucas at [lucasjal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lucasjal@sbcglobal.net).

Thanks!

**DON'T AGONIZE.**  
**Organize.**

**stanislaus**  
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209-529-5750.

## Freedom Rides pioneer to speak at MLK Commemoration February 1

By SAVOEUN PHAL & DAN ONORATO

Diane Nash, highly respected leader and strategist in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, will speak at the **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration** on Saturday, February 1, 2014 at the Modesto Junior College Performing Arts and Media Center, 435 College Ave., Modesto, at 7:00 p.m.



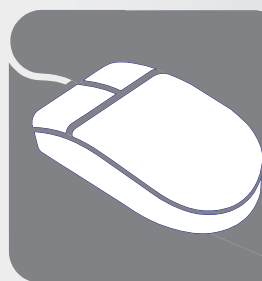
Raised in a middle-class Catholic family in Chicago, she chose to attend Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. There for the first time she experienced the humiliating segregation of the Jim Crow South—the separate water fountains and restrooms for whites

and blacks, the restaurants or lunch counters where blacks could not eat.

At non-violence workshops, given by Rev. James Lawson, she learned to channel her anger into nonviolent direct action. She helped organize sit-ins in local department stores and lunch counters, and played a pivotal role in the 1961 Freedom Rides that challenged interstate bus segregation. After the Riders' bus was burned in Anniston and riders were injured in Birmingham, some leaders wanted to halt the Freedom Rides, but she argued it was the movement's duty to continue. With characteristic clarity and calm courage, she conveyed this fearless message to federal authorities and the press.

In 1962, though pregnant, she was jailed for teaching nonviolent tactics to children. In many acts of civil disobedience with John Lewis, she refused bail for her arrests in order to be heard. She also played key roles in the 1963 Birmingham de-segregation campaign and the Selma Voting Rights Campaign of 1965. She maintained her commitment throughout the Civil Rights Movement as well as in the Peace Movement to end the Vietnam War.

Today, she remains an inspiration to those working for social justice as well as a prominent voice for human rights.



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online at:  
<http://stanislausconnections.org/>

At non-violence workshops, given by Rev. James Lawson, she learned to channel her anger into nonviolent direct action.

Among her numerous awards are the Rosa Parks Award, the Distinguished American Award, the LBJ Award for Leadership in Civil Rights, and the Freedom Award from the National Civil Rights Museum.

Please, join us in welcoming Diane Nash to Modesto.

The event is free. However, we depend solely on donations of money or services from our co-sponsors, caring groups, businesses, and individuals. *Will you help us bring Diane Nash to our community?*



**ACTION:** Make your tax-deductible check payable to "Modesto Peace Life Center-MLK." Send it to Jim Costello, 1849 Richard Way, Ceres, CA 95307-4504. The Peace/Life Center is a 501

(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our EIN # is 94-2800825. Information: [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

**SPONSORS** at press time: City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Dept.; Modesto Junior College; Modesto Peace/Life Center; California State University, Stanislaus; Rockwell, Kelly, & Duarte, LLP; College Avenue Congregational Church; Central Valley Democratic Club; Valley Lexus/BMW; Marianne Villalobos.

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Directed by Jim Johnson & John Ervin III



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7:30 PM



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# Still, Life with Chickens

By JENIFER WEST

I thought our lives were complete – until we had chickens. Oh, the patter of little claws, scratching for tasty bugs. And their adorable little faces, peering out from behind the gate, eagerly waiting to see what treat we might be bringing whenever we head out to the coop.

And the eggs! Oh, those wonderful eggs!

It's only been a short time since Roxie, Jasmine, Leila and Ginger have come to live with us, but their impact has been profound. For one thing, we're consuming a lot of eggs, of the fresh, organic variety. And it's such a delight, feeding them greens straight from the garden, listening to their delighted clucks and chuckles all the while. Makes a very fine start to the day.

I've wanted chickens for quite a while. After initially being less-than-thrilled with the idea, my dear husband, with a bit of help from a contractor friend, built what became more of a pen than a coop. And it's absolutely perfect! I'd been feeling a bit guilty, because it had been finished for a while, but hadn't contained so much as a single feather.

Then came a visit from the "chicken faeries" – friends who knew I really wanted chickens. Fortunately, our neighbors have been tolerant, so far. (Frequent "poop scooping," along with the occasional gift of an egg or two doesn't hurt, either!)

A certain household member, aka "the Chicken Whisperer," has been great with them – she immediately named them all and spent some time getting to know them. She says she can tell which is who, but I can only identify the lightest one (Ginger). I happened to be home when the first egg was laid (less than two hours after they arrived!), and the way she headed out of the coop, I thought it must be on fire! She was so excited! The very first day, we got two eggs, one of which was a double-yolker. (A very good omen, I thought.) For a while, we got mostly two or three a day. TOO COOL!!! I'm so pleased to have those wonderful girls in our backyard. I love the self-sufficiency aspect of it, as well as the peace of mind that comes from knowing, and being able to control,



how one more category of our food is produced.

There are so many good things about keeping chickens. The fact that they provide a continuous supply of healthy protein is very reassuring to me. I tend to buy things in bulk, so we do have a supply of staples on hand, but if, for some reason, we were unable to buy what we needed, we'd still have steady access to good, high quality protein.

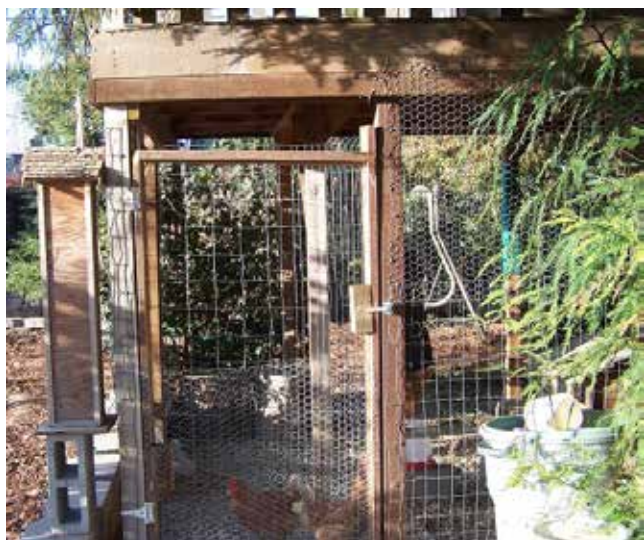
Chickens are also excellent for gardeners – stuff we put into the compost bucket with their waste and litter breaks down a lot faster than what we put into the other compost buckets. For example, while spreading compost on the garden, I came across a corn cob (the girls love to pick them clean, after we've finished with them!) and tried to pick it up. Although it'd only been composting for a month or two, it crumbled in my hand! If it had been in one of the other buckets, it would have taken much longer to break down. An added bonus – some kind of grub that the girls absolutely adore lives in the compost.

Speaking of grubs, we've discovered that the girls, who are omnivores, definitely lay more eggs if given adequate "animal" protein (the afore-mentioned grubs, mealworms, snails (in moderation – too many can give them worms!) yogurt, cottage cheese, and cat food – all of which they absolutely adore!). We now generally get 4 eggs a day, even though it's cooler, and the chickens appear to be molting. I started giving them more of these kinds of foods when I read that folks in other countries feed their chickens fish, among other things, and they generally produce more eggs and stay in production longer – often twice as long or more. Before we upped the animal protein, we generally got two or three eggs a day. But for me, the issue really isn't how many eggs we get – I

gauge our girls' health by their productivity. It takes a whole lot of resources (water, protein, calcium) for a creature that small to make an egg that size each day, and if they are able to, I figure they must be getting what they need.

Generally speaking, it is legal to keep chickens (but not roosters) in most of the towns in Stanislaus County. If you are interested in keeping them, whether for protein, as pets or both, please check the rules with your city or county government first. You might be surprised at how much they add to your life.

If you're not inclined to keep chickens yourself, but would like to make a gift of them to a struggling family is a less-fortunate country, an \$18 donation to Heifer International will provide a rooster and hen, or a \$45 donation will provide a dozen chicks. Visit <http://www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/index.html?isource=HDGCJ13AD0003>





## SAVE THE DATE!

The Stanislaus County Travel and Tourism Roundtable presents the 4th annual tour on

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY**  
**APRIL 12 & 13, 2014**  
11 AM TO 5 PM



## Holiday gift bags for prisoners

By DAVID HETLAND & SHELLY SCRIBNER

More than 3900 gift packets were recently delivered to the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla. Assembled by a hundred volunteers at the Methodist Church in Merced, the one-gallon Ziploc bags contained highly desirable hygiene products, greeting cards, writing materials, and snack items that had been gathered by a wide variety of church and community organizations throughout the area. Sponsored by the Inmate Family Council at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla (family and friends of inmates), this year was the eighth annual effort to remember an often lonely and forgotten population during the holidays. Inmates write:

*"Some of us do not have family who care and support us. Your presents are the only treats that most of us receive. Thank you."*

*"Your gift is much appreciated and in its way lightened our hearts during this holiday."*

*"We look forward to our gift each year. For me it is the only gift I have gotten in the past three years. From the bottom of my heart, thank you."*

Each year requires the collection of more than 80,000 items, which means **it's a year-round endeavor** needing lots of help from lots of people. Please continue to save travel/sample sizes of soap, shampoo, conditioner, skin/body lotion, toothpaste and tissue. There's also a need for adult size toothbrushes (individually wrapped), combs (no rat tail), small notepads, tea bags, and unused greeting cards with envelopes.

**ACTION:** Donated items may be brought to the Peace/Life Center Office (call ahead to ensure the office is open). For more information, contact Shelly (521-6304), [ShellyS833@aol.com](mailto:ShellyS833@aol.com), or Dave (388-1608), [dhettland2003@yahoo.com](mailto:dhettland2003@yahoo.com)

**A Thank you:** *I would like to personally thank all those who give me items for the prison project. We have a box at the Peace Center for items. We collect all year. All the women appreciate this.*



MICHAEL R. BAUDLER, CPA  
DONNA E. FLANDERS, CPA

Office (209) 575-2653  
Fax (209) 575-0629

e-mail [b\\_f@modestocpas.com](mailto:b_f@modestocpas.com)  
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## Green Tips for a Green Planet

### Keep entertaining energy costs at bay from this New Year's Eve to the next

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Throughout the year there are numerous occasions to get together with family and friends. Entertaining can generate added costs to your normal home energy use, especially in the kitchen. The California Consumer Energy Center suggests the following green energy kitchen tips to optimize your entertaining preparations and maximize your energy savings:

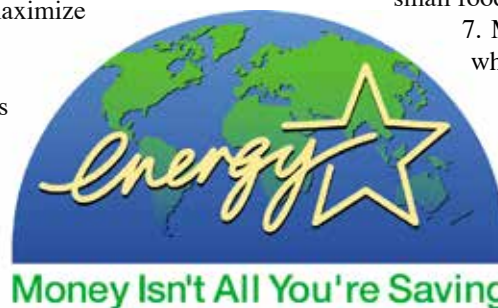
#### Kitchen Tips:

1. Since the latest kitchen appliances use almost 50 percent less energy than those from just a decade ago, ask Santa for that new stove, oven, refrigerator, dishwasher that you've been wanting/needing. It will be more efficient and save money in electrical and/or gas energy costs.

2. Use the oven light to check on the progress of foods cooking instead of opening the oven door. Opening the door can lower the temperature by 25 degrees and increase cooking time. Also be sure to cook more multiple items at the same time, leaving room around each for the heat to circulate.

3. Fit pan size to burner size on your stove-top to insure more heat goes into the pan than into the surrounding air. A 6" pan on an 8" burner equals more than a 40% energy loss.

4. Clean burners and high-end reflectors can save up to one-third on stove-top energy cooking.



5. Use microwave cooking for small portions and reheating leftovers. Microwaves use close to 50% less energy than conventional ovens and don't heat up your kitchen. Stove tops and ovens are more efficient for larger items like turkeys and large pots of food.

6. Consider small appliances. Slow cookers will cook a whole meal for around 17 cents of electricity. Electric skillets can steam, fry, saute, stew, bake or roast and can often be used as serving pieces. Toaster ovens use one-third the energy of larger ovens and are ideal for baking or broiling small food items.

7. Most Californians live in a climate is where we can cook outdoors year round.

Try roasting your turkey or other large roasts on a grill, which saves a bit on your utility bill and produces a very fine and often low-fat main course.

8. Refrigerators, even more energy efficient newer models, can consume as much as 15 percent of your home's total energy usage.

Optimize efficiency by keeping the doors closed as much as possible to prevent cold air from escaping. The exception... leaving the door open while you take out several items at one time is more efficient than opening and closing over and over. Also, when the refrigerator is full, the mass of cold items helps retain the cold when the doors are open, but be sure items are not jammed together too tightly in order to insure proper air circulation.

9. To use the dishwasher or to handwash, that is the question. Remember to run only fully loaded dishwashers, and use cold water only if you need to rinse dishes first. Hand washing and drying can be a fun alternative opportunity for family group time. Statistics show a dishwasher load of dishes requires 37 percent less water than washing dishes by hand, but by filling wash and rinse basins instead of letting the water run, the water use is half that of a dishwasher. Conserve up to 10% of dishwasher energy costs with energy-saving cycles and air power or overnight dry settings.

We're sure you will enjoy all those wonderful gatherings even more as you use these and other energy saving kitchen ideas and watch your energy costs drop. Have more kitchen or other energy saving ideas? Send them to *Stanislaus Connections*, so we can share them with other readers. [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org)

<http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/index.html>

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For more information on meetings, our programs, and ways you can give back to the LGBT community, visit [www.pflagmodesto.org](http://www.pflagmodesto.org)

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# Economists agree: US inequality is killing the economy

**‘The economic populists are right’ — Paul Krugman**

By **JON QUEALLY**, staff writer

A majority of “private, corporate and academic economists” agree: economic inequality in the U.S. is not just hurting individuals and families who struggle to make ends meet; the growing gap in both wages and wealth is harming the economy as a whole.

That’s according to a new survey by the *Associated Press* which confirms what progressive-minded economists and policy-makers have been saying since... always. See <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ap-survey-us-income-gap-holding-back-economy-0>

After asking more than three dozen economists a host of questions about trends in the current economy, the survey discovered that one of the chief concerns shared by most is the stagnation of the middle class as the rich get richer. Why? According to what AP gleaned from economists:

*Higher pay and outsize stock market gains are flowing mainly to affluent Americans. Yet these households spend less of their money than do low- and middle-income consumers who make up most of the population but whose pay is barely rising.*

*“What you want is a broader spending base,” says Scott Brown, chief economist at Raymond James, a financial advisory firm. “You want more people spending money.”*

*Spending by wealthier Americans, given the weight of their dollars, does help drive the economy. But analysts say the economy would be better able to sustain its growth if the riches were more evenly dispersed.*

As the debate in Washington and across the country about economic inequality receives fuel from a populist surge that has included growing demonstrations by low-wage workers and calls for a large federal increase of the minimum wage, the consensus by this diverse group of economic minds should

**For the bottom 90 percent of families, this impoverishment reflects both a shrinking economic pie and a declining share of that pie.**

bolster those calling for real policy changes in the wake of the financial collapse of 2008.

As Paul Krugman, noted Kenyesian and columnist for the *New York Times*, wrote this week: “The economic populists have it right.”

Citing the numbers, Krugman explains:

*On average, Americans remain a lot poorer today than they were before the economic crisis. For the bottom 90 percent of families, this impoverishment reflects both a shrinking eco-*

**... the growing gap in both wages and wealth is harming the economy as a whole.**

*... nomic pie and a declining share of that pie. Which mattered more? The answer, amazingly, is that they’re more or less comparable — that is, inequality is rising so fast that over the past six years it has been as big a drag on ordinary American incomes as poor economic performance, even though those years include the worst economic slump since the 1930s.*

*And if you take a longer perspective, rising inequality becomes by far the most important single factor behind lagging middle-class incomes.*

And going deeper than that, Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz **explains** the four main reasons why inequality stifles economic health and a more broad-based recovery:

*The most immediate is that our middle class is too weak to support the consumer spending that has historically driven our economic growth. While the top 1 percent of income earners took home 93 percent of the growth in incomes in 2010, the households in the middle — who are most likely*

**inequality is rising so fast that over the past six years it has been as big a drag on ordinary American incomes as poor economic performance**

*to spend their incomes rather than save them and who are, in a sense, the true job creators — have lower household incomes, adjusted for inflation, than they did in 1996. The growth in the decade before the crisis was unsustainable — it was reliant on the bottom 80 percent consuming about 110 percent of their income.*

*Second, the hollowing out of the middle class since the 1970s, a phenomenon interrupted only briefly in the 1990s, means that they are unable to invest in their future, by educating themselves and their children and by starting or improving businesses.*

*Third, the weakness of the middle class is holding back*

*tax receipts, especially because those at the top are so adroit in avoiding taxes and in getting Washington to give them tax breaks. The recent modest agreement to restore Clinton-level marginal income-tax rates for individuals making more than \$400,000 and households making more than \$450,000 did nothing to change this. Returns from Wall Street speculation are taxed at a far lower rate than other forms of income. Low tax receipts mean that the government cannot make the vital investments in infrastructure, education, research and health that are crucial for restoring long-term economic strength.*

*Fourth, inequality is associated with more frequent and more severe boom-and-bust cycles that make our economy more volatile and vulnerable. Though inequality did not directly cause the crisis, it is no coincidence that the 1920s — the last time inequality of income and wealth in the United States was so high — ended with the Great Crash and the Depression. The International Monetary Fund has noted the systematic relationship between economic instability and economic inequality, but American leaders haven’t absorbed the lesson.*

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Source URL: <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2013/12/18>

## Pope Francis condemns economic inequality

Submitted by **DAN ONORATO**

*In a recent document called *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), Time Magazine’s Person of the Year addresses one of the issues mainline media cover least: the problems caused by capitalism as it’s practiced today. Here are a few excerpts:*

*“In our time humanity is experiencing a turning-point in its history . . . we can only praise the steps being taken in areas such as health care, education, communications. At the same time we have to remember that the majority of our contemporaries are barely living from day to day, with dire consequences.”*

*“Just as the commandment ‘thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills . . .”*

*“Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, when the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.”*

*“While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. This imbalance is the result of ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace. . . .”*

*“Not to share one’s wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood.”*



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# Guantanamo: America's \$5 Billion Folly

By KEN GUDE

Over the past three years, Congress has focused unprecedented attention on reducing federal spending and cutting the deficit. This myopia has pushed the country from crisis to crisis, slashed federal domestic and defense programs in ways that were purposefully designed to be unacceptable, caused real hardship for many American families, and severely damaged the U.S. economy.

Yet during this period of fiscal austerity, Congress has chosen to waste nearly \$1.5 billion on the prison in Guantanamo Bay, even though the U.S. military and intelligence community have concluded that it is unnecessary and strategically harmful to the United States.

These statistics, which are mainly from the Department of Defense, or DOD, comptroller, are detailed and analyzed in this issue brief.

## A summary of U.S. military spending at Guantanamo and comparative costs

- Total cost of Guantanamo through end of 2013: \$4.8 billion
- Guantanamo spending from 2011 to 2013: \$1.42 billion
- Annual cost of keeping detainees who have been cleared for transfer at Guantanamo: \$196 million
- Estimated cost of holding all Guantanamo detainees in existing U.S. prisons from 2011 to 2013: \$29.9 million
- Estimated annual cost of holding all 164 current Guantanamo detainees in existing U.S. prisons: \$9.9 million
- Total cost of military commissions since their inception: \$582.1 million
- Cost of military commissions from 2011 to 2013: \$318.9 million, or nearly \$160 million each for the two convictions obtained during that time
- Average cost per conviction in federal criminal court: \$19,000
- \* Annual expense of keeping the 56 Yemenis designated for transfer at Guantanamo: \$131 million

Download this issue brief at: <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/12/03/80270/guantanamo-americas-5-billion-folly-2/>

From the *Center for American Progress*, <http://www.americanprogress.org>

# 12 Years a Slave vs. 12 Years a Prisoner... in Guantanamo

By ANN WRIGHT, Colonel, US Army (retired)

*Twelve years too long. Of the 779 prisoners kidnapped and subjected to extraordinary rendition by the United States government, 693, or 89%, have been freed because there was no evidence against them. 79 more prisoners have been cleared for release years ago but are still being held. (File)*

I hope the first African-American United State President has seen the movie “12 Years A Slave.” It’s the story of Solomon Northup, a born-free, educated African-American carpenter and musician who lived in Saratoga, New York. In 1841, during a trip to Washington, DC, Northup was kidnapped by slave traders. He was sold into the slave pens in the nation’s capitol, imprisoned in chains, beaten, and transported by paddle wheel steamer by slave traders to the American south. There he was sold to slave owners and began working as a slave on an American Southern plantation. He was savagely beaten and humiliated on the plantation and remained there for 12 years, unable to escape, except by suicide.

Finally, he was able to tell his story to a traveling Canadian builder who was hired to construct a building on the plantation. The Canadian, who was against slavery, at great personal risk, sent a letter to Northup’s friends and business acquaintances in New York describing Northup’s imprisonment as a slave. One of Northup’s friends traveled from New York to the southern plantation with the papers that showed that Northup was a free man, not a slave, and with the help of the local sheriff, was able, after 12 years, to bring Northup back to New York where he became an abolitionist and helped those attempting to escape slavery. He sued the Washington, DC slave pen owners, but as a black was not permitted to testify in the Washington, DC courts and his attempt to sue in New York those who sold him to the slave pens was not successful.

I hope the movie reminds President Obama of the past 12 years of another American injustice—that toward prisoners in Guantanamo. Most Guantanamo prisoners were kidnapped for a bounty, beaten, tortured, some water boarded, sexually humiliated and transported from all over the world by extraordinary rendition to a prison in Cuba from which escape was impossible except by suicide.

For years, the names of prisoners were unknown to the world, but finally a Navy lawyer, Matthew Diaz, believed all prisoners should be able to have legal defense, at great personal risk, disclosed the names thereby allowing lawyers from around the world to volunteer to be the defense attorneys for the prisoners. Diaz lawyer was court-martialed, sentenced to six months in prison and given a dishonorable discharge.

After 12 years, of the 779 prisoners kidnapped and subjected to extraordinary rendition by the United States government, 693, or 89%, have been freed because there was no evidence against them. 79 more prisoners have been cleared for release years ago but are still being held.

12 years later, 158 prisoners are still imprisoned in



Guantanamo: 7 have been convicted by a US military commission of criminal acts against the United States, 6 are facing trial by US military commission and 46 have been designated for indefinite detention, without charge or trial. After no releases of cleared prisoners for several years, 8 were released in the past three months—4 to Algeria, 2 to Saudi Arabia and 2 to Sudan.

I hope President Obama remembers that one-half of those remaining in Guantanamo—79 prisoners—have been cleared for release—and that he will issue an order for them to be released and that he also will finally order the infamous Guantanamo Prison to be closed... 12 years later.

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*Ann Wright is a 29 year US Army/Army Reserves veteran who retired as a Colonel and a former US diplomat who resigned in March, 2003 in opposition to the war on Iraq. She served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia and Mongolia. In December, 2001 she was on the small team that reopened the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. She is the co-author of the book “Dissent: Voices of Conscience.” ([www.voicesofconscience.com](http://www.voicesofconscience.com))*

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/12/20-5>

# BRIDEGROOM

from page 1

of often underserved people in our county. The commitment of those honored reflects Dr. King's vision of building the "Beloved Community."

Pastor Wayne started serving at Central Baptist Church, now located at 918 Sierra Drive, in 1973, and has lived in the neighborhood ever since. He became lead pastor in 1981. In the early 80's he saw surrounding neighborhoods change from predominantly blue collar working class white people to increasing numbers of Southeast Asians and Latinos. He welcomed these immigrants into his church. Since 1984 Central Baptist has become the home of four ethnic congregations: Laotian, Hmong, Cambodian, and Hispanic. The church has also provided bread and pastries for local families for many years.

In the late 80's, realizing Central by itself couldn't do all that he envisioned in west Modesto, he brought together two other West Side churches and five Anglo churches from across town to form the Modesto Outreach Ministry. That became the Christian Challenge Ministries but the focus remained on building connections and bonds of friendship within the community. This work involved Thanksgiving meals at three west Modesto sites, large block parties, tutoring at James Marshall and Mark Twain schools, and softball and basketball leagues for young people.

Pastor Wayne's talent at bridge-building and developing networks between groups grew when he and Bob Schmal founded Harvest of Hope. This collaboration between church, neighborhood, and county government focused on providing goods for needy families in exchange for dignity-building work projects. While working on this project Wayne and Bob developed a relationship with Raleigh Smith from the HUD office in Fresno, who introduced them to the Department of Justice Weed and Seed Program. With help from Modesto Police Chief Roy Wasden, they brought that program to west Modesto where it flourished from 2003 to 2008. Five members of Central Baptist served on its Steering Committee. The work was a stunning success, not only in "weeding" out the bad and "seeding" in the good, but in becoming the only Weed and Seed effort in the nation that brought city and county governments together in one project.

Over the last 20 years Bridegroom has worked with the West Modesto King-Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative and Stanislaus County in its numerous Asset Based Community Development trainings that focus on mental health and well-being issues affecting the community. He serves on the Collaborative's board. Also, "he's in the forefront with other West Side ministers," Carol Collins explains, "in the effort to work with the police department to improve relations between the police and the community."

In the early 2000's PICO California came to Modesto seeking a group of pastors to begin a local affiliate for its faith-based justice ministry. PICO is a non-project institute that

targets issues of low-income and working class families in the state. Pastor Wayne became one of the founding members and remains on its Congregation Building Community (CBC) board. Since 2007, he's worked closely with CBC's Homero Mejía. Accomplishments of this grassroots organizing network include forming a lighting district in a county island without street lights, changing a Modesto Police Department car towing policy for minor offenses in which drunk driving

was not involved, helping to pass Prop. 30 to provide much needed funding for schools, and increasing voter turn out in west Modesto neighborhoods. For the last two years CBC has focused mainly on comprehensive immigration reform. In 2013 Pastor Wayne co-chaired a community meeting on this issue with Congressmen Denham and Goudy at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church with 1,500 people present.

Pastor Wayne's long-time involvement in and knowledge of the community, as well as the wealth of relationships he's built over the years are a valuable contribution to CBC and Mejía. "He doesn't just preach about justice," Mejía says. "He's there on the ground, working for it."

Generally, Evangelicals concentrate on their personal relationship with Jesus and God. But what made Pastor Wayne also develop his passion for justice and his ever expanding vision of serving those often on the margins of society? Studying at Wheaton College in Ohio, one of the top ranking Christian liberal arts schools in the country, created the spark. Founded in 1860 and involved deeply in the Abolitionist Movement, it encourages its students to develop a hospitality of the mind that asks and pursues questions with an openness to new understanding. Then in the summer after his second year at Wheaton, Bridegroom worked in Guatemala on a Quaker-sponsored agricultural project. There he experienced a church community that was spiritually alive. He became aware that American churches don't have all the answers; others who are different might also be sources of truth. Shortly

after he joined the ministry and married his wife Beth, they spent a couple of months in Columbia, South America, doing missionary work. That experience with indigenous people in the interior only deepened the realization he'd had in Guatemala.

All this exposure helped him be open to different people and ways of thinking and living. Then when he began his ministry at Central Baptist and increasingly over the years, he's been influenced by the work and outlook of Evangelicals for Social Action and of Jim Wallis, a socially committed Evangelical minister and editor of *Sojourners Magazine*. The most important influence has been living in west Modesto among the people he serves. "Each of us reads scripture through a particular lens," he said to me after our tasty lunch at Pasta Pronto in west Modesto where I interviewed him. "Living here has changed my lens. Most of the people I see in the neighborhood aren't lazy. They're

hard working. But many are up against huge obstacles. Our work is to change some of that." Bridegroom's commitment is rooted not only in his daily experience but also in his theology. "We're more than just a soul," he explains. "We're a mind, emotions, bodies, relationships." I felt his gentle intensity as he spoke. "Jesus is about loving the whole person and loving humanity. When we pray the 'Our Father,' we say 'Thy will be done,' but where? On earth . . ."

In June, Pastor Wayne will officially "retire" as lead minister at Central Baptist. "I don't see him sitting home being idle," says Carol Collins with a chuckle. "He'll always be striving to serve his community." She's right. He'll continue serving the congregation in a limited role while he works on implementing his vision of getting people to work together to bring about constructive change. He'll be the faith-based liaison with other community pillars involved in revitalizing down town Modesto, which includes from 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> streets—part of west Modesto. He'll serve as a board member on the newly formed Clergy Council that seeks to develop positive relationships with the Modesto Police Department. He also plans to work with the Relational Culture Institute in Fresno and with PICO to help build a grassroots movement from Stockton to Bakersfield to train people in community organizing. The goal is to create a valley-wide voice on issues of common concern such as housing and job development.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of the "Beloved Community" was not some distant utopia. It becomes a reality every time different groups of people get involved together and grow in mutual understanding and appreciation. With his skill in connecting government and the faith community, mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, and Catholics, and racial and ethnic groups in Modesto, Pastor Wayne is helping build that community. How fitting it is that he will be honored with the 2014 MLK Legacy Award.

*(Special thanks to Beth Bridegroom for providing an extended outline of Wayne's work)*

## MoST Poetry Festival features poetry, dance and prize-winning poets

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

Modesto Area poets and others are invited to attend the MoSt Poetry Festival, hosted by the Modesto/Stanislaus Poetry Center, Saturday February 8 from 9 am to 4 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto.

The event will include a morning workshop lead by Patrice Vecchione (poet, author, artist, editor), and a Persona Poetry session lead by Gary Thomas, local poet, retired English teacher and MoSt vice president. There also will be a presentation of poetry and dance by the New Dance Company of Stockton, and a reading of the MoSt Poetry Festival contest winning poems.

**ACTION:** Tickets are \$35 each and include morning beverages and lunch. (Contest deadlines are already past.) Send ticket requests to: MoSt Poetry, PO Box 578940, Modesto, CA 95357. Checks should be made out to: Gillian Wegener.

**"He doesn't change in his commitment to the community. He's a caring, passionate person who gives of himself, and he's that way all the time."**

**The goal is to create a valley-wide voice on issues of common concern such as housing and job development.**



## Rabbi Shalom Bochner: Shalom means “peace”

Rabbi Shalom Bochner is a native of Albany, NY, and currently resides in Berkeley, CA with his family. He teaches 8th Grade Judaic Studies at Brandeis Hillel Day School in San Francisco, is the Director of Alma Retreats, and serves as a rabbi for Congregation Beth Shalom in Modesto. He is the former president of the UC Santa Cruz Interfaith Council and is committed to interfaith dialogue, peace work, and environmental education.

Rabbi Shalom grew up in a house in which poetry and political activism were emphasized. He considers the works of Robert Frost, Allen Ginsberg, and Bob Dylan inspirations for his own writing. An accomplished guitarist, drummer and song-writer, Rabbi Shalom loves leading nature-based weekend retreats for Jewish communities. He was named Shalom (Hebrew for “peace”) by his mother, who gave birth to him a few months after the 1967 Six Day War with the hope that a time of peace was approaching.



### True Peace #1

Beyond the last house, past the farthest street light,  
is a place where one can be alone  
with the sky, the land, the world, the stars.  
And there is a deeper lasting peace.

In the company of friends around the table  
is the place we feel most at home  
with our beliefs, our songs, our tribes, our God.  
And there is also a broader, higher peace.

Over the rushing waves, above the soaring mountain peaks,  
is a place where we can be one  
with nature, the sunset, the dawn, eternity.  
And there is a peace even greater than this one.

True peace is not merely the absence of war and hatred.

### True Peace #2

The fog blows in and the day turns to dusk  
a sky filled with stars, the quiet of the night  
gentle sunrise follows, the rebirth of the world  
an afternoon with gentle breezes, softness beneath the trees.  
The peace of being by yourself.

Waves crashing with abandon, washing cliffs into broken rocks  
Mountains testify to slow moving eternity, majestic storms, distant peaks  
Towering branches, reaching the blue sky, over layers of green and brown  
Flowing streams, song birds calling, delicate nature of fur and feet.  
The peace sounds of being at one with the world.

A meal of delicious foods on a fine wooden table with white dishes  
Waking up in a soft bed after a night of complete rest  
The swirl of the paintbrush on canvas, the photographer's sharp eyes  
Stringed instruments and woodwind sounds, conjunction of music and art.  
The peace of being filled with contentment.

The smile of family faces, the well-known laughter of cousins celebrating  
A dinner party, a lovely evening spent with closest of friends,  
Greetings from neighbors, walking down sidewalks filled with leaves  
The comforting hug, the look in your lover's eyes, unspoken heart poems.  
The feelings of peace found in good company.

Music, one of humanity's greatest gifts, the science of listening,  
making space for others, turns clashing noise into chorus and verse.  
Joining together creates a greater sound than playing solo,  
a harmony of sacred sounds, a beauty found in the instruments of many.  
The peace of hearing shared voices in prayerful song.

All this and the peace found in overlapping expressions,  
church bells, muezzin calls, shofar cries, blend with a quiet of meditations  
competing histories, differing accounts, faces with unique truths,  
different names, same smiles, all want their children to lay safe at night.  
When will we make the peace found in the combined symphony of all sounds and beliefs?

Peace is when all voices call out their histories and songs.  
And together they join the ultimate symphony of humanity.

Peace is found when being right gives way to true listening.  
Peace lives where ancient feuds are settled without fear.  
Peace can be heard when all discordant voices rise together.  
Peace happens when brothers weep on each other's shoulders.

One day, multiple truths, and every belief and competing reality,  
and every cry in the night of injustice and abuse,  
will be heard,  
and welcomed  
and embraced,  
and healed.

And the song of that day will never fade,  
for the world will have heard its true sweetness.

### Poem of Peace

Peace is completeness  
with one's self and world

Peace is a fullness  
of life, heart, and soul

Peace is a harmony  
of beliefs, thoughts, and dreams

Peace is the unity  
found within  
the deepest prayers of us all.



# 8th Annual UC Merced Human Rights Watch Film Festival

Four films over four Fridays in February. Free and Open to the Public. Films start at 7 pm in COB 105 (Classroom and Office Building).

## February 7: *An Unreal Dream: The Michael Morton Story*

In 1986, Michael Morton's wife Christine was brutally murdered in front of their only child and Michael was convicted of the crime. Locked away in Texas prisons for a quarter of a century, he had years to ponder questions of justice and innocence, truth and fate. Though he was virtually invisible to society, a team of dedicated attorneys spent years fighting for the right to test DNA evidence found at the murder scene. The discoveries ultimately reveal that the price of a wrongful conviction goes well beyond one man's loss of freedom.

## February 14: *Rafea: Solar Mama*

Rafea is a Bedouin woman who lives with her daughters in one of Jordan's poorest desert villages on the Iraqi border. When she is selected for an intriguing program called the Barefoot College in India, Rafea doesn't need to think twice, and travels to join 30 illiterate women from different countries train to become solar engineers over the course of six months. Rafea immediately understands that she has a unique opportunity to give her children a better future and to provide the whole village with solar power.

## February 21: *The Naked Option*

(Writer, producer, director Candace Schermerhorn in person). Fueled by the determination for a better future, grassroots women in Nigeria's Niger Delta use the threat of stripping naked in public, a serious cultural taboo, in a deadly struggle to hold oil companies accountable to the communities in which they operate. The women, at the risk of being raped, beaten or killed, are trained and armed, but not with anything you can see.

## February 28: *My Afghanistan: Life in the Forbidden Zone*

Nagieb Kaja, a Danish journalist of Afghan origin, travels to Lashkar Gah, capital of Helmand province in Afghanistan. Because journalists are not able to move safely outside the capital, contact with the civilian population in rural areas is almost impossible. But Khaja has a trick up his sleeve. He gives people living in outlying communities mobile phones equipped with cameras and asks them to film their daily lives, providing a rare glimpse into the war-torn existence of ordinary Afghans.

Sponsored by the School Of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts and The Center For the Humanities. For more information, contact assistant professor Nigel Hatton, [nhatton@ucmerced.edu](mailto:nhatton@ucmerced.edu), 209-228-4384.

Directions and map at <http://www.ucmerced.edu/directions-map>

# Happy Kwanzaa To All!

By BRUCE JONES

This celebration is already underway, but its philosophy can carry us into 2014 and beyond. The description below is from my book-near-completion *True American Values: The American Dream and a Progressive Social Contract*.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of family, heritage, and life that comes from the African-American community, first observed in the mid 1960s, as part of the civil rights movement. It is celebrated from December 26 through January 1st as a cultural holiday that honors heritage and traditions. Established by Dr. Maulana Karenga, it reflects the "First Fruits" (harvest) celebrations originating in ancient Egypt and Nubia.

The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa have their own day of celebration and participants light a colored candle for each. Listed below, they are written in both Swahili (the most common language in Africa) and English:

- **Umoja:** Unity. To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race
- **Kujichagulia:** Self-determination. To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
- **Ujima:** Collective Work and Responsibility. To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems, and to solve them together.
- **Ujamaa:** Cooperative Economics. To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together
- **Nia:** Purpose. To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness
- **Kuumba:** Creativity. To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- **Imani:** Faith. To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle

The values expressed in this list are universal and transcend ethnic or geographic origins. For more details, see internet references and the source, *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*, 2008 by Dr.. Maulana Karenga.

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## Keynote Speaker: Civil Rights Activist DIANE NASH



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# Delegations to El Salvador and Guatemala

From SOA, Schools of the Americas Watch

You are invited to travel with SOA Watch to El Salvador (January 27 - February 4, 2014) to observe the presidential elections, and to Guatemala (February 15 - 23, 2014) to visit indigenous communities who brought SOA graduate Rios Montt to trial on charges of genocide. Learn about the reality of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America.

## January 27-February 4, 2014: El Salvador Electoral Delegation

In coordination with the Center for International Solidarity (CIS), participants will observe the presidential election. The delegation seeks to contribute to free and fair elections and deepen understanding of the social and economic structures that govern the country and their impact.

The presence of international observers contributes to transparency, deters fraud, and builds voter confidence, especially in rural areas where the divisions and wounds of the war are still very present. Delegation fee of \$950 includes lodging, all meals, and transportation within El Salvador. It does not include air fare to and from San Salvador. **Information:** Lisa Sullivan, [LSullivan@soaw.org](mailto:LSullivan@soaw.org)

## February 15-23, 2014: Delegation to Guatemala

**Join Father Roy Bourgeois on a this important delegation.** Visit Ixil communities in El Quiche who bravely brought SOA graduate General Rios Montt to face trial for genocide. The group will also visit communities facing current repression and militarization directed against their efforts to protect their environment against exploitative private initiatives such as mining and dam construction. The delegation will meet with high level government officials to discuss Guatemala's participation in WHINSEC (aka the School of the Americas). Delegation fee of \$1,300 includes lodging, all meals, transportation within Guatemala, translation and materials. It does not include air fare to and from Guatemala. **Information:** Lisa Sullivan, [LSullivan@soaw.org](mailto:LSullivan@soaw.org)

Visit <http://www.soaw.org>

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# Under the Global Shadow of Big Brother, Journalism Must Light Up the Political Sky

By NORMAN SOLOMON

Every new revelation about the global reach of the National Security Agency underscores that the extremism of the surveillance state has reached gargantuan proportions. The *Washington Post* just reported that the NSA "is gathering nearly 5 billion records a day on the whereabouts of cellphones around the world." Documents provided by whistleblower Edward Snowden have forced top officials in Washington to admit the indefensible while defending it. One of the main obstacles to further expansion of their Orwellian empire is real journalism.

Real journalism is "subversive" of deception that can't stand the light of day. This is a huge problem for the Obama administration and the many surveillance-state flunkies of both parties in Congress. What they want is fake journalism, deferring to government storylines and respectful of authority even when it is illegitimate.

In motion now, on both sides of the Atlantic, are top-down efforts to quash real journalism when and how it matters most. In the two English-speaking countries that have done the most preaching to the world about "Western values" like freedom of the press, the governments led by President Obama and Prime Minister Cameron are overseeing assaults on real journalism.

They're striving to further normalize fake journalism—largely confined to stenographic services for corporate power, war industries and surveillance agencies. A parallel goal is to harass, intimidate and destroy real journalism. The quest is to maximize the *uninformed* consent of the governed.

In direct contrast, those willing to fight for truly independent journalism—including whistleblowers, political activists and journalists themselves—are struggling to provide our world with vital light, fueled by comprehension that real journalism must be willing to challenge entrenched power.

From incessant war and arming the world, to climate change and coddling fossil fuel industries, to anti-democratic governance and enabling vast NSA surveillance, the U.S. power structure — with epicenters along Wall Street and Pennsylvania Avenue — continues to dominate. That power structure is a clear, present and horrendous threat to human survival, the natural world of this planet and the possibilities for authentic democracy.

Against such dire, highly institutionalized assaults on the present and the future, we desperately need a wide range of nonviolent, principled and unrelenting insurgencies. In that context, government efforts to crush real journalism can be understood as methodical counterinsurgency.

Smashing *Guardian* hard drives and hauling the newspa-

per's editor in front of an inquisitorial parliamentary committee are aspects of the British government's counterinsurgency program against real journalism. In the United States, the counterinsurgency includes numerous prosecutions of whistleblowers and wide-ranging surveillance of journalists' workaday communications. These assaults aren't episodic. They've become routine.

Journalism is at a momentous crossroads. The alternative to unrelenting independence is sheepism, and that's not journalism; it's a professionalized baseline of bowing to government and corporate pressure even before it has been overtly exerted.

For journalists, and for the rest of us, silence is not neutrality; it ends up as acceptance of autocratic rule, a present festooned with pretty-sounding names like "anti-terrorism" and "national security."

As the most powerful institutions run amuck, their main functionaries are "leaders" who keep leading us farther and farther away from a world we could possibly be proud of leaving for the next generations. Pushing back against the ominous momentum will require fighting for real journalism. No one can plausibly say that reversing course will be easy or probable—only imperative.

Norman Solomon is co-founder of RootsAction.org and founding director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death" and "Made Love, Got War: Close Encounters with America's Warfare State".

Source: <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/12/05>

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"The system failed comprehensively, and each level of oversight, each level of responsibility that should have addressed this, abdicated their responsibility."  
— Edward Snowden



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

## ACTIONS FOR PEACE

Sonora - Stockton

**SONORA:** Contact Alice at lewisalice090@gmail.com

**PEACE AND JUSTICE NETWORK OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY** (<http://www.pjnsjc.org>).  
Info: James Walsh, jwprod1956@clearwire.net

## JANUARY

**Ongoing: MJC Modesto Area Partners in Science 2014**, MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132. **1/24:** Mark Aldenderfer, UVM, *Sky Caves of Nepal*. **2/28:** Kevin Mitchell, UCM, *Chaos and Fractals*. **3/28:** Judy Van de Water, UCD, *Autism and Immunology*. **4/25:** Joel Hagen, *TBD*. More at <http://maps.events.mjc.edu>

**Ongoing: MJC Science Colloquium**, Wednesdays, Science Community Center Rm 115, MJC West Campus, 3-4 pm. **Jan. 29:** Garry Hayes, MJC Geologist, **"Into the Great Unknown: A Geologist Floats the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon."** **Feb. 5:** John Buckley, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, **"Last summer's massive Rim Fire in the Yosemite region: its far-reaching effects on wildlife, water, and recreation."** **Feb. 12:** Minda Berbeco, National Center for Science Education, **"Climate and Evolution in the Classroom."** **Feb. 19:** Dr. David Martin, **"The International Trade in Reptile Skins: How Policy and Science Meet through Forensics."** **Feb. 26\*:** Teri Curtis' *MJC Zoology class members*, **"Term Report Animal."**

**7 TUES: Modesto Film Society** hosts *The Age of Innocence*, 7 pm, State Theatre. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/108>

**12 SUN: Science On Screen presents Whale Rider. Topic: Does Saving a Culture Sometimes Rely on Challenging its Traditions?** Doors, interactive activities at 2 pm; presentation and film, 3 p.m.; Q&A to follow. Admission: \$8 or \$6 for student with ID. State Theatre, <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/190>

**14 TUES: John McCutcheon** in Concert for the Peace/Life Center.

**18 SAT: CareMore Senior Film Series, The Best Years of Our Lives**, 10:30 am, State Theatre, <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/180>

**19 SUN: Modesto Film Society** hosts *Out of the Past*, State Theatre, 2:00 pm, <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/95#>

**19 SUN: The Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee** presents the **19th Annual MLK Birthday Celebration**. Keynote speaker: **Dolores Huerta**, co-founder of the United Farmworkers Union with Cesar Chavez. Sonora High School Auditorium, Shaws Flat Rd. and

Washington St., Sonora, 2:00 pm. FREE. Info: Pat Cervelli, 209-928-3494.

**19 SUN: Home Grown Concert at Sunday Afternoons at CBS plus a jam session and "souper social."** 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. See article, this issue.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**February 1, 2014: MLK Commemoration** with Civil Rights pioneer **Diane Nash** (see article, this issue)

**February 8, 2014: MoSt Poetry Festival**, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto. 9 am to 4 pm. See article, this issue.

**Friday March 21, 2014: Peace Essay Contest Awards and Reception.**

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

**LifeRing Secular Recovery:** Sunday 10:00 am, Kaiser CDRP, 1789 W Yosemite Ave, Manteca. Support group for people living free of alcohol and drugs. Each person creates an individualized recovery program. We avoid discussion of religious or political opinions so our meetings can focus on sobriety skills. 526-4854, <http://goldendrippings.com/lifering/>

**Weekly mindfulness meditation** and dharma talk, 12:30-2:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>

**LifeRing Secular Recovery:** Sunday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto.

### MONDAYS

**LifeRing Secular Recovery Morning Mtg.** Monday 7:00 am. Deva Cafe, 1202 J St, Modesto.

**LifeRing Secular Recovery Women's Mtg.** Monday 6:30 pm, private home, 1905 Kienitz Ave, Modesto. Bonnie, 324-7095.

### TUESDAYS

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

**LifeRing Secular Recovery.** Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 526-4854

**Ukulele class/play-a-long** led by Lorrie Freitas 6 p.m. Tuesdays, Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Suggested monthly fee \$25. Info: 505-3216.

**Weekly mindfulness meditation** and dharma talk, 6:30-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori for more information at 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>

**PFLAG Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays** support group. 7 pm, 566-2468. First and third Tuesdays. Emanuel Lutheran Church, 324 College Ave., Modesto, <http://www.pflagmodesto.org>

**PFLAG Merced**, Second Tuesday, Merced United Methodist Church, 899 Yosemite Park Way, Merced. 7 pm. Info: 341-2122, <http://s444531532.onlinehome.us>

**PFLAG Sonora/Mother Lode**, third Tuesdays of January, April, July, and October, 6:30 to 8 pm, Tuolumne

## 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), **EXCEPT THIS MONTH. VIGIL WILL BE ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY (NOTE TIME)**, 4:00 - 5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

**CENTER TV:** News and interviews you won't find elsewhere on Comcast Public Access TV Ch 26, Wed. & Sat. 9:00 pm - 10 pm. Also: Listen to local Valley Community Radio KQRP 104.9 FM, <http://www.kqrp.com>

**PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING**, FIRST Thursdays, 720 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750.

**MEDIA COMMITTEE** of Peace Life Center. Meetings TBA. Call John Lucas, 527-7634.

**CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS:** Meets twice a month. New workers welcome. Call to confirm time and place. 537-7818, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

**PEACE LIFE CENTER MODESTO**, 720 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

County Library Community Room, 480 Greenley Rd., Sonora, Info: 533-1665. Info@pflagsonora.org , [www.pflagsonora.org](http://www.pflagsonora.org)

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

### WEDNESDAYS

**LifeRing Secular Recovery.** Wednesday 6:30 pm, Reynolds Room, 1700 McHenry Village Way, Modesto. Back of McHenry Village across from the Memorial Health and Education Center. Meeting offering support for people in relationships with people wrestling with addiction.

**Modesto Folk Dancers** All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 578-5551.

**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 non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

**PFLAG Oakdale**, third Wednesdays, Golden Oaks Conf. Room, Oak Valley Medical Bldg., 1425 West H St., Oakdale, 7 pm. Info: [flagoakdale@dishmail.net](mailto:flagoakdale@dishmail.net)

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

**Mindful Meditation:** Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Stan, 549-7770, [stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com](mailto:stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com) , or Anne, 521-6977.

**Compassionate Friends Groups**, 2nd Wed., 252 Magnolia, Manteca.

### THURSDAYS

**Third Thursday Gallery 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: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

**CVAN (Central Valley Action Network)** 3rd Thursday, 7-8:15 pm, Peace/Life Center 720 13th St. Contact: Jocelyn at [jocelyncocooper@gmail.com](mailto:jocelyncocooper@gmail.com) or 510-467-2877 or 209-312-9413

**The Book Group**, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.com)

**The Compassionate Friends**, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter. 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact: Joanna Rose-Murray, 209-484-8276, [jrmcompassionate@gmail.com](mailto:jrmcompassionate@gmail.com), <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.org>

**NAACP**. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S M.L. King Dr., Modesto, 7 pm, 3rd Thursdays. 549-1991.

**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.

### FRIDAYS

**Occupy Modesto:** General Assembly meets each Friday, 5:00 - 6:30 pm at Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St. All interested members of the 99% are welcome. Time will change when it stays light later.

**LifeRing Secular Recovery.** Friday 6:30 pm. Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. Every first Friday we alternate between a LifeRing & 12 Step speaker with a discussion following.

**Funstrummer Ukulele Band** every Friday, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Begins 9:15 am. Suggested monthly membership fee \$25. Info: 505-3216.

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

**Village Dancers:** Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

**Sierra Club:** Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 549-9155. Visit <http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

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

**Hispanic Leadership Council**, 1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Other meetings at Terrace Cafe, Double Tree Hotel. Info: Yamilet Valladolid, 523-2860.

### SATURDAY

**So Easy ~ So Good:** Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabee potluck/meeting every third Saturday of the month, 11:30 AM- 1:30 PM. Info: Kathy or Chris, 209-529-5360; email [kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com](mailto:kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com)

**SERRV:** Saturdays, 10 - Noon and after church Sundays or by appointment. Call Mary, 522-6497 or 523-5178. Gifts from developing countries. Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland, Rm. #4, Modesto.

**DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS:** Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org) Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.