

John McCutcheon Back Live in Concert Tuesday, January 10

By **KEN SCHROEDER**

Six-time Grammy-nominated folk musician John McCutcheon performs in his 20th benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, January 10 at 7:00 PM at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Avenue, Modesto.

Johnny Cash called him “the most impressive instrumentalist I’ve ever heard.” John is a master of the guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano, autoharp, and fiddle. John’s latest and 43rd album is *Leap!* his 3rd and final album of songs written during the pandemic. It

accompanies his Cuban father-in-law to his first job in America. It contemporizes The Troubles to look hard at 2022 America. There are Fuller Brush salesmen, a straggler at the Canterbury pilgrimage, a kora player in an NYC subway, and a nervous kid standing at the ledge of his local quarry.

John’s regular winter visits to perform and support the work of the Modesto Peace/Life Center have been called “the best thing about January in Modesto.”

Online tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/john-mccutcheon->



Three New Year’s Resolutions to Lift Up Workers and Their Families in 2023

From the [Economic Policy Institute](#)

As we look toward a new year and a new Congress, we hope policymakers will resolve to:

Strengthen unions and the right to strike: [Union approval hit its highest](#) point since 1965, yet only 11.6% of workers are represented by a union. Labor law reforms that restore workers’ right to form unions and [strengthen the right to strike](#) would help ensure workers have the leverage they need to secure their share of economic growth.

Boost worker pay and tackle wage inequality: The [value of the federal minimum wage](#) is at its lowest point in 66 years. After the longest period in history without an increase, the federal minimum wage today is worth 27% less than 13 years ago—and 40% less than in 1968. Meanwhile, worker productivity has continued to increase, but the typical worker has not seen that reflected in their wages: [Productivity has grown 3.7 times as much as worker pay since 1979](#).

Make pay more equitable for teachers and address the educator shortage: The [teacher pay penalty](#) hit a new high of 23.5%

Economic Policy Institute

in 2021. This gap in pay has been worsening over time, hurting students in public education by undermining teacher retention and recruitment.

The holiday season is a good time to remember the impact of policies like these on the lives and circumstances of workers and their families. We wish you a happy holiday season and a joyful new year as we continue to advocate for a fairer economy for all throughout the new year.

EPI is an independent, nonprofit think tank that researches the impact of economic trends and policies on working people in the United States. EPI’s research helps policymakers, opinion leaders, advocates, journalists, and the public understand the bread-and-butter issues affecting ordinary Americans.

[concert-tickets-461528372787?aff=ebdssbcategorybrowse](#)

In-person tickets are available at Intrinsic Elements (1214 J St., Modesto 209-409-8510) by cash or check for \$25, or at the door for \$28. Youth 24 and under are \$10.

Please consider becoming a sponsor. You will receive tickets to the concert, your name in the program, and reserved seating. Five levels of sponsorship are available:

Autoharp \$50 One ticket,
Guitar \$100 Two tickets,
Banjo \$175 Four tickets,
Piano \$300 Eight tickets,
Hammer Dulcimer \$500 Sixteen tickets.

You may send your sponsorship donation check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134, Modesto, CA 95354. Please write “concert sponsor” in the note on the check.

You may also buy your sponsorship here at the Eventbrite site.

For more info, contact Ken Schroeder at kschroeder70@yahoo.com or 209-480-4576. Let Ken know if you would like a dedication to appear in the program (such as “In Honor of” or “In Memory of”)

The Modesto Peace/Life Center is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

COVID precautions in effect.

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<http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>

Growing our awareness to create a better world together: Community Conversations about Gen Z and LGBTQ+

By ARI KENNEY, UUFSC

Topics like gender, sexuality, and identity can be confusing. Many of us want to support the young people in our lives, but we don't fully understand what they're talking about.

We invite you to join the Unitarian Universalist Church in Modesto for two community conversations with Ari Kenney (they, them), a local LGBTQ+ educator who works in consumer research at E&J Gallo Winery. If you've ever wondered: "What do all these new identity terms mean?" "Why are there so many LGBTQ+ young people these days?" or "What's the difference between gender and sexuality?" this is the place for you to ask. All attendees who attend these non-judgmental, candid conversations will receive an informational packet.

Session #1 (January 22nd, 1-3 pm): "Ask a young person: Understanding and relating to Gen Z", focusing on the identities, attitudes, and behaviors of young people. To register for this free event, please email mlainey1@gmail.com, or sign up at <https://GenZQuestions.eventbrite.com>

Session #2 (January 29th, 1-3 pm): "Ask a non-binary person: How to understand LGBTQ+ people," focusing on LGBTQ+ identities, gender, and sexuality.

To register for this free event, email mlainey1@gmail.com, or sign up at <https://LGBTQuestions.eventbrite.com>

Please bring your curiosity and questions! Reach out to mlainey1@gmail.com or arikenney12@gmail.com if you have any questions.

The Truth About Sea Level Rise Over the Next 30 Years

By STEVE MUROV, Ph.D.

On November 15, 2022, Donald Trump, during his candidacy announcement speech, stated:

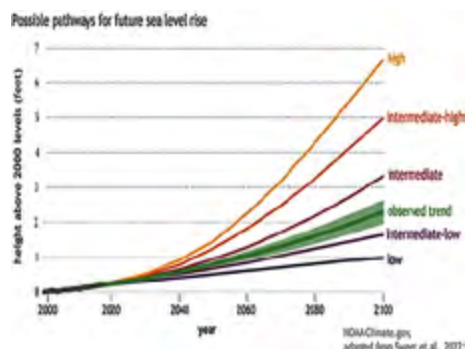
"They say the ocean will rise one-eighth of an inch over the next 200 to 300 years."

For U.S. coastlines, scientists project an increase of 10 to 12 inches in the next 30 years alone.

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/hazards/sealevelrise/sealevelrise-tech-report.html>

Trump's statement is another very dangerous big lie as tens of millions of Americans believe his lies. Statements like this erect a barrier to very urgently needed action on climate change. Trump "erred" by a calamitous factor of hundreds.

We urgently need to improve climate change education!



MAPS: Free, Informative, Engaging Community Science Programs

Dr. John Abatzoglou,
Climatologist, UC Merced

MJC West Campus Sierra Hall 132

Friday, Jan. 27, 2023. 7:30 pm
(suggested for junior high and up)

Navigating Climate Change: Science, Impacts, and Solutions

Professor Abatzoglou is interested in the hows and whys of climate, weather, and the so whats. His lab's work spans many topics - from addressing questions on climate variability, understanding climate impacts on natural resources to developing climate datasets and tools.



<https://www.ucmerced.edu/content/john-abatzoglou>

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=S1J4kAoAAAAJ>

<https://www.uidaho.edu/news/climate-change/abatzoglou>
https://www.climatologylab.org/uploads/2/2/1/3/22133936/img_0387.png

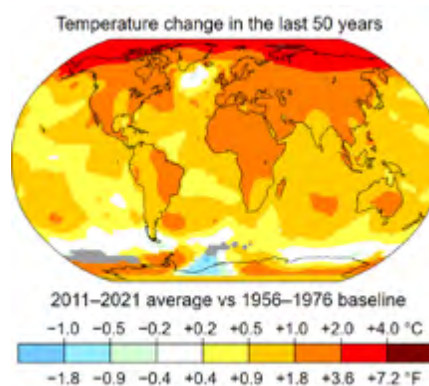
<https://mist.ucmerced.edu/news/2020/mist-faculty-welcome-professor-john-abatzoglou>

<https://news.ucmerced.edu/news/2020/changing-snow-melt-threatens-valley-ag-way-life>

The globe has warmed by nearly 2°F over the past century with continued warming in the pipeline for the foreseeable future.

In this talk, I'll synthesize the latest science on climate change, evidence of climate change in California, and state-of-the-science information on climate trajectories and impacts pertinent to different sectors in the state.

While the impacts of climate change are already evident, the pathway of future change isn't locked in. Instead, science and policy can chart a course for bending the curve of climate change and its impacts. I will outline examples of both mitigation strategies for slowing the pace of climate change and science-informed adaptation efforts for improving the climate resilience of California's economy and communities.



Approximately monthly on Fridays MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132, 7:30 pm



Friday, Feb. 24: MJC East Campus Auditorium, **FAMILY SCIENCE show for people of all ages.** Frank Cascarano and David Marasco of Foothill College present a series of exciting physics demonstrations. <http://www.thephysicsshow.com/>

Friday, March 24: Dr. Jeanette Pirlo, new Assistant Professor of Evolutionary Biology, CSU Stanislaus. **Stompin' Through the Marshes: A Look at Gomphotheres from North-Central Florida.** Jeanette studies a group of extinct elephant relatives, Gomphotheres and Mastodons. Her research focuses on extinct megaherbivore ecology of the American continents and the reconstruction of paleoecosystems.

<https://timescavengers.blog/2018/02/26/jeanette-pirlo-paleontologist-and-marine-biologist/>

Friday, April 21: TBA

MAPS is grateful to MJC, the MJC Foundation, Stanislaus County Office of Education, Modesto Teachers Assn., the Great Valley Museum, and the Stanislaus County Library for support.

Motherlode Celebrates MLK's Birthday on 1/15

By PAT CERVELLI

For the first time in three years, the Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee will hold an in-person event celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

The theme of this year's program is "*Celebrating the Mother Lode's Commitment to Equity, Fairness, and Justice*" with panelists Andrea-Victoria Lisbon, co-founder of *Stand Up, Speak Up, Speak Out*; Stephanie Beaver-Guzman, Counselor at Columbia College; Thomas Moraitis, LGBTQ activist; and Nikki Coleman, Columbia College Prison Outreach Worker.

Singers will perform songs of protest, and the Laurie Bailey Social Justice Award will go to the members of the Sonora City Council's Social Equity Committee which recently developed a **resolution affirming the city's commitment to equity, fairness, and justice.**

The celebration will take place on what would have been King's 94th birthday: Sunday, January 15, at 2 p.m. in the Sonora High School Auditorium, 430 N. Washington St., Sonora. Reception will follow in the school cafeteria.

For more information, see www.motherlodemlk.org and the Motherlode Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee's Facebook page.

What Do We Do with the Universal Feeling of “Otherness”? A Story and an Invitation

By ARI KENNY

To be human is to know what it feels like to be “othered.” To feel separate, different from other people. I witnessed it from a young age through my special needs sister.

My sister Allison was born with Apert Syndrome, a genetic condition that affects the way parts of the body grow and separate. A single-point mutation, a random, bad roll of the dice. She was born with her fingers and toes stuck together, among several other complications such as a bulging forehead and shorter nasal passages that caused difficulty breathing. Since then, she’s gone through 30 surgeries to help her live a better life.

She’s 2 years younger than me, so I’ve been a close witness to her life-long discomfort of going up looking and being different. She has never known a life where she wasn’t the “other.” Where people didn’t stare at her when she walked past. The worst was when people would ignore her entirely and talk directly to my parents or me. Watching people treat her differently made me mad and broke my heart.

Growing up with a special needs sister was difficult, but it also taught me to be aware of others’ pain from a very young age. I watched my sister be left out by her peer group and the world.

While I might have been sensitized at a young age, I know I’m not alone in that sensitivity. Humans are porous creatures. We take on other people’s stuff. When we see somebody who is in pain, we *feel* it.

Our nervous systems make little distinction between our own pain and the pain of others. It turns out they react similarly to both. This instinct for empathy is as much a part of us as the desire to eat and breathe.

Part of the universal human experience is to feel the discomfort of feeling *othered, separate, lonely, disconnected, different*. And the fact that we can look at others who are in pain and process it the same way as our own struggles tells us that caring and compassion are right at the heart of human existence.

My sister is extrinsically different. People perceive her disability just by looking at her and treat her differently. They *other* her before she gets a choice.

Me, I’m intrinsically different. I can choose to “out” myself and risk being othered, or I can stay quiet and never feel truly known.

Non-binary gender is a word that refers to people who don’t identify as a man or a woman. When I discovered that word when I was 26, 5 years ago, it felt right in the deep part of my chest. Do you know that feeling? When you just *know*? I knew “*Oh, that’s me. I’m non-binary.*” I felt the same way when I thought about my name. I just *knew*. Ari isn’t my given name, but when I thought about it, it came to me almost immediately. My name is Ari. It’s gender-neutral, and it feels like it’s been me all along.

After a period of inner turmoil, when I finally knew and accepted my own capital T truth, *I’m non-binary and my name is Ari*, I didn’t tell anybody for a long time. I thought my friends and family would think that I was crazy. Or that I was just doing it for attention. I wanted to be really sure this was me before blowing up my life and telling people.

I eventually got the courage to share with some of my closest friends, and unfortunately, it went poorly. They were



skeptical and caught off guard. They buckled down. They didn’t actively reject me, but their unsupportive silence and unwillingness to use my new name and pronouns were devastating.

I went back into the closet for another 6 months. And after that, I started coming out to people differently. Instead of trying to explain the intellectual nuances of my understanding of gender, I shared my feelings.

I would say it like this:

Hey, I’m about to tell you something, but first I want you to know why I’m telling you. I’m telling you because you’re somebody who is important to me, and I trust you. And what I’m about to tell you is that I’ve discovered something about myself that feels meaningful and makes me happy.

“Hi, my name is Ari.”

After once I started coming out like that, people responded so positively, with support and love, and congratulations. They didn’t have to fully understand my internal experience of gender to respect me and appreciate how important it was to me.

Coming out felt amazing. My friend made me a mug with my new initial, A, on it, and I drank out of it every morning. Seeing my name in new places felt like welcoming in the truest version of myself. I legally changed my name, and I changed the gender marker on my driver’s license from an F to an X, and I felt so excited.

This process of coming out—the fear I held for a long time that I would be rejected and then ultimately being accepted and supported by my loved ones made me think a lot about otherness. It made me think about my sister’s experience of being othered everywhere she goes.

“What do we do with the universal feeling of “otherness”? The answer that I’ve come to is to share our stories, to risk vulnerability, and to listen and learn.

Everybody has something that makes them feel different. A story that would break your heart. A way that they have been judged or misunderstood. As humans who feel the pain of others, one of the most impactful things we can do to create connection and love is to share and listen. To support the people who may feel like the *other* or are afraid to come out

and be themselves. And to support their loved ones in understanding them. It’s about honest conversations. Making space for not knowing, for confusion, and for fumbles.

The more we understand about other people, the more we realize they aren’t so different from us. Their “otherness” goes away. They become relatable. That’s what I do at my job in Consumer Insights at E&J Gallo Winery—I help our marketing teams understand and empathize with groups of people.

After I came out as Ari (they/them) at work, I started leading LGBTQ+ trainings to help people understand identities, gender, and sexuality, and how to be an ally to their colleagues. I built a team of facilitators, and we now lead 2-3 trainings a month. A lot of this work is about making a space for people to anonymously ask the questions they’ve always wondered but never had a place to ask. To create an open space for listening and learning.

And now I’m bringing this space to you. To the broader Stanislaus community. I am partnering with The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County to create a formal place to learn about LGBTQ+ identities and how to be supportive to young people. This learning journey ladders up to our values of social justice and equity and our commitment to compassion in human relations.

We are calling this series **Growing Our Awareness to Create a Better World Together: Community Conversations about Gen Z and LGBTQ+**

Session #1, January 22nd from 1-3 pm: “**Ask a young person: Understanding and relating to Gen Z**”, focusing on the identities, attitudes, and behaviors of young people.

Session #2, January 29th, from 1-3 pm: “**Ask a non-binary person: How to understand LGBTQ+ people**”, focusing on LGBTQ+ identities, gender, and sexuality.

If you’ve ever wondered: “*What do all these new identity terms mean?*” “*Why are there so many LGBTQ+ young people these days?*” or “*What’s the difference between gender and sexuality?*”, these events are a trusted space for you to learn and ask questions anonymously. All attendees who attend these non-judgmental, candid conversations will receive an informational packet.

Many members of our congregation have already signed up, and now we are socializing these events within the broader Stanislaus County in service of helping local community members who are curious and want to better understand young people and LGBTQ+ people.

We only have 100 spots, so I encourage you to reserve your place today if you would like to attend. You can email mlainey1@gmail.com and Elaine will sign you up, or you can register yourself at: <https://GenZQuestions.eventbrite.com> and <https://LGBTQuestions.eventbrite.com>

I hope you will join us. What we’re offering is a unique opportunity for people, anyone, regardless of where they are in their understanding of some of these topics and communities, to come and learn something new. To grow our understanding of people who are “other” than us.

Together, we can create a more beautiful, connected, loving world.

Modesto City Residents Now Have Upscale Recycling

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

The City of Modesto has expanded its recycling program to residents within the city limits with an added blue can, joining several other Stanislaus County cities. This good news is accompanied by the city's attempt to keep waste pickup services to a price very near former levels with a manual sorting plan that is half the price of materials recovery facilities in other cities outside the county that use both manual and machine-operated sorting equipment.

Apartment, commercial, office buildings, organizational, and religious campuses will now be included in the recycling programs. City representatives will meet with individuals from these facilities to discuss waste stream needs and determine what types and numbers of receptacles may be needed per property.

The current green can will continue to accept yard and dirty food-grade oily paper waste, which would include fast food wrappers, paper plates and napkins, pizza and/or other dirty biodegradable food containers. Those plastics labeled com-



postable can go into the green can as well.

The blue can will take clean cardboard/paper, plus all PETE (1) and HDPE (2) clean plastics, as well as fruit, veggie, bakery, and other clamshell-style containers. Blue cans will also accept clean canned goods, metals, wine bottles, and unbroken clean glass containers. K-cup filters and grounds can be removed, and the plastic cup can be put in the blue can. Hint: the grounds can be spread around the garden to amend the soil and nourish plants, or the filters and grounds can go into the green can. Exceptions would include those that have held laundry detergents or additives, cooking or other greasy or oily substances or poisons.

Garden chemicals/pesticides, motor oils/additives or any form of poisonous materials, hazardous waste, chemicals, paint, or electronics should be taken to the Stanislaus County Hazardous Waste facility located at 1710 Morgan Road in Modesto. The facility is open for collection on Fridays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon. Call 209 525-6789 for further information.

Customers are asked to save precious water resources by using a minimal amount for rinsing containers. Hint: fill a bowl or pot part way and dip items in it to rinse, then remove paper labels to put in the green can. The water can then be used as green water on outside plants depending upon what has been dipped into the water.

Styrofoam, plastic bags/big box store and delivery plastic packaging/wrapping materials, pieces of cement, rocks, chunks of metal, and other forms of garbage should go into the black can, as well as plastic utensils, plates and drink containers and other forms of non-recyclable garbage.

Please note that green and blue can pick-up will be done on an alternating weekly schedule. Modesto residents will receive a calendar of blue can and green can weeks in the mail and in the city newsletter. Look for more information in *The Modesto Bee* and other local publications and fliers.

ACTION: For more information contact Myriah Hill, City of Modesto Solid Waste Administrative Technician, at (209) 577-5458. Or visit <https://modestogov.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1365>. Interested citizen groups may request speakers from her office to provide further information and answer questions about how the new recycling options will affect their complex or neighborhood.

Reducing wintertime emissions during the holidays

From the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Residential wood burning can be one of the Valley's largest sources of wintertime PM2.5 emissions and is shown to have a direct effect on neighborhood air quality and public health. The Valley Air District asks Valley residents not to use wood-burning devices over the holiday weekend and consider their health and that of their neighbors during this time. In some areas, wood burning may be prohibited, and residents may receive a fine for burning when not allowed. This includes fireplaces, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits, and chimineas.

The Residential Wood Smoke Reduction program aims to reduce negative health impacts and buildup of PM2.5 by restricting the use of wood-burning devices in the Valley when conditions do not allow for pollution to disperse.

The daily burn information is always available by visiting

www.valleyair.org/burnstatus, by calling 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463), or by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on a mobile device. In addition, residents are invited to sign up for daily wood-burning email [notifications](#).

There are three curtailment levels. Curtailments do not apply to natural gas devices. Residences in areas with no natural gas service or where wood burning is the sole source of heat are exempt. Areas where propane tanks are used are considered to be without natural gas service. Outdoor wood-burning devices at all residences are still subject to daily restrictions, regardless of exemption status.

Valley residents are encouraged to apply for the Fireplace

& Woodstove Change-Out program and receive as much as \$5,000 to upgrade from older, higher-polluting wood stoves and open-hearth fireplaces to natural gas inserts and free-standing stoves. To participate in this program, please visit <https://ww2.valleyair.org/grants/burn-cleaner>

The Valley Air District covers eight counties, including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and San Joaquin Valley air basin portions of Kern. For additional information about the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, visit www.valleyair.org or call 559-230-6000.



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

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Modesto, CA 95353
209-529-5750

ELECTRIC VEHICLE
RIDE AND DRIVE EVENT

Sunday, January 29th
Stanislaus County Library
10am - 3pm

TEST DRIVE NEW EVs

LEARN ABOUT EV CHARGING

TALK TO THE LOCAL EV COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

STEM & OTHER ACTIVITIES

SHOP FROM LOCAL FOOD VENDORS

REGISTER FOR AN EVENT NEAR YOU
www.EVequity.org/rideanddrive

How to Stop Hate Crimes Town Hall in Fresno, January 25

By **MIKE RHODES**, The [Community Alliance](#)

Hate Crimes are on the rise in Fresno. Recently a gay couple was physically assaulted in the Tower District - see that story in the January 2022 issue of the *Community Alliance* newspaper. A vicious and racist sign was put up near Central High School, anti-Jewish fliers were distributed in Clovis, and we have a Fresno City Council member spewing his hatred against the Transgender community from the Dais.

The *Community Alliance* newspaper has joined with groups throughout the State to confront and stop this growing threat to the safety of marginalized members in our community.

The Town Hall on January 25 is the second in a series of events we are organizing to call attention to this problem. The first Town Hall was held in Huron and addressed the institutional racism that is a roadblock to students in that rural community who are not having educational opportunities equal to students in other cities. A High School in Huron is needed to address this inequity.

Our second Town Hall will be held at the Central East



High School, Hondo Hodge Performing Arts Center at 3535 N Cornelia Ave in Fresno. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

Speakers will inform, strategize and engage with the audience as we develop a plan to stop hate crimes in this community. Your participation is essential to the success of this free event and questions and answers will follow each presentation.

In addition to reporting hate crimes to local law enforcement, incidents should be reported to California State Attorney General Rob Bonta. He is taking the rise in hate crimes seriously and has set up a website where you can report these incidents. That website is <https://oag.ca.gov/hatecrimes>.

The website says "crimes motivated by hate are not just attacks on individual innocent people - they are attacks on our communities and the entire State. It is the job of Attorney General Rob Bonta to see that the laws of the State are uniformly and adequately enforced."

The California Department of Justice has tools and resources to aid and assist local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities in the investigation of possible hate crimes, including the identification, arrest, prosecution, and conviction of the perpetrators of those crimes. If you wish to report a crime, please file a report with the local police or sheriff's department."

The rise in hate crimes throughout California and across the United States has created widespread calls for action, with funding provided for this series by the California State Library under the statewide [Stop the Hate](#) initiative. This event is being organized by the *Community Alliance* newspaper.

For more information visit www.fresnoalliance.com.

Night Must Fall

By **TOM PORTWOOD**

It's eventide during the holidays, the temperature hovering at 38 degrees, the concrete splattered with grease stains, some ancient, some new, the pale skies are pristine, faceless, offering neither warmth nor hope, and the two women and the man are bunched together, the collars to their soiled windbreakers turned up, their knit caps pulled tight over their ears. They're sitting by one of the self-help stations in the open air of the car wash, their belongings piled into three rust-eaten shopping carts with a blue tarp thrown across the carts as if the carts are also seeking warmth.

Because it's cloudless, it will soon be colder and the grease stains staring up at them will be there when dawn arrives, when the rising sun still won't bring warmth, but the two women and the man don't have the luxury of thinking that far ahead for night must fall and they must endure it as best they can in this shelter-less home they've settled on for these next several hours of darkness.

They move closer to each other, the chill bores into them. The man draws a thin, mauve blanket across the two women. One of the women sips from a cup of coffee brought by a stranger. The man reaches deep into the side pocket of his jacket for three small cans of chili and beans he bought ten minutes ago at the convenience store on the corner. This and the two pears and a mushy, overripe banana he found in a grocery bag left by a bus stop this morning will be dinner for the three of them tonight.

Two hundred feet away, the Jack in the Box is lit with what looks like warm, welcoming light, as if a hearth is aglow; customers are sauntering in and out, laughing, frost on their breaths, ebullient with holiday cheer - and on the other side of Coffee Road, the neon signs of restaurants are glittering like rare jewels. It's a Saturday, and people are gathering, making toasts with wine or beer, or gin and whiskey, wolfing down hamburgers, spaghetti and meatballs with Mariana sauce, Chicken Teriyaki.

The two women and the man are well aware they are removed from this other, rarified life, and this eats at them silently, but the words they exchange are spare, as if they are saving strength for the numbness the darkness will surely bring, for the desolation they see in each other's eyes; they know they do have each other, and that's something. But is it enough?

As they spoon cold chili into their mouths, they stare out at the passing traffic, the bright headlights. Hear the jarring backbeat of the rock band tuning up at the neighborhood bar and grill.

Dig deep from within to keep up the fight.

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



Be informed!

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<http://thevalleycitizen.com>

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Central California Art Association

Abstracts & Impressions
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1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369

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Homeless: The Saints Who Walk Among Us

By [DEBRA DeLASH](#), [The Valley Citizen](#)

Those who frequent the streets, alleys, parks and hide-aways of the homeless often encounter humble missionaries of hope and charity. These are the people who feed, clothe and comfort the lost and forlorn on an endless mission of hope and charity. Almost always, they are people of modest means who embody the true spirit of Christmas all year long in humble acts of ministering to the poor. Many are faith-based, others are not. The one thing they have in common is their mission of hope and their comprehension of the true nature of grace.

Debra DeLash started delivering warm sleeping bags to homeless people in 2020. To date, she's delivered over 500. * Her charity now includes other such necessities as socks and hand warmers. On one of her latest missions, she learned of another death on the streets. This is the story of "Tom-Tom" and his friends.

*Debra's mission is entirely dependent on donations. She has a wish list below this story and [here](#). ed

Death among the Homeless

Late afternoon last Wednesday, "Tom-Tom" passed away on Modesto's hard ground of homelessness, cold and alone. Eulogies came in the form of testimony from David and Lee, two friends joined with David by indivisible bonds of suffering and redemption.

This is what they told me during my mission to deliver sleeping bags, gloves, socks and hand warmers to the people of our Valley's cold shadows. This is what they told me and stirred in me.

On this new morning, I park the car for my second stop of deliveries near a patch of asphalt in one of Modesto's nameless neighborhoods of the poor. About a block away, ten men sit in a circle sharing one of poverty's most common vices; right now, they don't need what I have to offer.

Around the corner, an old man named David is picking up trash and cans. He needs a sleeping bag, so I offer him some hand warmers and gloves and ask him to meet me back at my car.

Once there, David begins to talk. David is a veteran, a former "airman" on the Midway, and comes alive while sharing his history. I notice his hands and wrists are covered with terrible-looking sores. I offer one of two donated boxes that say, "For Veterans Only," which I had recently received. As David opens the package, he is thrilled to see cleansers, salves, and disinfectant wipes for his acute maladies. He looks over at a patch of asphalt, and I notice a single soda can on the ground where David fixates.

Tom-Tom's resting place

"A man died right there yesterday. I knew him and we would talk."

"What? I mean...huh?" I can see the pain David holds in and want to say the right thing.

Running through my mind is the plight of Biblical Job, and how his friend Eliphaz, came to him in Job's gruesome trials and ended up making things worse. Eliphaz started well enough by traveling with Job, and for a time stayed close, saying nothing. Then in Eliphaz's confusion and desire to understand, he misinterpreted Job's earthly tragedies.



Debra carries bags into camp



Tom-Tom's resting place

Right now, as I stand in front of clearly hurting David, I remind myself to say very little; not to pour platitudes on this acute painful moment. No words can touch this.

David says, "Tom-Tom was so thin; skin and bones, I thought he would have died sooner. He got weaker and weaker."

I am wondering how long Tom-Tom had to suffer. Did he just lie there in the cold, dying?

David goes on,

"I saw him huddled over there. I went and tried to talk; his voice was very low, but he wasn't cold. The sun was shining on him. I left to go to the corner church and get food; they feed me and give me a blanket. I was gone for a couple of hours. As I walked back here, I see cop cars at Tom-Tom's place.

He was gone. He was wearing only one shoe and lying on a piece of plastic, I couldn't believe it happens just like this."

I glance over at the soda can lying there, and back to the look on David's face. I ask how long they had been pals.

David explains that Tom-Tom had been homeless for a few years and that he struggled with trust issues. Yet he would talk to David and I see why. David has a kind spirit; he even invites me to go to the church that helps him. I imagine the last words Tom-Tom heard on this earth were from David, and I believe this to be a blessing, despite a very sad physical death. His last messages heard would have been of warmth and friendship. When the police arrived, Tom-Tom had already passed.

Stirrings of the Human Heart

"The light is everywhere; even in the darkness. For the light created everything and will never go out. And God's Kingdom will be filled with those of the light."

A tiny light stirs in our hearts as David speaks. It is a tiny beacon that refuses to give in to the darkness. It is that light that helps David keep moving forward in his life on the streets and enables him to share stories of his friend. God turns on this light, and it is embedded deep in all of us, if we can only see it; it is there we find the awakening of the human heart.

Pulling out from behind this strip mall, a block or so off, I see a young man sitting beside a dumpster. He is clearly in distress; his face is down almost upon his lap. When I greet him, he looks up, and I see he is weeping. He has only a blue blanket and a backpack.

"Do you need a warm sleeping bag?"

**Debra DeLash**

This stranger starts talking immediately. None of what he says is about himself.

“Look!” and he points around the corner towards the strip mall. We both turn in that direction. “My friend died right over there yesterday.” My heart starts beating faster and I ask,

“Do you mind if I ask your name? And the name of your friend?”

This is Lee, Tom-Tom’s second eulogist. I can see the stirrings of his heart with that spark of light that connects two people. Today, instead of the usual blindness, there is true sight. Earlier, when I passed by the group of men who were captured by the darkness, I went on and went into the light. I kept moving forward and found David, and now I have found Lee, who says,

“It was Tom-Tom.”

At this point, I am trying hard not to speak; to impact this sacred spot of time, which belongs now to the young man sitting on the curb.

Lee continues talking about how Tom-Tom had a bad virus and Lee watched him worsen day by day. It got so bad with the mucous and his breathing, that Tom-Tom’s voice lowered to a whisper at the end.

Lee’s grief is acute and palpable. I look down and wait. After a time, Lee raises his eyes, still tearing, and finishes,

“Today, I miss him already. I already miss him.”

No finer eulogy could have been recorded about this lone but not friendless man who died in the street.

The Road Goes On

David had told me about a wheelchair-bound woman, perhaps 75, who lives on the sidewalk, not far from Lee. He said she needs a warm sleeping bag. I go back to the car and drive further down the road.

Off to the side, there is a repair shop with two men working on a car. I spot the wheelchair behind the second dumpster I’ve seen today. There I meet “Lydia.” As David said, she is old, weather-worn, and sitting in a wheelchair with her head sticking out of a flimsy fleece blanket.

Down a nearby street, there are 5 or 6 women and men who have set up makeshift shelters from tarps and a couple of smaller tents.

Lydia’s space

Lydia is a beautiful soul. Her voice is faint and I am straining to catch everything. Lydia has been out here for years;

she has no family available to help. Yet you know what she tells me?

This is where the breathtaking part of “Stirrings of the Heart” enters. She is freezing, hungry (as I find out later), and relies on nearby strangers for basic help (also I find out later). She appears to be nearing 80 years old, and as I look around her patch of life here, the words, “hell on earth” come to mind. Lydia whispers,

“I know that God has a plan for me.”

I look around in a 360 circle; every inch of Lydia’s cramped space is cluttered and noisy; it is bitter cold, and Lydia can’t move around without help. It is fragile and, minute by minute, this stark existence, yet we talk about Lydia’s faith and share stories about life. We use few words but speak volumes. God’s power is eternal and creative; it’s true that this life is not fair, and yet there will be justice, if not in this world, then later. I think from what Lydia tells me, that she may agree.

Oh dear Lord have mercy! Yes, this is a spark of light in the darkness!

So in this short day, there are too many stories to tell and yet more stirrings that awaken the heart.

**Lydia’s place on the streets**

As I leave Lydia’s place, I stop to speak to a younger woman, the one who has the tent nearby. It turns out she brought Lydia into her little space last night to sleep: Valley temperatures have reached the low 30s at night. I have never felt such a strong revelation of true charity, until this moment.

I look over at the tent; it is small, and it must have been cramped; this act is where the light is, the spark of light in the darkness: Charity even when it brings hardship.

“Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.” (John 12:36)

The stirrings of God are everywhere this morning. Then I remember that as I backed out of my space earlier, a truck was parked close nearby. What was written on the truck? “Faithful Paving.”

Yes, it said, “Faithful Paving” and the “t” was in the shape of a cross. I saw this truck parked across from Tom-Tom’s place earlier. They may be replacing the asphalt patch which was his final resting place.

So in this short day, there are too many stories to tell and yet more stirrings that awaken the heart.

The next stop is McDonald’s for coffee. My car is pretty much empty from the day’s rounds and a man is sitting outside the entrance. A recent sock donation included extra thick socks, almost up to the knee. I have one pair left.

“Do you want socks?” The man accepts, sits down, and immediately lifts the legs of his pants to reveal wet, extremely dirty socks; he quickly rolls them off. He works at lightning speed to put on the new socks as I back away. Having given out practically my whole carload, I am by now driving out of town. I pass by the road I had started on earlier this morning.

Follow the Light

I see David again. But this time he is not alone. There is a hunched-over young man beside him. His neck is bent forward at an extreme angle, so that he’s only able to look at the ground, not side to side. I watch as David rests his arm on this man’s shoulder and guides him down the street. It is near mealtime and there is a church-run food truck at a nearby park. They may be heading there. The sun is coming out this afternoon. It did yesterday when Tom-Tom passed away.

It is easy to say we believe in God and will follow Him when things are not too hard. But will faith hold during bitter circumstances? The story of Job tells us faith must hold, especially when put to the test. This day, the stirrings of faith and charity in the hearts of David, Lee, and Lydia, are, to me, that small voice of God beckoning, telling us to keep trudging forward toward the light of hope. There is a message for all of us written in the words and kindness by people of the shadows.

So I pray, dear Lord, as I accept your call of love and mercy; please grant our brother Tom-Tom kind admittance into Your Heavenly Kingdom. I pray Tom-Tom, and others both who I have lost in this world, and those sleeping out in the cold tonight, know the warmth of Your eternal embrace.

And may I grow to contain even a portion of the charity of that woman who takes Lydia into her tent. May the people You have placed upon our earthly paths find warmth and friendship and stay by our side Lord through the end. Amen.

A Song of Degrees. I lifted up mine eyes to the mountains, whence my help shall come. Amen. (Psalm 121:1)

For the past two winters, you, my friends, have helped to provide over 500 warm sleeping bags to the homeless in the Central Valley. I started out visiting smaller communities in four counties: Merced, Stanislaus, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin. I mostly head to places where there are no/few shelters and limited services. I distribute one on one, in outlying areas: searching under bushes, strip malls, parks, alleys, and covered bus stops, under freeways, yet also have visited the camps. Last year I added hygiene bags, food items, gloves, hats, bibles, etc. Recognizing how hard this life is, my prayer is that at least during our short interactions, the person receiving the sleeping bag knows he is not alone. If they need to talk, we do; I know I am lacking and must partner with God; then we face the pain encountered together.

I have a [wish list here](#).

BLAST FROM THE PAST: Guatemala, the Never-ending Journey

By JAMES COSTELLO

NOTE: The following article was published in *Stanislaus Connections* in March 1997 and is one of our occasional deep dives into the past. It is edited.

When I left my secure and comfortable home to fly to Guatemala, I began a journey from which I have not returned. While I am now in the United States, my Guatemalan odyssey continues. I meander along the uncertain and tortuous Guatemalan roads of my psyche and visit, restlessly, the newly formed memories there. Guatemala weighs heavily upon me, coloring everything I think about.

Accompanied by twelve other Church of the Brethren compadres stuffed into a Toyota van, we bounced and careened along an unpaved rock and rut-filled stretch of what seemed to be the worst road in Guatemala. It took us two hours to make the eight-mile trip south from the town of Escuintla to our destination.

We arrived, leaking oil and water, an hour before sunset at the Mayan village of Nuevo Mexico (Comunidad Indígena Nuevo México, San Vicente Pacaya) built on the grounds of an old, abandoned coffee plantation called La Providencia.

Mayan Indians had established this community of seventy-plus families after returning to Guatemala from a thirteen-year forced exile to Mexico spurred by brutal Guatemalan military oppression and persecution. With peace negotiations between the government and guerrillas in progress, these displaced people had returned to rebuild their lives out of almost nothing.

After a year and a half, they had built a four-room school, church, and had dug in water pipes (without water) to each family's plot of land. Dirt-floor homes dotting the hillside, verdant with green grasses and scattered trees, were constructed of scrap wood, plastic sheeting, and tin. We would call them shacks. Some villagers had built small houses of cement blocks. Since there is no piped-in water, bathing and laundry are done in the little creek that gurgles through the community. There is a river nearby. There is no electricity. Water for cooking and drinking is carried in large pots by the women and young girls, often over long distances, then boiled before use. The women also carry wood for in-home, open fires over which they cook their basic, and often only, staples—corn and beans.

At sunset, our group members were divided into twos and threes and assigned to live with families for the next four days. Luckily for me, my partner was Tom Benevento, our group leader, fluent Spanish speaker, a veteran of four years in Guatemala, and one of the nicest, most selfless persons I have ever met.

Tom did not know about my bug phobia or my allergy to physical work. He soon found out. As we trudged along the pitch-black hilly path, rustling through moist grasses punctu-

ated with benign fireflies, I became apprehensive. I thought, "What had I gotten myself into?" What was I doing out here in a foreign country, bereft of my loving family, hot showers, fast food, accessible medical care, my easy chair, and

wood on her back while carrying her three-year-old child at the same time!

Shortly, while I rested nervously in a chair next to the memorial, a large beetle flew into the light of the flickering candle. I jumped to my feet, emitting a short shuddering gasp. Valentin quickly flicked the buzzing insect into the darkness. The cat of my bug phobia was now out of the bag. I was seized with prospects of large insects visiting me throughout the night. After all, was I not in a tropical country where large and creepy bugs were common? I smiled weakly at Tom and my hosts, shrugging off this incident as best I could, but my inner turmoil was increasing.

We had been told that we might have to sleep on the floor. I was relieved when Tom and I were offered boards on sawhorses. Who knows what creatures took command of the ground at night?

As we spread out our sleeping bags, Tom sensed my nervousness. There were many dark shadowed recesses along the poorly lit wooden walls. He told me he would sleep next to the wall. I was glad. As we settled in, a large beetle whipped across the ceiling above me into the shadows. A shiver went down my spine as I scrunched my eyes closed.

Over the next four nights, the hard bed-boards bit into my back and hips. I tossed and turned painfully all night, sleeping fitfully, floating sluggishly and stiffly in and out of my exhausted reveries. When Valentin produced from the dark of the house a new, running Macintosh computer for me to see, I knew I must be getting some sleep. Or was it delirium?



computer? I don't even like camping! The dark absorbed us as I nervously slipped into culture shock.

We emerged from a tunnel of spooky trees and bushes into a small clearing illuminated by the dim light of a small kerosene lamp from the one-and-a-half-room abode of Don Valentin, his wife Maria, and their two children: four-year-old Abel and three-year-old Magdalena.

After warmly greeting us, Maria, just nineteen years old, bantered with Tom in Spanish and dispelled some of my apprehension with her wonderful musical laugh. Valentin immediately offered me the best chair in the house. The house filled with smoke, taking my breath away for a moment, as Maria stoked the cooking fire for the evening meal.

In the middle of the house stood a small table with an attached overarching trellis of green foliage and dried multi-colored flowers. Today was All Souls Day, and Valentin had fashioned a shrine to his dead brother and to Maria's first child who had died at seven months of age. A memorial candle burned in the center of the table next to a small, faded photograph of the lost infant.

Maria, 4 feet 5 inches tall and small-boned, was vigorously, and it seemed effortlessly, grinding corn with a hand grinder. I offered to help and found myself struggling to crank the handle, having to switch from one arm to the other. This was my first lesson in humility and physical endurance. What looked like easy work was actually difficult. This diminutive, soft-looking young woman was actually much stronger than I. Later I learned that she could also haul large bundles of



At 4:30 a.m., Valentin blasted Tom and me into startled consciousness with a tape of his favorite Mexican music screaming from his battery-operated player (loud was considered good). As the high-pitched rata-tat trumpets blasted into our brains, even the usually serene Tom hushly voiced his strong desire to throw that tape player out the door.

The next night, Valentin gave me something else to keep me awake. Earlier in the day, the group and I had listened to the harrowing tales of Doña Victoria, a small woman much older appearing than her fifty-four years. We had wept with her as she recounted the atrocities perpetrated upon the men, women, and children of her tribe by Guatemalan Army troops.

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Award-Winning Poet Amanda Moore to Facilitate 11th Annual MoSt Poetry Festival

February 4, 2023

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) will host the 11th Annual Poetry Festival on February 4, 2023, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Road, Modesto, California. The event will run from 9 am to 1:30 pm.

Facilitated by Amanda Moore, an awarded-winning, nationally recognized poet from the Bay Area, attendees will be led through a program titled *At the Starting Line, A Workshop on Poetic Opening*, which promises to be very helpful for both new and experienced poets.

Ms. Moore's debut collection of poetry, *Requeening*, was selected for the 2020 National Poetry Series by Ocean Vuong and published by HarperCollins/Ecco in October 2021. Her poems have appeared in journals and anthologies including *Best New Poets*, *ZZYZVA*, *Catapult*, *Ploughshares*, *LitHub*, and *Mamas and Papas: On the Sublime and Heartbreaking Art of Parenting*, and her essays have appeared in *The Baltimore Review*, *Hippocampus Magazine*, and on the University of Arizona Poetry Center's blog. She is the recipient of writing awards, residencies, and fellowships from The Brown Handler Residency, In Cahoots, The Writers Grotto, The Writing Salon, Brush Creek Arts Foundation, and The Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts.

Former poetry co-editor at *Women's Voices for Change* and a current reader at *Bull City Press's INCH*, Ms. Moore is a high school English teacher and lives by the beach in the Outer Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco with her husband and daughter. We are honored she is sharing three of her beautiful poems in this edition of *A Gathering of Voices*. (All three of the poems are from *Requeening* by Amanda Moore. Copyright © 2021 by Amanda Moore. Reprinted courtesy of Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers)

Tickets (\$40 each) at Eventbrite: <https://most2023fest.eventbrite.com>. More information at <https://www.mostpoetry.org/>. **Attendance is limited to the first 44 people who purchase tickets.** Coffee, tea, and table snacks will be provided. Attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch. The festival will include an author's table and camaraderie with poets and poetry aficionados from throughout Northern California.

Love, a Burnin' Thing

My daughter at 14 is giving up
on words—at least with me.
She slams the door,
berates me with silence.
I drop the needle on the record player,
hear Johnny Cash sing “Ring of Fire,”
and fall down into that moment:
labor, one of the last times
an utterance adequately prepared me
for anything. How apt the phrase,
how perfectly rendered, how I felt
every centimeter ignited: my expansion
a perfect burning circle,
her soft skull crowned
in flare and flame.
Yes, the ring of fire
I slowly pushed her through
toward oxygen
which kindled her breath.
Oh, how she wailed then
and we clung to one another,
all my knowledge
suddenly extinguished.
I listened to the certainty
of her voice, how,
knowing that I'd falter,
she was naming herself.

From Requeening by Amanda Moore. Copyright © 2021 by Amanda Moore. Reprinted courtesy of Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

Everything Is a Sign Today

Feather in the grass, stippled and striped:
hawk, I think. And then a man
blocking the sidewalk, child on his back,
both of them pointing binoculars toward the treetop
where I know a great horned owl nests, though I've
never seen it.
All these birds: creatures I might never have known
had I not spent my childhood filling her feeders, naming
each genus from our perch at her kitchen table.
A falcon swoops down beside me on the path
gripping some rodent in its talons, twisting the body to kill.
Like the time a heron a few feet from our picnic blanket
plucked a whole mouse from its burrow and swept away.
She had been
delighted, said we, too, should grab something
of our own that day. Turning toward home,
I bend to collect a wrinkled postcard at the curb,
an advertisement for the Monet exhibit. How I loved
those paintings when I was younger, all of them nearly the
same:

Opening the Hive

Late afternoon slants, illuminates
the worn, white husk of hive and gleams
like an incubator bulb on the oval of an egg.
This might have been the way I was born
to move over my mother and wash from her
what was left of painful birth, her legs
like the old wood cracked with a hive tool,
my lips clamping and the bees burrowing
into honeycomb, bathed in sweetness,
a taste fresher when robbed this way.

Smoke to calm, to push the heaving down,
down to the center where the queen hides
and is stroked, flanked by the upturned rumps
of guard bees, wings fanning scent in warning.

We open this small universe and set it in motion,
a new heart ready to be fed and broken and fed again,
gathering strength to reseal and take into itself
what we leave behind: our fingerprints
through broken comb and crushed drones.

This might have been the way I was born
and then set to life: stolen honey clinging
to light hair that covers everything new.
Like late afternoon sunlight, a kiss
on my dented forehead, mother collapsed and emptied
of poison, barbed stinger and the baby, the jelly, the bee.

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haystack, haystack, haystack. The only difference
the season and time of day, which is to say
they like this grief these months later:
all the same but for the light.

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

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PSAs in English and Spanish broadcast multiple times a day, produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

PROGRAMS

Sports Talk Modesto - Join Jay Freeda and Jimmie Menezes. Snappy banter to catch

up on everything happening in the sports world. - Thursdays, 5 pm.

Vib'n with the West Modesto Collaborative - Karlha Davies and Jasmine Corena. Engage, Educate and Advocate on behalf of the West Modesto Community. Showcases Voices of the West Modesto Community - Wednesdays, 7 pm.

Ukraine 2.4.2 - a collaboration between Anne Levine, WOMR, the Pacifica Network, and Kraina FM, a 26-city radio network in Ukraine that arranges weekly cutting-edge and exclusive interviews with key people in Ukraine - Thursdays, 10:00 am.

Beethoven to Bernstein - Classical music ranging from Beethoven to Bernstein. Big hits from well-renown composers - Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Ravel, Copland - and many more, mostly in the form of orchestral, chamber, and piano music - Saturdays, 10:00 pm.

The Not Old - Better Show - fascinating, high-energy program of big-name guests, inspiring role models, interesting topics, with entertaining host and former Modestan, Paul Vogelzang - Fridays, 2:00 pm, Saturdays, 12:30 pm.

Bucks Stallion's Radio Transmission Emporium - Cyber Acoustic Music - Saturdays, 12:00 am, Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.

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

AREA 5150 UFO RADIO - Spooky music & sounds out of this world, Friday night at 11:00 pm.

LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS



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 and Laura Stokes - Mondays, 8:00 pm; 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 Laura Stokes - 8:00 pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00 am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp-woty> and on Spotify.

People Not Profit - with Pegasus - Wednesdays, 9:30 pm; Saturdays, 2:30 pm; Formerly Peril and the Promise. Listen here also: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp-peril>.

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

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

Local Music Programs

Mars Radio - Hip-Hop Show - Music, interviews from local & regional artists - Fridays, 8:00 pm. A new, second show plays on Saturday nights at 8:00 pm, with a third at 8:00 pm Sunday.

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

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

This is SKA with Middagh Goodwin - Tuesdays, 9 pm; Fridays, 11 pm; Sundays, 5 am to 7 am.

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

Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

Various musical programs during the noon hour: Oldies, Old Piano, and International.

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

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

Attitude with Arne Arnesen - 3:00 pm. Political and social issues.

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

Democracy Now! - 7:00 am. Reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez.

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

Children's Programming

Confetti Park - Music, stories New Orleans style, Saturdays 8:00 am; & Sunday's 12:30 pm.

The Children's Hour - Sundays 3:00 pm.

Science

Radio Ecoshock - the latest scientific information on Climate Change - Saturdays, 9:00 am.

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

Big Picture Science - 1:00 pm Sundays.

Planetary Radio - 2:30 pm Sundays.

Got Science - 4:00 pm Sundays.

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

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Guatemala from page 8

Now it was my host's turn to tell his story.

In the flickering light of the memorial candle, Valentin quietly recounted the grim tale of his brother's brutal death at the hands of the military. Tom solemnly translated since I spoke little Spanish. Valentin's brother was waylaid while returning from work, shot in the legs, then dragged through the village tied to a military vehicle. He was then crucified and decapitated, his battered body left hanging for all the villagers to see. They got the message—all fled into the countryside. Valentin returned several days later to bring down the body. Valentin seemed to take some comfort in the fact that his brother's death had allowed the rest of his people to escape. He had not died in vain.

Tossing on my boards that night along with my bug fears, new frightening visages invaded my thoughts—faces of cold, brutal, sociopathic soldiers knifing pregnant Mayan women and skewering their babies.

I was awed by the strength and dignity of these quiet people who bore the scars and memories of such unimaginable suffering.

As the hot humid days and warm nights merged, a sense of timelessness pervaded. Simple, hearty meals of corn tortillas, beans, and more corn, variously prepared, were served, not at fixed times but in the early morning, around noon, and after nightfall. Meetings with villagers occurred within an hour or so of the expected time. The time devoted to work was determined by the time required to get it done, not by the hands of the clock. I realized that, in the States, I was often a slave to time and to all of the things—the baubles and bangles of my affluent life—a life which now appeared to me frivolously encumbered and almost obscenely rich compared to the poverty of my Mayan family.

I realized that I was immensely wealthy, so much so that I



became ashamed of how much I have. The gap between my life and theirs seemed almost cosmic when imagined against the billions of people mired in grinding poverty and political oppression. Why had I been spared the harsh life to which fate had consigned so many others? It seemed horribly unfair that Valentin and Maria had so little while I had so much. Yet, what they lacked in material wealth was dwarfed by their fierce, single-minded determination to survive and live by hard physical labor.



Since this trip had been billed as a “work camp,” I knew that I was going to have to do “real work” with real dirt and real sweat. It was all I could do to huff and puff my soft gringo body up and down those hot village hills.

I scored a small (very small) triumph when I hefted an eighty-five pound bag of cement up a small hill to the spot where Valentin was ingeniously mixing cement (without a mixer and without rapidly drying it out) for a small block house floor. Valentin outdid me the next day when he carried a one-hundred-pound sack of coffee on his back up a 40-degree mountainside. While I plodded, perpetually short of breath, carrying my small plastic bowl and slipping on the dewy-green forested slope, Valentin quietly measured his footing firmly up the winding path—and continued to lug his heavy burden out of the forest to the coffee mill a long distance away.

After six hours of coffee picking with my family and Tom, the value of our labor came to \$2.50, an amount inadequate by even Guatemalan standards. This, more than anything else, sharply defined the difference between my life and theirs. Maria and Valentin were working excruciatingly hard, day after day, to survive by picking coffee, planting and harvesting fields of corn and beans, hauling wood and water—all by hand—against seemingly overwhelming odds and obstacles, yet, tied together in a tightly-knit community of other families like themselves. They wanted what we all want; a better life for themselves and an education for their children.

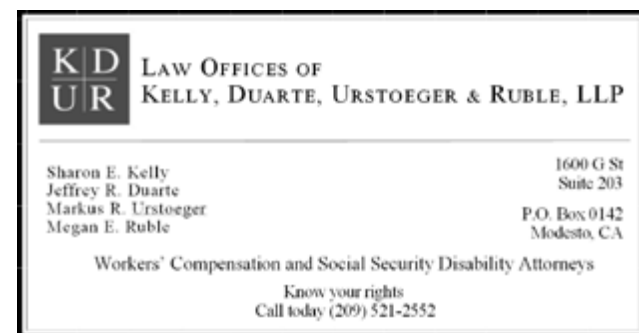
I spent my last evening in Nuevo Mexico with Maria and Valentin laughing over my fractured Spanish pronunciations and over their good-hearted efforts to speak English.

In the dark of their dimly lit and smoky house, I had finally

begun to lose some of my fears. Their “shack” had become a “home” for me where their hospitality had been gracious and unstinting. I was saddened that I would be leaving the next morning when only now had I begun to open my heart to them and appreciate their warmth and friendship—and courage.

Four days had not been long enough to know them well. But four days had been long enough to change my life forever.

My leaving would not be the end but the beginning of my unending journey.



calendar



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

january 2023

CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.

MJC Science Colloquium: Wednesdays 3:15 - 4:15 pm. in Science Community Center, Room 115, West Campus. Talks will also be recorded for the Science Colloquium's YouTube site for later viewing. Back in the spring.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science: free MJC science programs. on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 pm. **January 27: Dr. John Abatzoglou, Climatologist, UC Merced. Navigating Climate Change: Science, Impacts, and Solutions.** Professor Abatzoglou is interested in the hows and whys of climate, weather, and the so whats. His lab's work spans many topics - from addressing questions on climate variability, understanding climate impacts on natural resources to developing climate datasets and tools.

The **Prospect Theatre** has continuing offerings: Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2022-2023-season/>

3 WED: VIGIL: PEACE ON EARTH, 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm, McHenry & J. St., Modesto.

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

10 TUES: Annual John McCutcheon Concert. See article, p. 1 for tickets.

15 SUN: “Celebrating the Mother Lode’s Commitment to Equity, Fairness, and Justice.” Remembering MLK, Sonora High School Auditorium, 430 N. Washington St., Sonora, 2 pm. FREE.

22 SUN: Session #1: “Ask a Young Person: Understanding and relating to Gen Z,” focusing on the identities, attitudes, and behaviors of young people. 1- 3 pm. See p. 2 for registration information.

22 SUN: The State Theatre and the Modesto Film Society present *Cabaret*. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/cabaret-012023/>

29 SUN: Session #2 “Ask a Non-Binary Person: How to Understand LGBTQ+ People,” focusing on LGBTQ+ identities, gender, and sexuality. 1- 3 pm. See p. 2 for registration information.

29 SUN: Electric Vehicle Ride And Drive. Stanislaus County Library, 1500 I St., Modesto. 10 am to 3 pm. Register at www.EVequity.org/rideanddrive.

LOOKING AHEAD

February 4: Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center (MoSt) will host the **11th Annual Poetry Festival**, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto, California. 9 am to 1:30 pm. See article p. 9.

February 25, 2023: 29th Annual MLK Commemoration. Details TBA.

June 2-4: Peace Camp returns!

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

Dungeons and Dragons, Noon. Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative and Resource Center, 1202 H St., Modesto.

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. All are welcome. For more information, please email charlie@imcv.org. Our mailing address is IMCV, P.O. Box 579564, Modesto, CA 95357.

Food Addicts Anonymous in Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

MONDAYS

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the second Mondays at 7:00pm. 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.

ONGOING 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

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 1 pm-2 pm 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

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@nopride.org, 209-284-0999.

First Tuesday - LGBTQ+ Ages 12-14, 5-7 pm activities and support. Second Tuesday- LGBTQ+ Ages 15-17, 5-7 pm activities and support. Third Tuesday-Friends and Family, 5-7 pm Discussion and emotional support. All at Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative and Resource Center, 1202 H St., Modesto.

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/24765549018387/>

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

The GAP. A place of support for Christian parents of LGBTQ+ or questioning kids every Wednesday 6:30pm at St. Paul's Episcopal

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.

Church 1528 Oakdale Rd. Instagram: 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 monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on-site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: mercedboard@gay-centralvalley.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

Let's Talk Coffee. LGBTQ+ Senior (age +55) Coffee Meet up! Every Thursday @ 1 pm 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@nvlf.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

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

3rd Thursday Art Walk, downtown Modesto, third Thursdays, 5 to 8 pm. Info: <http://www.modestoartwalk.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.

FRIDAYS

Friday 7:30-9:30 pm (Sept thru May) **International Folk Dancing** with Village Dancers, Carnegie Art Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock \$7. No experience or partner needed. 209-480-0387 for info.

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

Funstrummers: A Fun-loving Ukulele group gets together live to practice and play. Play along with us or work up to playing out in gigs. Friday mornings, 10am to Noon at the Telle Classrooms, Trinity Presbyterian, 1600 Carver Rd., Modesto.

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

First and Third Saturdays - **Gay Men's Group**, Noon. First and Third Saturdays- Positive Support Group for folks living with HIV. All at Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

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 UUFSC 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.