

Derek Castle: Is Citizenship the Answer for Homelessness?

By [ERIC CAINE](#), The Valley Citizen

When Derek Castle and his wife moved across the street from Modesto's Graceada Park four years ago, the prime attraction was their two granddaughters. Their son and his family lived nearby. Along with the Gallo Theatre for the Arts, Graceada Park has long been considered one of Modesto's crown jewels.

As Castle got to know his new neighbors, he heard story after story about the problems they were having with homeless people in the park. The eye of the storm was the park's gazebo, where homeless people set up during the day and often spent the night.

"It had become a day camp for the unsheltered, with regular late-night disturbances," said Castle recently. "One neighbor had a child that was so scared from the fights and screaming that the child could no longer sleep in their bedroom. An elderly couple was so disturbed that they had to move out of the master bedroom at the front of the house to the back."

Anecdotal reports from neighbors, especially those who lived closest to the gazebo, suggested there had been an increase

in problems when the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES) had been shut down early in 2020. MOES was a permitted campsite about a mile south of Graceada Park. When it closed, it had been home to over 450 people for almost a year. Prior to MOES, there had been permitted camping at a site nearby.

"I felt I had a moral obligation to help these neighbors," said Castle. Some had considered selling their homes, despite the prime location near the park and in Modesto's coveted College District.

"I felt I may have something to offer since I knew I would be sympathetic to the neighbors and also to the unsheltered folk in the park. I thought maybe I could work toward a win-win."

A native of Australia who had moved to Modesto twenty-five years earlier, Castle had worked with homeless youth before coming to America.

He also has a close family member who struggles with mental health issues and has had periods of homelessness due to the illness, "So I'm sympathetic to the struggles of the unhoused."

After listening to his neighbors and getting

to know some of the homeless people who frequented Graceada Park, Castle decided to take on the challenge of making the park better for everyone.

"I felt I had two tasks," he said, "to make Graceada much better for neighbors and park users and to try and find better solutions for unsheltered folk than just hanging around doped-up in Graceada all day."

Working with city officials, Castle was able to help get nighttime closure of the park, which has limited some of the nocturnal disturbance so troubling to his neighbors. He's also helped bring in pickleball courts and set up a newsletter and email chain to keep nearby residents up to date.

"Lately, I have been putting in most time trying to find better solutions for the unsheltered. I have tried to build some relationships. We store art supplies for one person and sporting equipment for another. But the City of Modesto seemed reluctant to do much for the unsheltered until November when it became more likely that options such as safe camping might be possible. So I have seized the window of opportunity to try and

continued page 2



Modesto Sound awarded \$255,000 by the KDA Creative Corps

California Audio Roots Project at Modesto Sound will continue recording and distributing local stories!

Modesto, Calif. (June 17, 2023) – The [KDA Creative Corps](#) (KDACC) announced

that Modesto Sound received \$255,000 in funding to execute the California Audio Roots Project from June 2023 to May 2024. The California Audio Roots Project is designed



to involve members of the community in recording stories, poems, and songs about their lives and about living in California. The upcoming season will focus on social justice and community engagement. Modesto

Sound is proud to be on the list of the 20 recipients who will receive funding for their arts programming which will create a combined 611 jobs here in Central California.

"It felt good to see that our work is appreciated and can continue! We know many of the podcasts we have recorded in the past have helped preserve meaningful musical and life stories that may not have been recorded and shared otherwise," said Modesto Sound's Founder, Brenda Francis.

"I am thrilled to lead as Project Director and look forward to meeting the participants and recording their stories, poetry, and music," said Modesto Sound's Executive Director Janet Seay.

The California Audio Roots Project helps people feel they are heard and part of creating

media—not standing on the sidelines. Modesto Sound's established organizational partners for this project are two community radio stations and the public library located in the 95354 Zip Code. The radio station partners, [Valley Media](#), [valleymedia.org](#), (KGIG 104.9 FM) and the [Modesto Peace/Life Center](#), [peacelifecenter.org](#), (KCBP Community Radio 95.5 FM) were chosen on the basis of their missions, which aim to reflect the diverse and economically underserved voices of the Modesto community.

To encourage participation and honor the
continued page 2

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL	2
HOMELESS	3
LIVING LIGHTLY	4
CLIMATE JUSTICE	5

WHO ARE THE HOMELESS? 6-7

REMEMBER HIROSHIMA	8
GATHERING OF VOICES	9
KCBP RADIO	10
ELLSBERG MEMORIAM	11

READERS! Sign-up for our e-edition!

Get the latest e-edition of Stanislaus Connections delivered right into your email box!

Can enlarge text to read more easily! Print out if desired!

To sign-up, send your email address to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org

If you do not have Adobe Reader, download it free from

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

A Remembrance

By ELAINE GORMAN

Dorothy Griggs passed away on May 22, 2023, after a short illness.

I met Dorothy about 30 years ago when we were both [Yokuts Sierra Club](#) outings leaders. Dorothy would often lead hikes in [Tuolumne River Regional Park](#). She would end the hikes with a tailgate party, with snacks and sometimes Bloody Marys! Besides being an outings leader, she was our publicity chair for many years, and she participated on our management committee. I had many memorable Yokuts adventures with Dorothy, including an overnight at the [Pigeon](#)

Derek Castle

from page 1
promote better options for the unsheltered.”

After over 120 emails to and from his city councilmember, Castle has learned that council members, “are very limited in what they can do alone...they are not allowed to lobby other members — at least not more than two — and they are not allowed to lobby staff.”

On the other hand, Castle also learned that, “Citizens can lobby all council members and lobby every staff member. I realized that council members needed citizens to be actively lobbying if things were to change. So now, instead of just contacting my own council member, I have begun to actively lobby all council members and appropriate city staff. I have been speaking at council meetings and sending them information and speaking in person at times.”

Some of the most compelling information Derek Castle has found includes [reports that quality-of-life crimes associated with homelessness dropped significantly when the city permitted safe sleeping at MOES](#). He’s also been encouraged by the support of at least four councilmembers for safe sleeping sites for people experiencing homelessness. Three expressed their support for safe camping in a [Modesto Bee OP/ED earlier this year](#).

Though homelessness has proven an intractable problem throughout California for years, citizen engagement as practiced by Derek Castle may yet provide a path toward solutions.

“Council members need activist citizens and vice versa,” he said last Saturday, “it takes both working together to achieve change and to overcome the intransigence of bureaucracy.”



Modesto City Councilmember Nick Bavaro visits Graceada Park homeless people, March 2023.

[Point Lighthouse Hostel](#) and a walk to see the elephant seals at [Año Nuevo State Park](#). Another time, a group of Yokuts went to Sierra Club’s [Clair Tappaan Lodge](#) near Donner Pass for skiing, fellowship, and hot tubbing. She also led several trips to walk around and explore San Francisco.

In 2007, Dorothy and I went to Washington DC, to represent the Motherlode Chapter while we lobbied U.S. Congress and Senators to pass the [Omnibus Public Lands Bill](#). While overshadowed by the looming recession, we were able to help successfully pass this important legislation. As Dorothy had participated in prior SC lobbying events, she was my guide as we negotiated the hallways of Congress.

Dorothy was a member/supporter of the [Modesto Peace/Life Center](#) for many years. We attended Peace Camp together. She would often participate in the Song Circles. Dorothy would show up at MPLC vigils, envelope-stuffing “parties,” and the Annual Pancake Breakfast.

Dorothy embraced life with passion, humor, adventure, and compassion. She participated in many aspects of the community — Housing Authority, book club, Buddhist sitting group, art/theater/music, and fun. Her family was important to her, and many hundreds of thousands of people met her through her [grandson’s YouTube videos](#).

Dorothy was a shining light for me and all of her friends. I will miss her.

Modesto Sound awarded \$255,000

from page 1

value of their time, residents will be paid to record these podcasts. Residents served will mostly be from the 95354 Zip Code. This is because research from the California Healthy Places Index (HPI) Map <https://map.healthyplacesindex.org> shows several areas, including Zip Code 95354 which is where Modesto Sound’s studio is located, to be in the lowest quadrant (bottom fourth).

According to the HPI work, which can be zoomed in on neighborhood-by-neighborhood, data on social conditions that drive health — like education, job opportunities, clean air, and water — are positively associated with life expectancy beginning at birth. Community leaders, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders use the HPI to compare the health and well-being of communities, identify health inequities and quantify the factors that shape health.

“We were thrilled to see the enthusiastic response from artists and organizations across the region for the KDA Creative Corps grant program,” said KDACC Program Director Andrea Hansen. “After a thorough review process, we were excited to announce Modesto Sound as a recipient of this inaugural grant and even more excited to see the impact this project will have on the community over the next year.”

Out of 140 eligible individuals and organizations, KDACC received an astounding \$21.7 million in grant application requests for \$3.4 million in available funding. The grant applications came from all 14 counties in the Central Valley and Eastern Sierra region of the state.

Applications from individuals and eligible organizations were reviewed against objective criteria that considered project design, artist involvement, impact on the Healthy Places Index, community engagement, and budget. A review panel adjudicated complete and eligible applications based on the criteria against a 6-point ranking scale. Final grant awards were made collaboratively between the Kern Dance Alliance Board of Directors, KDACC program staff, and the

In Memoriam
Dorothy Griggs
January 21, 1930 - May 22, 2023



(L) Elaine Gorman, (R) Dorothy Griggs

[California Arts Council](#) (CAC) staff.

For more information about the projects, please visit <https://kdacreativecorps.org/>.

The California Creative Corps is a pilot program designed to promote community and civic engagement and spread awareness about water and energy conservation, climate change, emergency preparedness, relief, and recovery through the arts.

About Modesto Sound

Modesto Sound opened in 2005 and is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower youth with real-world job skills to create music and artistic media. Their purpose is to provide youth a safe and fun way of learning a job skill while providing the community with radio programming and live concerts. Previous participants become mentors to new students. This forms a circle of learning.

For more information about the California Audio Roots Project and this recording opportunity, visit [Modesto Sound](#) at modestosound.org or call 209-573-0533.



MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER

Working for **peace, justice**
and a sustainable future

Connections is published monthly except in August by the Modesto Peace/Life Center
829 13th St., Modesto, CA 95354
Open by appointment.
Mailing address: P.O. Box 134,
Modesto, CA 95353
209-529-5750

“You have an ally,” says Condit to Homeless Advocates

By [ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen](#)

On June 21, Stanislaus County Supervisor Channce Condit assured members of the Modesto Citizens Action Group ([MoCag](#)) that he was fully supportive of proposals for safe sleeping sites for the most vulnerable members of Modesto’s and Stanislaus County’s homeless population. MoCag is a citizens’ action group dedicated to finding immediate shelter and safe ground for homeless people in Modesto and Stanislaus County.

“You have an ally,” said Condit.

MoGag members Steven Finch and Lynelle Solomon stressed the urgent need to provide minimal shelter and safe ground for the elderly, disabled and ill people who have nowhere to go as Modesto and Stanislaus County deal with shortages of staff, services, and shelter space for people experiencing homelessness.

“There’s a homeless woman who pushes a dead dog around in a baby stroller,” said Finch. “We can’t have that in our community. She’s mentally ill, and people don’t choose to be mentally ill like that.”

The meeting at 1010 10th Street in Modesto came directly after a [widely published study by UC San Francisco](#) that refutes claims that homelessness is caused by drugs and “bad choices.”

“The results of the study confirm that far too many Californians experience homelessness because they cannot afford housing,” said [Margot Kushel](#), MD, director of the UCSF Benioff Homeless and Housing Initiative (BHII) and principal investigator of the study. “Through thousands of survey responses and hundreds of in-depth interviews, the study’s findings reflect the incalculable personal costs



(l to r) Richard Anderson, James Costello, Channce Condit, Russell Fowler, Steven Finch, Lynelle Solomon. Photo: Eric Caine

of homelessness.”

Supervisor Condit stressed that the effort to manage homelessness should include all of Stanislaus County.

“My district is the poorest in the county,” said Condit. “We need to spread responsibility for managing homelessness around the county, not just in one place.”

The City of Modesto has by far the largest proportion of Stanislaus County’s homeless population, however, and MoCag members pointed out that many of the county’s services and service providers are in Modesto, including Stanislaus County’s low-barrier Berberian Shelter. They argued that it would make sense to have safe sleeping and safe parking as near to services as feasible.

“I would be open to a MOES (Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter) kind of concept,” said Condit, in response

to the question of whether he favored interim safe sleeping sites. He also said he was in favor of tiny homes as one piece of the complex puzzle of widespread homelessness.

The Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter (MOES) was a permitted campsite that Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto developed in 2019 after a Ninth Circuit Appeals Court Ruling ([Martin vs Boise](#)) that decreed, “as long as there is no option for sleeping indoors the government cannot criminalize indigent, homeless people for sleeping outdoors, on public property.” Reports at the time of its operation included [statements from public officials that quality of life crimes associated with homelessness dropped significantly while MOES was open](#).

Reaching an estimated population just under 500 people, MOES was closed down early in 2020, when Stanislaus County opened the 182-bed Berberian Shelter near downtown Modesto. Many residents of MOES were left with nowhere to go.

MoCag members stressed that one of the lessons learned from MOES was that it had gotten too big. They said they favored safe sleeping sites with far fewer numbers and better management.

Condit offered to call local representatives together with MoCag in a collaborative effort to address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable of the local homeless population, which now includes a [rapidly increasing percentage of elderly individuals who’ve been priced out of the housing market](#).

“We can’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good,” said Supervisor Condit. “We’re a country of second and third chances. We need to keep trying to get this puzzle right.”

Homeless: The Drug Fallacy Rises (Again)

By [ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen](#)

The state of Hawaii ranks [sixth in the nation in homelessness per capita](#) and dead last in drug use and addiction per capita. Ordinarily, such data would be of minor interest. Within the context of a recent [widely published OP/ED](#) by Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig and several other purported authorities, however, it’s highly pertinent. Hawaii’s statistics are part of a fact pattern that presents conclusive rebuttals to Reisig’s group’s main claim that, “We can end our [California’s] homeless crisis in one year” by charging, “hard drug possession as a new class of crime called a ‘treatment mandated felony.’”

Reisig et al argue that homelessness is not the result of high housing costs and broken systems of care as many claim. Instead, they say, California leads the nation in per capita homelessness because of lax drug laws. They then cite four states — New Jersey, Maryland, Michigan and Illinois — that have, “much stronger hard drug laws than California.” [Their conclusion](#) is that, “Fentanyl, heroin, and other hard drug addictions, and the associated mental health crises that these drugs entail are the root cause of California’s homeless crisis.”

Even though its role as the cause of homelessness had been discredited time and again, drug use remains among the most popular explanations for homelessness and the facts be damned. Nonetheless, if it were true that drug use causes homelessness, we would find strong correlations between drug use and addiction per capita and homelessness. There is no such relationship.

Of the five states (including Washington D.C.) with the [highest rates of drug use per capita](#), only Washington D.C. is in the top five in homelessness. Michigan, cited by Reisig et al. as an example where tough drug laws have reduced homelessness, is actually #10 in drug use and addiction per capita, despite its harsh drug penalties.

California, where Reisig et al. say lax drug laws lead to homelessness, ranks #39 in drug use and addiction per capita, which puts it in a better position than every one of the states Reisig and company listed with “much stronger hard drug laws” (Illinois is #28, New Jersey #35, and Maryland #36). We’ve already mentioned that Hawaii, is #51 (including D.C.) in the entire nation in drug use and addiction, yet #6 in homelessness.

Reisig et al. cite housing costs in an attempt to show they are less a factor in homelessness than drug use. In fact, housing costs have closer correlations to homelessness than drug use. [Hawaii leads the nation in housing and rental costs](#) and ranks sixth in homelessness (including Washington, D.C.). California, second only to Washington D.C. in homelessness per capita, is second in housing costs to Hawaii and third overall in rental costs. Washington, D.C. is third in housing costs and second in rental costs.

Reisig and company don’t discuss housing shortages, but in California, housing shortages are directly relevant to homelessness. [California leads the United States in housing shortages at 978,000](#). That’s over three times the number of the next closest state, which is Texas at 322,000.

Ironically, Houston, Texas, is often cited as a national model for reducing homeless numbers. Houston’s primary tactic? You guessed it — Houston’s primary tactic for managing homelessness is a “Housing First” model, not harsh drug penalties. In fact, the [Houston Coalition for the Homeless](#) argues that,

“In the Houston region, 50% of homelessness is caused by an economic crisis (job loss, bills become higher than earnings), debunking common stereotypes that homelessness is overwhelmingly caused by substance use — which actually accounts for less than 10% of homelessness locally.”

The plain fact is that if every homeless drug addict in California were to stop using tomorrow, we would still have a housing shortage of almost one million units. Furthermore, even those homeless people with incomes and jobs wouldn’t be able to afford California’s high rental costs, [which in 2022 averaged \\$1586 per month](#), just behind Hawaii and Washington D.C. All three regions are in the top tier of homelessness per capita.

Arguments like those presented by Reisig et al aren’t just erroneous, they’re harmful. They never establish a causal relationship between drug use and homelessness because they can’t. Instead, they distract from the complex systemic issues that contribute to homelessness by offering specious theories that criminalize the elderly, destitute, disabled, ill, and working poor who make up the greatest proportion of homeless people in California. It’s hard to say which is the worst offense of such arguments — contriving them in the first place or publishing them.

Wild Dogs Don't Snore

By JENIFER WEST

We adopted Annabelle, a Lab mix who turned out to be completely feral, from the animal shelter about five years ago. We assumed, as most people do, that she'd "just" been mistreated – we were sure that, with enough love, we could bring her out of her shell. A lot of love has been involved, but developing a relationship with a truly wild creature has turned out to be an entirely different experience than simply loving a wounded soul back to health.

And it has been more than worth the effort. Perhaps because she has known cold, and hunger, and fear, and understands now that she'll never have to be miserable again, she greets each new day with puppy-like enthusiasm.

We adopted Annabelle along with Chance, also a Lab mix, from the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency in 2018, when they were both at the tail end of puppyhood. They had named her Anna, which just didn't capture how lovely she is, so, at our house, she became Annabelle.

We've always had dogs, with various cats, chickens, fish, frogs and other assorted creatures coming and going over the years. The current roster includes the two dogs, a couple of cats who get along like the sisters they are, bunnies (thought we had two females; got him fixed after she had a litter), and assorted fish and frogs.

Annabelle was dangerously close to the end of her time at the shelter when we adopted her, and we got her with Chance as sort of a package deal. She must have been terrified: a completely wild creature, locked into that tiny cage with nowhere to hide. But someone at the shelter must have recognized her spirit. And that, when frightened, her instinct is flight, rather than fight.

With her sweet and gentle spirit; puppy face; soft, brown eyes; brown gladiator sandal markings and obvious intelligence, she's such a beautiful girl that we've found it impossible not to love her.

Feral cats are common enough to be familiar, but a truly wild dog is pretty rare, and it was a challenge to figure out how to interact with her. It took time, and much effort (not to mention tons of treats) to gain her trust.

For quite a while, she seemed to be more wild than dog.

We humans instinctively value any relationship we develop with a truly wild creature, perhaps because it is so rare. Or it may be that that level of trust bestowed upon us by a wild thing implies to us something about our character. Whatever it is, the first time Annabelle came close enough to take a treat from my hand felt like a gift. And visitors are invariably excited and flattered if she doesn't bolt out of sight.

She hid in the bushes at first, as far away from us as possible. Eye contact, even for just a split second, would send her fleeing, terrified, back to the safety of the shrubs. That instinct is undoubtedly what kept her alive while she was on her own, but she has had to overcome it to take her place in our household.

Fortunately, Chance soon coaxed her out, and we were able to begin the long process of building a relationship with

her. It has literally taken years, but she's part of the family now, and even comfortable enough, sometimes, to venture out from the safety of her hiding place in the bedroom when there are people in the house she doesn't know.

Figuring out how to connect with her has taught us so much that we never would have learned otherwise. Each of us has had to work to develop our own relationship with her, and for a long time, she only truly seemed to feel safe when Chance was close by.

In order to help her let go of her fear, we had to understand



it and then figure out how to help her get around it. For a long time, she would stay close but just out of reach. For weeks, she would curl up on the grass while we were on the patio, on the far side of a flowerbed: nearby, but with a clear path to the safety of the bushes, in case she felt the need to flee.

To coax her to come close to us, we tossed treats to her while deliberately looking away. We each did this every day for weeks until the wonderful day came when she ventured close enough to take a treat from our hands. Even then, she would often spook if we accidentally glanced at her while handing it to her. Those days are long gone, and she's even learned to sit to get a treat.

Annabelle's joyful spirit brightens the house. Something as simple as a piece of rawhide to chew will almost always spark a round of frolicking. Her delight in tossing a bone or toy into the air and catching it, rolling around and snuffling, is invariably contagious.

Judging by her reaction to the first cold wind, the autumn after we brought her home, her life before us must have been difficult. The two of us were on the back lawn when a breeze carrying a chill swept over us. She looked up, sniffed the air, and froze, a look of foreboding on her face. There was no way for me to communicate it to her in that moment, but at least one of us could take comfort in knowing that she would never again have to be miserable with cold or hunger.

That she had figured out how to survive on her own was made clear one day during her first summer with us when she taught Chance how to pull down the branch of a tree to get at the delicious fruit growing on it. But we've always made sure all of our animal friends have plenty to eat, and neither of them has shown any interest in it since.

Our dogs are part of the family and have their favorite sleeping places on the bedroom floor. For a while she slept silently, curled up as tightly as possible, tucked in next to a bookcase against the wall. We finally had the sense to move the thing out of her way, and she sleeps comfortably stretched out on her own rug these days.

I don't recall exactly when I was first aware of her snoring, but it made me laugh then, and it still amuses me. It's unmistakable: the happy sound of a dog completely abandoned to sleep. It always lifts my spirits – she has clearly let go of the incessant wariness so critical for survival in the wild.

And I have been healthy since, but I was very ill for many weeks a couple of summers ago, and it clearly frightened her: whenever I managed to get to my feet and totter past her in the house, she tucked her tail and bolted outside.

It's a little difficult to explain, but it was as if my spirit was slowly withdrawing from my body. It had happened so subtly that I hadn't really noticed. But then, I awoke in the middle of the night with a strong, deeply comforting sense of returning well-being. I could literally feel the warmth of life flowing back into the "furthest" parts of my body: toes, feet, legs, fingertips... I was still extremely weak, so it took me several minutes to push myself out of bed and get to my feet.

I had only taken a step or two when Annabelle was suddenly there, bouncing happily around me. I still don't know how, but she sensed the change in me, and her elated reaction to it confirmed that I really was finally on the road to recovery. We celebrated together, the room alive with her dancing and snuffling mixed with my laughter.

Some things we've learned from Annabelle, in no particular order:

Simple pleasures, like laying in the sun and chewing a bone, really are the best.

Very few things in life are better than a full tummy, friends you love and a safe, comfortable place to sleep.

Letting go of fear makes life soooo much better.

Life can be scary, but having someone who makes you feel safe close by helps you get through it.

Trying something new, such as getting into the car, can be pretty scary, but the reward, like playing at the park, is worth it.

None of us had any idea of the adventure we were embarking on the day we brought Annabelle home. We didn't know then that we were being called upon to help a beautiful, wild spirit let go of her fear, or that, in so doing, we would help her find joy. Nor could we have imagined how contagious that joy might be – especially when that familiar low rumbling issues from a dog sound asleep, sprawled out on her rug, in the middle of the night.

Because, as we know now, wild dogs don't snore.

PLANTING OUR FUTURE
Climate Justice Youth Summit
FOR AGES 12-24

FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2023
10:00 am - 4:30 pm
WEAVE Center 820 H Street, Modesto CA, 95354

Artistic Expression
Hood Herbalism
Mental Health
Workshops
Live Music
Giveaways
Networking

tinyurl.com/PlantingOurFuture
(209) 589-9277
valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com

REGISTER TODAY!

What is the Climate Justice Youth Summit?

By **BIANCA G. LOPEZ**, Co-Founder/Project Director, Valley Improvement Projects (VIP)

Our youth summit is a youth-led event organized by our Climate Justice Action Now (CJAN) youth coordinators. **The Summit will take place in Modesto and is open to all Stanislaus County youth ages 12-24 on Friday, July 28th, 2023.** Our goal is to inspire young people in Stanislaus County to discuss local, climate, and environmental justice issues while highlighting and uplifting youth voices and providing them with tools to directly affect change at a local level.

The youth summit will include workshops, entertainment, collective art projects, food, leadership opportunities, friendly contests, and more. We anticipate 100 participants!

How can you help make this event a success?

Make sure the youth in your life don't miss out on this

opportunity! Our youth organizers are still seeking local support to make this a fun and successful event. There are various ways in which you can support our efforts, please see the list below for details. Donations are tax-deductible.

- Volunteer!
- Connect us to free fruit or other healthy food items.
- Make a monetary donation.
- Donate eco-friendly swag to give to all participants (100)
- Host a fun activity during Lunch (makers space, planting, art, music, etc.
- Send us literature or flyers for youth activities you would like us to share with our participants (100 copies).

Email: valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com;
Web: valleyimprovementprojects.org



5th Annual Kids Connect Community Celebration!

By **MICHELLE DUNN**, Child Support Supervisor, Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services

In celebration of Child Support Awareness Month in August, Stanislaus County Department of Child Support in partnership with United Way and Modesto Junior College invite you to participate in a FREE informational booth at the 5th Annual Kids Connect Community Celebration. The goal of this FREE family event is to highlight services provided by the local Child Support program and connect families to valuable resources in the community to assist in the future success of all children and families.

This year, the backpack giveaway for children will return (while supplies last). Due to organizations like yours, this event has succeeded in prior years as we promote Child Support Awareness Month while highlighting the many family-centered nonprofit agencies and supportive businesses

throughout the community. Over 50 agencies participated in the 2022 event, including various County departments, along with approximately 650 attendees.

Date: Friday, July 28th

Time: 4 pm – 7 pm (set up time 3 pm)

Location: Modesto Junior College, 435 College Ave, Modesto

For **booth participation**, email Outreach@stancodcss.org for a booth registration form and return it via Email or Fax by Friday, July 7, 2023, Fax: 209.556.4484. We encourage all participating organizations to include a child-friendly activity at your booth. You may also host your own prize giveaway. A table and 2 chairs will be provided per agency. The vendor area will be shaded by trees; however, please bring your own pop-up tent for guaranteed shade.

July 15, 2023
Saturday 9-6 pm

**Calaveras Voices:
Writing Beneath the Big Trees**

Join us for a day of poetry & journaling at Big Trees State Park
1170 CA-4, Arnold, CA 95223 Check-in time 9:00-9:30 am

Keynote Speakers

California Poet Laureate Dana Gioia (2015 – 2018)
California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick (2022 – 2024)
Poet Susan Kelly DeWitt (editor Tule Review)

- Workshops
- Docent Tour of North Trail
- High School Students/Poetry Out Loud Students
- Public Reading/Open Mic

Bring your own picnic lunch (water & cookies provided)
Carpooling is recommended as parking can be challenging and you can share the entry fee cost.

Park Entrance fee: \$10 per vehicle (up to 9 people)

Registration (\$45) information available at manzanitawp@gmail.com

"This project was made possible with support from California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit www.calhum.org."

Sponsors: Manzanita Writers Press, Cal Humanities, Friends of the Calaveras County Library, Calaveras County Poet Laureate

KDUR LAW OFFICES OF
KELLY, DUARTE, URSTOEGER & RUBLE, LLP

Sharon E. Kelly
Jeffrey R. Duarte
Markus R. Urstoeger
Megan E. Ruble

1600 G St
Suite 203
P.O. Box 0142
Modesto, CA

Workers' Compensation and Social Security Disability Attorneys
Know your rights
Call today (209) 521-2552

Stanislaus County
Department of Child Support Services presents:

JULY 28

the 5th Annual Kids Connect Community Celebration!

FREE EVENT

Community Family
Support Success

- BACKPACK GIVEAWAY (while supplies last)
- RAFFLE PRIZES
- ENTERTAINMENT
- COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Visit us on Facebook for more information:

SCAN ME

The Modesto Citizens Action Group: MoCAG Takes a Stand for the Unheard

Some things you must always be unable to bear. Some things you must never stop refusing to bear.

– William Faulkner

By **TOM PORTWOOD**

They meet every two weeks on a leafy street dappled in sunlight at the offices of the Modesto Peace/Life Center. Some of them are retired, although you would never guess that by looking at their current resumes. The rest of them are younger, still in the midst of busy, demanding careers. But every member of the Modesto Citizens Action Group (or MoCAG: <https://www.mocag.org/>) understands time is of the essence – that it's not an exaggeration to say that a humanitarian crisis is happening now in Modesto's parks and alleyways, by our rivers, and along the long, desolate sidewalks of many of our roads.

At least two MoCAG members were born in Modesto, while one was born in Iowa, and another in upstate New York. One hails from Australia. Lynelle Solomon, a real estate agent, is a granddaughter of the founder of one of Modesto's first department stores. Frank Ploof served aboard the U.S.S. Ranger during the Vietnam War and would go on to a long career at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory before retiring in 2008, and has since selflessly devoted much of his time and resources to assisting those experiencing homelessness in our community.

Richard Anderson taught microbiology and other courses at MJC and elsewhere for decades before he began video-documenting the plight of the homeless in our neighborhoods at the candlelight vigil for the 11 who had died in 2012.

James Costello was a pediatric physician assistant prior to retiring and has shepherded *Stanislaus Connections* for two decades and was also a driving force in the founding of KCBP Community Radio. As more people heard about the meetings or read one of Eric Caine's searing articles condemning the cruelty of the displacement of homeless encampments by law enforcement, the group grew apace.

Another member, Steve Finch, is the CEO of SHARE, which he co-founded with Mr. Ploof, a nonprofit dedicated to providing resources such as temporary housing and transportation for the homeless in our area. Attorney Aaron Anguiano is the President of the Latino Community Roundtable. Other members include John Frailing, Derek Castle, Modesto Peace/Life Board President Jocelyn Cooper, and John Lucas. Together, this a formidable, passionate group of people – but more than that – they are determined and focused on reaching their goals because they know failure is not an option – not when lives are at stake. Daily, they are witness to the tragedy that is the reality for so many living on Modesto's streets.

"People seem to think that homeless people have it made out on the street, that everything is given to them," remarked Ms. Solomon recently. Ms. Solomon knows of what she speaks, having taken it upon herself to personally cook for, feed, provide across-the-counter meds, and otherwise watch over any number of our neighbors – and she thinks of them

as our neighbors – for the past several years.

"Let me tell you," she continued, "their life, from morning till night, is about survival – and through the night as well. They work so hard from the moment they wake up, wondering where they're going to get their next meal, or if they're going to have a next meal, where they're going to take a shower, where they're going to get a drink of water or go to the bathroom, where they're going to put their head down at night, is it going to get too cold during the night. It is a daily fight for survival for these people. It is not peaches and cream. People seem to think they chose this lifestyle – I don't know anybody who wanted to be homeless. These people are mentally tortured by the reality of their daily lives."

MoCAG was formed a little over three months ago out of a growing frustration by its members at the failure of local authorities to adequately respond to the current crisis in



homelessness. The group views itself as a strong advocate for the homeless because so many of its members engage with and speak directly to people experiencing homelessness. Even though MoCAG is still in its infancy, it has already developed an action plan and is currently keying in on two initiatives for the short term:

Continually advocating for the establishment of Tier-1 housing communities.

Completing "Homeless in Modesto 2" – a documentary updating the hour-long "Homeless in Modesto" documentary Richard Anderson, John Lucas, and Leng Power produced in 2018. <https://youtu.be/PHauVTGXQsE>

Regarding the need for the establishment of Tier-1 housing in Modesto, Mr. Costello explained that "if people are sleeping in parks or in doorways or are just living out on the streets, they are subject to robbery, assault, hunger, among other things – in short, their existence is very insecure. The idea is to create a small village of shelters to get people off the street, where at least they could have a dwelling where they could put their backpacks, their documents, or their personal possessions. And where they could also have their pets and relax a little bit – to know that they have a place to stay, where they can actually rest, where they can sleep during the night without fear of being attacked."

Richard Anderson, who came up with the idea of what

would become MoCAG, had praise for what "the City and the County have already done – the opening of the low-barrier shelter, the access center, Kansas House, and more. Those are all good things. Who is left is who we focus on. Who are left are the people who are still not housed by the programs that the County has been able to form. That's at least 441 people, according to the 2023 Point In Time count. People who do not want to be in a congregate shelter like the County's Low Barrier Shelter often fear losing their pets or their partners or their possessions."

Although MoCAG acknowledges that progress has been made on some fronts since the historic *Martin v Boise* decision was issued by the 9th Circuit Court in 2018, the group knows that it must actively engage local officials to ensure the speedy development of Tier-1 housing communities in Modesto and avoid a further deepening in the crisis that so many of our neighbors are experiencing.

"I hope we can get the message across that these are human beings out there and they deserve compassion," Ms. Solomon said. "They deserve a smile and deserve to be looked in the eye and told hello. They walk on the sidewalk next to us, not behind us or under us. They are our community."

In recent weeks, MoCAG members have met with each of the City Council members, Mayor Sue Zwahlen, City Manager Joe Lopez, and Community Development Manager Jessica Hill. Having also met with Supervisor Terry Withrow, the group will now be meeting with the other county supervisors to educate them about the dire need and viability of Tier-1 housing villages.

"Our goal is to get that type of little village going," Mr. Costello explained. "To advocate for it. But to get it to work, you have to have case management.

You have to have services – you can't just put up a little village and put it on autopilot. People will need intensive help. This is just a first step. Parking is part of this first step because some people live out of their cars and need a safe space to park. The City of Modesto has passed a safe parking ordinance but the approval process across many organizations has taken way too many months but is in its final approval stage. Apparently, though, there is some safe parking available behind the Salvation Army's Berberian Shelter for current shelter clients. So, MoCAG is a work in progress. But there is a momentum now to do something, and MoCAG is prepared to assist in any way we can."

"When we had COVID, it was amazing how fast the government got things rolling. Why can't we do that with our homeless?" Ms. Solomon asked pointedly. "They were able to lock us down and set up testing stations, all very quickly. Why can't they move that fast for the homeless?"

At one point, Mr. Ploof was asked why he had dedicated so much of his time to helping those living on the streets, and why he felt it was imperative for the community to pay heed and act upon the devastation daily unfolding on Modesto's streets:

"I hate to use a worn-out phrase – but it's doing the right thing," Mr. Ploof stated. "The right thing in the context of

continued next page

California Statewide Study Investigates Causes and Impacts of Homelessness

UCSF releases most comprehensive study of people experiencing homelessness.

SAN FRANCISCO (June 20, 2023) – The University of California, San Francisco Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative (BHHI) today released the largest representative study of homelessness in the United States since the mid-1990s, providing a comprehensive look at the causes and consequences of homelessness in California and recommending policy changes to shape programs in response.

[The California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness](#) (CASPEH) used surveys and in-depth interviews to develop a clear portrait of homelessness in California, where 30% of the nation's homeless population and half of the unsheltered population live.

The study found that, for most of the participants, the cost of housing had simply become unsustainable. Participants reported a median monthly household income of \$960 in the six months prior to their homelessness, and most believed that either rental subsidies or one-time financial help would have prevented their homelessness.

“The results of the study confirm that far too many Californians experience homelessness because they cannot afford housing,” said Margot Kushel, MD, Director, UCSF BHHI and principal investigator of CASPEH. “Through thousands of survey responses and hundreds of in-depth interviews, the study's findings reflect the incalculable personal costs of homelessness. Our policy recommendations aim to inform solutions to the homelessness crisis.”

The study found that the state's homeless population is aging, with 47% of all adults aged 50 or older, and that Black and Native Americans are dramatically overrepresented. Contrary to myths of homeless migration, most were Californians: 90% of participants lost their last housing in



The study found that the state's homeless population is aging, with 47% of all adults aged 50 or older, and that Black and Native Americans are dramatically overrepresented.

California and 75% of participants live in the same county as where they were last housed. Nine out of ten spent time unsheltered since they became homeless. The median length of homelessness was 22 months.

One in five participants entered homelessness from an institution. Of those who hadn't been in an institution, 60% came from situations where they weren't leaseholders, such as doubling up with family or friends. Participants were disconnected from the job market and services, but almost half were looking for work.

“As we drive toward addressing the health and housing needs of Californians experiencing homelessness, this study reinforces the importance of comprehensive and integrated supports,” said Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency. “California is taking bold steps to address unmet needs for physical and behavioral health services, to create a range of housing options that are safe and stable, and to meet people where they are at. We are grateful for the voices of those who participated in this study, as they will help guide our approach.”

Participants had experienced multiple forms of trauma

throughout their life, increasing their vulnerability to homelessness and contributing to their mental health and substance use challenges. Two-thirds reported current mental health symptoms and more than a third experienced physical or sexual violence during this episode of homelessness. More than a third had visited an Emergency Department in the prior six months. One in five who used substances reported that they wanted substance use treatment—but couldn't get it.

“Having experienced homelessness firsthand, I vividly recall the relentless fight for survival, the pervasive shame that haunted me, and my unsuccessful endeavors to overcome homelessness on my own,” said Claudine Sipili, a member of the CASPEH Lived Expertise Board. “The study holds great significance for me because it aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness. I hope it will inform the development of effective strategies, policies, and programs; address the issue in a dignifying way; and support individuals in their transition from homelessness to housing stability.”

Based on the CASPEH findings, BHHI offers six key policy recommendations:

Increase access to housing affordable to extremely low-income households making less than 30% of the Area Median Income: (1) produce more housing affordable to the lowest-income renters; (2) expand rental subsidies (e.g., Housing Choice Vouchers); and

(3) ease use of subsidies (e.g., increase housing navigation services, create and enforce anti-discrimination laws).

Expand targeted homelessness prevention, such as financial supports and legal assistance at, (1) places where people receive other services, including social service agencies, healthcare settings, domestic violence services, and community organizations; and (2) institutional exits (jails, prisons, drug treatment). Expand and strengthen eviction protections.

Provide robust supports to match the behavioral health needs of the population by (1)

increasing access to low-barrier mental health, substance use, and harm reduction services during episodes of homelessness; and (2) staffing permanent supportive housing with evidence-based models, such as pathways to housing, assertive community treatment, and intensive case management.

Increase household incomes through evidence-based employment supports such as training, support for job search and transportation, and provide outreach to help those experiencing homelessness sign up for eligible benefits.

Increase outreach and service delivery to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Embed a racial equity approach in all aspects of homeless system service delivery.

A documentary project produced in support of CASPEH, which includes photographs and interviews with Californians experiencing homelessness, is available at www.unhousedca.com.

MoCAG Takes a Stand

from previous page

humanity is to make sure that the least of us are treated well. Being civil is actually hard work. I can see where there's a tendency to be authoritative – you don't have to worry about negotiating anything with anybody. But you have to move away from that if you want to live in a civil society because it's about negotiation. None of us can have everything. To be human in a civilized sense means that everyone deserves respect and your voice counts.

As a friend of mine stated the other day, this country is too rich to have anyone experiencing homelessness. Modesto prides itself on its sense of community. If we are wise, we'll follow Mr. Ploof's counsel and do the right thing. But if we turn our backs on those among us when they are most in need of our help, we diminish only ourselves.

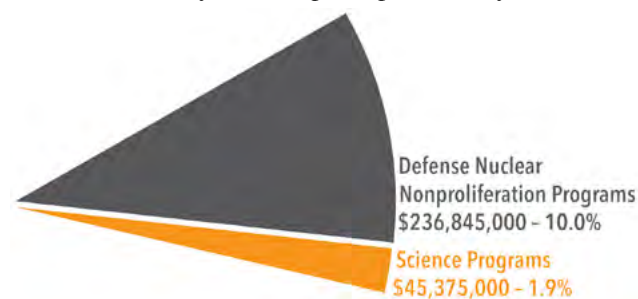
Livermore Lab Budget: Everything for Nukes, Pennies for Cleanup

By [MARYLIA KELLEY](#), [Tri-Valley CARES](#)

As some members of Congress want draconian cuts to social programs that make up less than 15% of the federal budget, military spending continues to spiral out of control.

The President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget request for military programs in the Pentagon and the Department of Energy (DOE) stands at \$886 billion. Congress is expected to increase it.

The Livermore Lab budget for the coming year reflects this overall trend. Nearly all of the money is for the DOE National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) budget line called nuclear weapons activities. As you can see in the pie chart we created from the DOE's own numbers, a whopping 84% of Livermore's budget is for nuclear weapons, totaling roughly \$2 billion. Notably, this is a plus-up over last year.



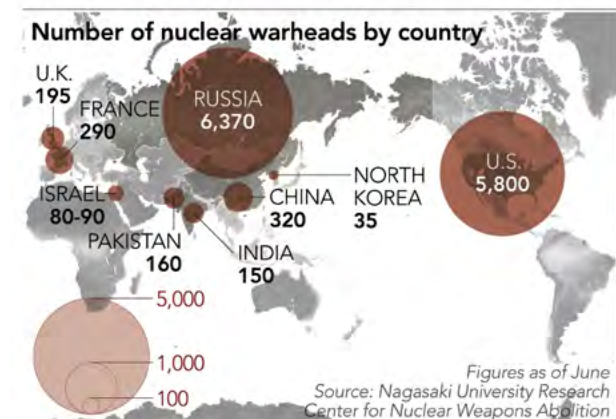
Livermore's second-largest program, Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, comes in at 10%. Civilian science programs get a tiny sliver at less than 2%. Another small sliver is allocated for the cleanup of toxic and radioactive pollutants released into soils, groundwater aquifers, and in some cases, surface waters at the Lab's Main Site and Site 300.

Hiroshima remembrance

ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS: Join the Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck

Join us at Graceada Park, Modesto, on **Sunday, August 6th at 6:00 PM**. Bring food and drinks to share as we converse and rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. We will remember Daniel Ellsberg and others who stood against nuclear weapons.

Bring your own table service and a lawn chair.



Another small amount goes to Decontaminate & Decommission (D&D) "high-risk" radioactively-polluted buildings that were abandoned after past nuclear warhead programs contaminated them. According to the DOE Inspector General, "high-risk" means danger to workers and the public since contaminants may leak outside the structures.

We have long said that our country's federal budget each year is our national policy in action. This is nowhere truer than at Livermore Lab. For example, while Livermore's programs to create new U.S. weapons of nuclear mass destruction are singled out for lavish funding, the cleanup of toxic and radioactive pollutants is not only minuscule, it is slated to suffer further cuts.

Tri-Valley CAREs was recently told by NNSA officials that the FY2024 budget for environment, health and safety will get chopped by 10%.

Further, the DOE FY2024 Lab Tables for Livermore show that the money for dealing with "high risk" contaminated buildings will suffer a substantial cut of about \$10 million.

In plain language, this budget promotes nuclear proliferation, which means escalating nuclear dangers for the U.S. and the world. Locally, this budget means more health risks for Lab employees and the public alike, including due to off-gassing from contaminated buildings.

And, in the fenceline communities of Livermore and Tracy, this budget also means that toxic and radioactive pollutants, including radioactive hydrogen (tritium), uranium, industrial solvents like TCE, perchlorate, hexavalent chromium, and many others, will continue to threaten our environment.

Tri-Valley CAREs opposes this budget allocation. We are working with our community members and our Congressional Representatives to stave off the cuts to already underfunded health, safety, and Superfund cleanup programs.

We are also working tirelessly to stop the further development of new warheads and all the dangers that stem from them – from the production of new plutonium bomb cores to the building of novel weapons to the international impacts of adding them to the U.S. stockpile.

It will take a public movement to change nuclear weapons policy, programs and budgets. Livermore Lab is a key site where the "rubber" of the federal budget meets the "road" of actual new warheads coming off of assembly lines. Changing Livermore Lab is integral to changing nuclear weapons policy.

We invite you to join us!

[Slightly edited]

MRB MICHAEL R. BAUDLER

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

mb@modestocpas.com

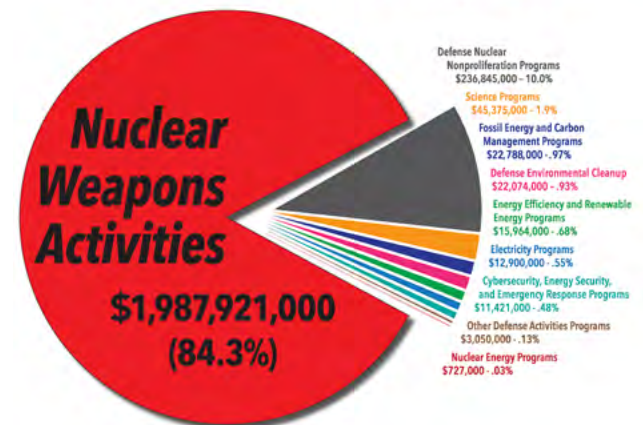
Michael R. Baudler, CPA

TELEPHONE
(209) 575-2653 ext 303

FACSIMILE
(209) 575-0629

1120 14TH STREET, SUITE 2
MODESTO, CALIFORNIA 95354

**FY2024
Budget Request for LLNL
Total \$2,359,047,000**



**DON'T BE
FOOLED,
I'M STILL
HERE!**

**Mask, vax &
get boosted!**

**Getting vaccinated and
boosted makes you**

**10x more protected
from COVID-19**

**than those who
are unvaccinated.**

**Find a vaccine near you:
833-422-4255**

Mytum.ca.gov

NAACP
Modesto/Stanslaus
Unit 1048



NAACPMODESTOSTANISLAUS

NAACPMODESTOSTANISLAUS@GMAIL.COM

NAACPMODESTOSTANISLAUS.ORG

(209) 896-9196



Linda Toren - Calaveras' Superb Poet Laureate

Linda Toren is a retired teacher and currently director of *Voices of Wisdom* through Manzanita Writer's Press. She has presented poetry workshops for children and adults—publishing schoolwide collections of poetry and art at local elementary schools for more than 15 years.

Linda has enjoyed the company of fellow poets (the licensed fools) for many years. She is the current Calaveras Poet Laureate (2022-2024). Her poetry book, "Raven Braids the Wind" was published by Manzanita Writers Press in March 2022. Linda also produces a community radio program, "A Way with Words," at www.KQBM.org, on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 3:00 – 4:30 pm. Her website is www.lindatoren.com, where you can find archived shows. *A Gathering of Voices* is very pleased that she is sharing a few of her excellent poems with us.



Wherever you stand, be the soul of that place. – Rumi

How is change made real?
It is as inevitable as daybreak.
Some may resist with fear,
others embrace the necessity.

It is as inevitable as daybreak—
the bravery to make change
as others embrace the necessity
Of being present for the invisible.

The bravery to make change—
insisting voices must be heard,
of being present for the invisible,
upending the rules of engagement.

Insisting voices must be heard—
gather the community of artful protesters
upend the rules of engagement
then herald the songs of common good.

Gather the community of artful protesters ...
this is how we know we are here
to herald the songs of common good.
We must have a leader.

This is how we know we are here—
life is not a casual enterprise so
we must have a leader—
not to follow but for inspiration.

Life is not a casual enterprise—
the sadness, the sweetness
wants to follow and be inspired
by the souls who won't give up.

This is how real change is made.

Blue Creek

I reach through the glass of years, pick up
a small turtle in the creek, the same one you saw,
mottled against dappled rocks, the syrupy waters
of spring settling around you. It fit your palm
as if you were one creature fixed upon the same
living truths. You placed it back, the exact spot
where alder leaves glanced across shifting water,
a geography of time flowing.

Ah sum ah teh *

Someone said you are
in the neighborhood
lumbering onto porches
scaring the chickens.

Some say you are cinnamon.
Others say you are big and black.
Scratch your back on an old pine
sniff the storm coming.

I think you are shaking off
the rain today – drops fly
turn to gray clouds
haphazard like thunder.

These quiet days
you are free to amble
no tracks on sodden leaf litter
no sound to mark your passing.

From all the secret places
back in the woods
you amble through bear clover
closer to curiosity
easy pickings.

Some people say
you have a picture of
how we live—how alike
we are and lonely.

*Miwuk word for black bear

In the harbor of night, wavering stars
Drift easily toward infinity
The delayed light travels, nothing to mar
Life's unerring curiosity

Dreams are not the only fools of morning
Nor is the edge of dawn populated simply
By creatures dressed in the garb of sleeping
Truths-- evidence forebodes such fantasy

Without warning, dreams and reality weave
Memories and age, a fine cloth tapestry
Wrought with the full moon ready to leave
Us abandoned at the point of entry

So—that one inevitable step takes
Charge of all the fears and regrets we make

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

Streaming on www.kcbpradio.org

PSAs in English and Spanish produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

PROGRAMS

Sunday Cruisin' with your host, DeeJayRig! Oldies hits from 1959 to 1999 – Sundays, 5:00 p.m.

Faithful Fridays – inspirational music and thoughts – Fridays, 7:00 p.m.

Why Not Nice? – Showcases unique music from unique cultures and thinkers worldwide, focusing on world/academic/jazz and roots music – Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

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 – Jasmine Corena and Likhi Rivas 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, 11:00 pm.

LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

L-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/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

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

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

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY RADIO

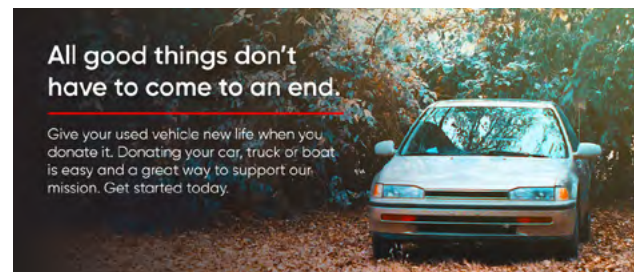
STATION: Donate here: <https://kcbpradio.org/donate/>
Please consider a recurring monthly donation.



Donate Your Vehicle to KCBP Radio: It's a Win-Win Solution

Have you considered donating a vehicle to KCBP Radio? **Not only will you cruise past the hassles altogether, but you'll make a lasting impact.**

1. It's easy and the pick-up is free!
2. The proceeds from the sale of your vehicle will help us continue to provide community programs to you!
3. Donating saves time and money on repairs and maintenance.
4. Donating beats the hassles and worries of selling.
5. Our Vehicle Donation Support Team is here to guide you every step of the way.
6. We help you take care of the paperwork and provide you with any necessary tax documents. Vehicle donations are tax-deductible.



To donate, call (855) 500-7433, or submit the secure online form at <https://careasy.org/KCBP>. We accept all types of vehicles that meet the following basic requirements: Vehicle has a clear title, is in one piece, is accessible for safe towing, does not need to be running.

Daniel Ellsberg Left Us a Message

For the 52 full years that followed his release of the Pentagon Papers, he devoted himself to speaking, writing, and protesting.

By [NORMAN SOLOMON](#)

When Daniel Ellsberg died on Friday, the world lost a transcendent whistleblower with a powerful ethos of compassion and resolve.

Ellsberg's renown for openly challenging the mentalities of militarism began on June 23, 1971, when he appeared on CBS Evening News ten days after news broke about the Pentagon Papers that he'd provided to journalists. Ellsberg pointedly said that in the 7,000 pages of top-secret documents, "I don't think there is a line in them that contains an estimate of the likely impact of our policy on the overall casualties among Vietnamese or the refugees to be caused, the effects of defoliation in an ecological sense. There's neither an estimate nor a calculation of past effects, ever."

And he added: "The documents simply reflect the internal concerns of our officials. That says nothing more nor less than that our officials never did concern themselves with the effect of our policies on the Vietnamese."

Ellsberg [told](#) anchor Walter Cronkite: "I think we cannot let the officials of the Executive Branch determine for us what it is that the public needs to know about how well and how they are discharging their functions."

The functions of overseeing the war on Vietnam had become repugnant to Ellsberg as an insider. Many other government officials and top-level consultants with security clearances also had access to documents that showed how mendacious four administrations had been as the U.S. role in Vietnam expanded and then escalated into wholesale slaughter.

Unlike the others, he finally broke free and provided the Pentagon Papers to news media. As he said in the CBS interview, "The fact is that secrets can be held by men in the government whose careers have been spent learning how to keep their mouths shut. I was one of those."

Ellsberg's mouth, and heart, never stayed shut again. For the 52 full years that followed his release of the Pentagon Papers, he devoted himself to speaking, writing and protesting. When the war on Vietnam finally ended, Ellsberg mainly returned to his earlier preoccupation—how to help prevent nuclear war.

This spring, during the three months after diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, Ellsberg made the most of every day, spending time with loved ones and speaking out about the all-too-real dangers of nuclear annihilation. He left behind two brilliant, monumental books published in this century—"Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers" (2002) and "The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a [Nuclear](#) War Planner" (2017). They illuminate in sharp ghastly light the patterns of official lies and secrecy about military matters, and the ultimate foreseeable result—nuclear holocaust.

Ellsberg was deeply determined to do all he could to help prevent [omnicide](#). As he said in an [interview](#) when "The Doomsday Machine" came out, scientific research has concluded that nuclear war "would loft into the stratosphere many millions of tons of soot and black smoke from the



In Memoriam

DANIEL ELLSBERG

April 7, 1931- June 16, 2023

Heroic Whistleblower

Anti-Nuclear Weapons Activist & Peacemaker

Friend of Humanity

burning cities. It wouldn't be rained out in the stratosphere. It would go around the globe very quickly and reduce sunlight by as much as 70 percent, causing temperatures like that of the Little Ice Age, killing harvests worldwide and starving to death nearly everyone on earth. It probably wouldn't cause extinction. We're so adaptable. Maybe 1 percent of our current population of 7.4 billion could survive, but 98 or 99 percent would not."

During the profuse interviews that he engaged in during the last few months, what clearly preoccupied Ellsberg was not his own fate but the fate of the Earth's inhabitants.

He was acutely aware that while admiration for brave whistleblowers might sometimes be widespread, actual emulation is scarce. Ellsberg often heard that he was inspiring, but he was always far more interested in what people would be inspired to actually do—in a world of war and on the precipice of inconceivable nuclear catastrophe.

During the last decades of his life, standard [assumptions and efforts](#) by mainstream media and the political establishment aimed to consign Ellsberg to the era of the Vietnam War. But in real time, Dan Ellsberg continually inspired so many of us

to be more than merely inspired. We loved him not only for what he had done but also for what he kept doing, for who he was, luminously, ongoing. The power of his vibrant example spurred us to become better than we were.

In a recent series of [short illustrated podcasts](#) created by filmmaker Judith Ehrlich—who co-directed the [documentary](#) "The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers"—Ellsberg speaks about the growing dangers of global apocalypse, saying that nuclear war planners "have written plans to kill billions of people," preparations that amount to "a conspiracy to commit omnicide, near omnicide, the death of everyone." And he adds: "Can humanity survive the nuclear era? We don't know. I choose to act as if we have a chance."

Norman Solomon is the national director of [www.RootsAction.org](#) and executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His next book, *War Made Invisible: How America Hides the Human Toll of Its Military Machine*, will be published in June 2023 by The New Press.

<https://www.laprogressive.com/progressive-issues/daniel-ellsberg-left-us-a-message>

calendar



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

july

MJC Science Colloquium Fall 2024 Schedule. Wednesdays 3:15 - 4:15 pm (recorded for later viewing on Science Colloquium YouTube). Science Community Center, Room 115, Modesto Junior College West Campus. Parking permit needed. Fall schedule TBA.

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science: free MJC science programs. on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 pm. Fall schedule TBA.

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

5 WED: NO VIGIL THIS MONTH

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

16 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society present *The Godfather, Part II*. 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/the-godfather-part-ii-072023/>

28 FRI: Planting Our Future, **Climate Justice Youth Summit**. The Weave Center, 820 H. St., Modesto. 10 am to 4:30 pm. Info: see p. 5, this issue.

28 FRI: **5th Annual Kids Connect**, Modesto Junior College, 4 to 7 pm. Info: see p.2, this issue.

august

2 WED: NO VIGIL THIS MONTH

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

6 SUN: **Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck**, Southeast corner, Graceada Park, 6:00 pm. We will remember Daniel Ellsberg and others who stood against nuclear weapons. Bring food and drinks to share. Bring your own table service and a lawn chair.

20 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society present *King Kong* (1933). 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/king-kong-082023/>

LOOKING AHEAD

Harvest Gathering this Fall.

ONGOING

Great Valley Museum of Natural History: Classes for children. Museum exhibits and store open Tues. to Fri., 9 am to 4:30 pm. Info: 575-6196. Call for info about classes.

Mistlin Gallery: Exhibits by local artists; home of the Stanislaus Arts Council. Visit stanislausarts.org for schedule and information. Open Tues. - Sat.

A.R.T.S. Educational Resource Center: All things recycled free arts materials for teachers, scout leaders, childcare, artists for their projects. Open M - F 8 to 4:30, 917 Oakdale Rd. Modesto, Media Center behind Ross Store. Volunteers needed. Info: 567-4516.

Central Valley Democratic Club. Monthly meetings. Zoom. Contact jean.cvdc@gmail.com for information.

Childrens Story Hours Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, Wiggle Worms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age-appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Preschool StoryTime, Cuentos en español. Times vary. Info: http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtm

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. Visit <https://www.habitat.org/ca/modesto/stanislaus-county-hfh>

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

D&D Champions Group, Noon. Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County meets in person and on Zoom every Sunday at 10:30 am at 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Info: 209-788-3720; www.stanuu.org

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

Unity of Modesto meets in person every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. at 2467 Veneman, Modesto. Information: 209-578-5433

MONDAYS

Queer Cuts, last Monday of the month, 10 a.m., Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto, 209-408-8848.

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter meets on the second Mondays at 7:00 pm at 2201 Morill Rd., Riverbank. 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.

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.

TUESDAYS

Women's Support Group for Women 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+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto (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@mopride.org, 209-284-0999.

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

NAACP Meeting. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; For ZOOM link, visit <https://www.naacpmolestostanislaus.org/> 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.

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), 4:30-5:30 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.

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 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@gaycentralvalley.org – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

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

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

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

THURSDAYS

LGBTQ+ Senior (age +55) Coffee Club Every Thursday @ 1 pm. Weekly social group to provide connectedness and community inclusion for LGBTQ+ Senior Citizens. Refreshments, snacks provided. Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

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.

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

3rd Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, art galleries open – take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 529-3369, 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 Thursday, Cafe Amore, 3025 McHenry Ave, Suite S., Modesto, 8 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

FRIDAYS

Trans Support Group, 1 pm, Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

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. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mej3gD0ZD40&list=LLB8YI9zZg660qHCXGoC6ojQ&index=1>

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, yamilstv@hotmail.com

SATURDAY

First and Third Saturdays - **Gay Men's Group**, 1 pm. Positive Support Group for folks living with HIV, 12 pm. All at Central California LGBTQ+ Rainbow Resource Center, 1202 H St., Suite C, 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, 11 am to 12:00 pm, Gallo Center for the Arts, 10th & I 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

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.