



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

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Why Juneteenth Matters For White People, Too

By **TIM WISE**

We should talk about Juneteenth while we still can.

I say this only half in jest. As reactionary forces advocate restricting what schools can teach about the history of racism in America, one can imagine they may seek to extinguish all honest conversation about such a day as this.

After all, to commemorate Juneteenth—June 19, 1865, the day enslaved persons in Texas first learned they were free, two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation—requires us to know first about the system of enslavement whose ending it celebrates. That means confronting the truth that this nation's promises of liberty were never intended for everyone. "All lives" had not mattered for a long time because Black lives were considered outside the circle of "all."

Too often, this is still the case. So although we celebrate literal emancipation on Juneteenth, a larger freedom from economic inequality and police brutality, among other things, still awaits the descendants of those released from bondage six generations ago.

The liberation of Black people is the only hope for our own.

But the incompleteness of the struggle does not diminish the importance of partial victories. We should celebrate these, not to partake in a premature victory lap or use "progress" as a way to paper over ongoing injustices, but to pay tribute to those who set us on the path to making the nation's reality comport with its rhetoric. Juneteenth could never have happened without the brave rebellions of the enslaved, the moral force of the abolitionist movement, and the Black troops whose infusion into the ranks of the

Union army helped turn the tide of the Civil War.

Although the importance of celebrating Juneteenth might be evident to Black folks, it should be every bit as important to those of us who are White because the liberation of Black people is the only hope for our own. The literal chains that bound Black bodies always, metaphorically, bound us as well: to a mindset of human inequality, the perpetuation of unspeakable horror, and the numbing of one's conscience necessary to make that horror acceptable.

Scientists are now beginning to speak of the intergenerational transmission of trauma among oppressed peoples, as well they should. But I also wonder about the intergenerational transmission of moral anesthesia among those who descend from oppressors. Surely that too can be inherited as a legacy, much as enslaved bodies themselves once were.

Because reading the 1844 will of my four-times great-grandfather, Samuel McLean, makes the cost of desensitization all too clear. To wit:

The same ethical novocaine that made possible human trafficking makes probable our indifference to systemic suffering today.

"I give and bequeath unto my loving wife, Elizabeth, my Negro woman named Dicey... and all my household and kitchen furniture, wagons, horses, cattle, hogs, sheep and stock of every kind except as may be necessary to defray the expense of the first item above."

To speak of a Black woman in the same category as furniture and livestock and to think nothing of leaving all equally to one's heirs is undoubtedly a kind of bondage, no? White supremacy's most horrific iteration—chattel slavery—destroyed Black bodies as it confined the White soul. So too did

segregation require moral sequestration among its beneficiaries. And the same ethical novocaine that made possible human trafficking makes probable our indifference to systemic suffering today.

By embracing the liberation struggle and each of its signal events, of which Juneteenth is one, Whites can begin to reconnect with that humanity whose forfeiture was the price of our ticket.

How we commemorate is less important than the fact of commemoration itself. We must speak with our children about the cost paid by Black people for the national bounty we enjoy, about the bill that has come due for that history, and how we intend to make payment on that bill, materially, and by linking to the tradition of White allyship and antiracist solidarity. No, it is not a long enough tradition, to be sure; but it is there for the joining, there to teach us a different way of living in this skin.

We must commemorate Juneteenth—a day of deliverance from one form of racist evil—by recommitting to a fuller liberation that can deliver the nation from more subtle forms. This comes not from a place of guilt but one of responsibility. We are not guilty for the world as we find it, but we have found it all the same. And if that world has marginalized some as it has elevated others—in this case, ourselves—responsibility requires us to say "enough." And to celebrate those steps on the road to something better.

TIM WISE is an antiracism educator and author of nine books, including the memoir *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* (Soft Skull/Counterpoint) and his latest, *Dispatches from the Race War* (City Lights).

From *Yes Magazine*

A Buddhist Cop's Approach to Justice

By **CHERI MAPLES, JULY 27, 2017**

Cheri Maples, a student of Thich Nhat Hanh and former police officer, addresses the U.S.'s crisis in policing and how a Buddhist outlook could help foster more positive relations between citizens and police.

A cop meets Thich Nhat Hanh

I became serious about developing a consistent mindfulness practice when I attended my first retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh (known affectionately as "Thay"), in 1991, seven years into my twenty-year police career.

I had quite a chip on my shoulder, then, built on the anger formed by my experiences, including those as a police officer. At the retreat, I had extreme doubts that Thay's teachings could be incorporated into the life and work of a cop. And I was sure that if anyone at the retreat found out I was a cop, I would be judged.

Thay convinced me that part of the skill set of a police officer was the ability to employ both the gentle compassion of understanding and the fierce compassion of setting boundaries to protect others, including using force to intervene if people were physically harming one another. For a police officer, wisdom is being able to discern when gentle compassion is called for and when fierce compassion is called for.

Thay directed me to focus on my intention. I found it was possible to start any call or street interaction with a commitment to non-aggression and preventing harm.

I know it is possible to aspire to be kind and

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If you do not have Adobe Reader, download it free from <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>

Modesto needs a Police Review Commission with an Independent Police Auditor

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

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

Supported by the following groups: Modesto/Stanslaus NAACP, ACLU Stanislaus, Latino Community Roundtable, North Valley Labor Federation, Modesto Peace/Life Center, Faith in the Valley, Democratic Women's Club of Stanislaus, Valley Improvement Projects, Indivisible Stanislaus, Turlock Black Lives Matter Movement, Stanislaus & Tuolumne Central Labor Council, United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME 3930, Advocates for Justice, DSA Stanislaus, Modesto Church of the Brethren.

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

KCBP Community Radio Seeks Volunteers

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

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

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

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



The Stanislaus Retired Teachers Foundation announces 2020-2021 scholarship recipients

Sarah Selfaison and Vanessa Orozco both received \$2000 to continue their education in the California State University Stanislaus teacher credentialing program. A third recipient, Bethany Hewitt Mendes, received \$3000 from the California Retired Teachers Association.

The Stanislaus Retired Teachers Foundation (CalRTA) awards scholarships each year to students enrolled at California State University Stanislaus. These students are seeking a teaching credential through the education department.

While enrolled in the credential program students are committed to a full year of preparation and training to become a classroom teacher. Due to the required student teaching hours and preparation, students are unable to hold a part-time job. Many students must take out loans to complete this part of their educational training.

The Stanislaus Retired Teachers Foundation is committed to raising funds for our future teachers of Stanislaus County.



Left to right: Lori Kramer, CalRTA president, Bethany Hewitt Mendes, Sarah Selfaison, Raquel Flores, Stanislaus Retired Teacher Foundation chairperson.

Kids! Host A PM 2.5 Monitor at Your School!

From the Stanislaus Community Air Monitoring Project (SCAMP) and the Valley Improvement Project

Get Accurate Air Quality Readings

In Stanislaus County, the San Joaquin Air Resource Board only has two monitors: one downtown Modesto and one downtown Turlock. If your campus is away from these two monitors, you would benefit from hosting your own.

What is PM2.5?

Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) are very small particles that are able to bypass the nose and throat and penetrate deep into the lungs. Some may even enter the circulatory system.

They are known to trigger or worsen chronic diseases such as asthma, heart attack, bronchitis and other respiratory problems.

Project

Commitments: this opportunity is free, requires low maintenance and is easy to



STANISLAUS COMMUNITY AIR MONITORING PROJECT (SCAMP)
HOST A PM2.5 MONITOR AT YOUR SCHOOL



This is a free program!



install.

You will need:

An outlet to plug it in

A safe location to mount

Wi-Fi for real-time information on www.SJVAIR.com. We ask that your school make a two-year commitment.

ACTION: to participate or for more information, contact us at: valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com or call 209-589-9277.

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Homeless: The Punishing Effects of Market Forces

By **ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen**

For years, the dominant explanations for homelessness have been drugs and choice. Whenever the topic of homelessness arose, people were quick to say, “It’s the drugs.” And if they didn’t rant about drugs and needles, the alternative was to argue that homelessness was a “choice” people made to avoid the responsibilities of self-sufficiency.

Occasionally, someone would point out that doing away with mental institutions and social services might have had something to do with the rise in homeless numbers, especially since studies show consistently that between thirty and forty percent of homeless people are mentally ill.

More recently, rising rents have been recognized as driving factors in the increase of homelessness. Almost no one, however, has really put together the intricate mosaic of pieces of the American economy that have contributed not just to a rise in homelessness but to widespread poverty in general.

Consider, for example, that as productivity of goods and services rose over the last forty years, wages for middle-income workers declined relative to inflation. The decline wasn’t trivial:

According to the Economic Policy Institute, “Between 1979 and 2017, the compensation of median workers trailed economywide (net) productivity growth by roughly 43%, leading to rising inequality.”

In short, even as people worked harder and produced more, their wages declined.

As middle-income wages declined, housing costs rose. In fact, “Median home prices increased 121 percent nationwide since 1960, but median household income only increased 29 percent.”

But even as these inexorable economic forces wrought increasing hardship on America’s wage earners, rising numbers of people living in poverty and experiencing homelessness were attributed to drugs, a decline in family values, and bad “choices.”

Rising housing costs and rents have been especially hard on wage earners in west coast regions like the Bay Area and Los Angeles County, where income to housing-cost ratios are among the highest in the nation. One consequence has been an outflow of residents to distant cities and increased pressure on housing supplies.

Cities like Modesto and Manteca in the northern San Joaquin Valley have become “bedroom communities” for Bay Area commuters whose incomes dwarf those of typical

Valley workers. The consequent upward pressure on housing costs has resulted in rising numbers of eviction notices for renters whose monthly incomes couldn’t sustain even a modest rent increase.

One such former renter is Theresa Carr. At 71, Carr has custody of two great-grandchildren, aged eight and nine. She and the children are currently living in a motor home, parked on a street in Modesto. On a fixed income from Social Security, Carr’s attempts to find an affordable rental keep foundering on forty- and fifty-dollar application fees.

“They take your application, charge you forty- or fifty-dollars, and then you never hear from them,” says Theresa Carr. “They say they’ll send you an email and they never do.”

Carr has been looking for a place to live since October of last year, when rent for the apartment she’d been in for 10 years went up by \$150 a month. In an increasingly common

scenario, the property owner died and his heirs decided to revise agreements with renters, included retroactive increases in security deposits.

“I paid the rent every month,” said Carr last week. “I never missed a payment. Then I found an eviction notice posted outside my rental for everyone to see.”

“Not everyone is out here because of drugs,” said Carr, gazing at homeless people in a park in west Modesto. “There are lots of different reasons people become homeless.”

Not far from that same park, Irene Hopper-Gomez has a month to move from her studio rental, which was sold to new owners. Before becoming disabled and receiving disability income, Hopper-Gomez worked for Stanislaus County.

“It’s outrageous,” says Hopper-Gomez. “For one room with kitchen and bathroom, it’s \$800 to \$1200 a month, if you can find one.”



Theresa Carr



Brigett Moore

In fact, average rent in Modesto rose 10% over the last year and is now \$1407 a month. Average apartment size is 785 square feet.

Brigett Moore, another Modesto resident who was recently served with eviction notices, considers herself fortunate to have found a rental only a couple of weeks before facing homelessness. Moore is a former drug user who was homeless and went through rehabilitation programs in Stanislaus County, returned to the workplace, then underwent surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome last fall.

“Stanislaus County was always there for me,” she said last week of people in her rehabilitation programs. “They never let me down.”

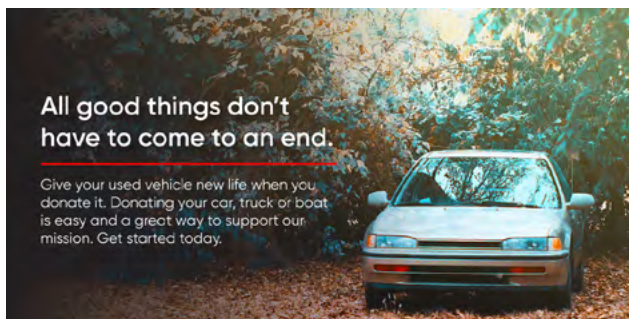
Once back in the workplace, Moore raised her credit score almost two-hundred points. She is frugal and thrifty and managed to save enough money to pull her through the hard times brought on by missing work because of

continued page 11

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.

Be informed!

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

Division IV Peace Essay Contest Winner

Peace to Homeless

Jedidiah Chen

Hart Ransom Acad. Charter, Teacher: Susan Janis

"It takes a society to combat homelessness, and a strong nation to fight poverty."

— Wayne Chirisa

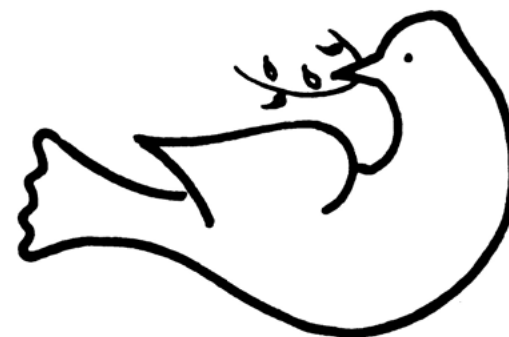
There are about 1.6 billion people homeless in the world. There are approximately 600,000 homeless in the United States. Furthermore, Modesto has about 1,400 homeless people. Local Rescue gives the homeless the supplies that they need.

The homeless people in the United States were in a desperate need of aid before the pandemic, but now the situation is worse. Many stores and restaurants are closing which causes people to lose their jobs and become homeless. According to a new study by a Columbia University professor, both big and small businesses have had to let employees go "leaving millions of Americans out of work." The study also predicted that homelessness in the United States could increase "as much as 45% in a year." (Oreskes) During the pandemic, homeless people have greater needs than the general population. Their needs include masks, food, socks, personal hygiene items, shelter and compassion. It is so easy

to get sick when living outdoors, especially now, without a mask on during this pandemic. People who experience homelessness, age faster and have a greater chance of dying. (State of Homelessness).

Local Rescue, a department of CrossPoint Community Church, is the organization that provides for the needs of the homeless in the Modesto area. Through their program called Monday Night Church, they provide free hot meals every Monday for 200 people in need. The church members donate time, money, and food to help support this program. Kristine Kauffman, the director, says that there is a team that "shops, prepares, and cooks." There are also others who "come to serve the meals." It takes the team about eleven hours a week working together to serve the meal. In addition, they partner with the Hope Shower Shuttle on Monday afternoons to provide portable showering buses for the homeless. Mrs. Kauffman said that in addition to food, "We try to assist in directing them to housing programs, addiction recovery programs, food banks, and shelters. We have developed connections in our community in all these areas so we can usually help them get to the next step." Due to Covid-19, Ms. Kauffman said, "We are no longer able to serve meals inside the building, but we have adjusted to serving them to go."

Local Rescue's work is vital because the homeless



population is increasing along with their needs. It is important to care about this impoverished population and provide for their necessities. The homeless cannot afford, and often do not have the ability, to provide for their own basic needs to survive. Local Rescue bridges this gap.

This organization promotes peace because they provide food and the love of God at this time when people struggle to live during the pandemic. Homeless people could get sick and could die because they are hungry. I am familiar with this organization because I helped to collect food with my friends for them to give to the homeless. My family distributes masks and food to the homeless every Monday. The homeless have many needs and Local Rescue provides comfort in these hard times.

Note: references will be found in the essay on Weebly at peaceessaycontest.weebly.com

Green Tips for a Green Planet - Free curbside recycling is back after many decades!

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

United Cerebral Palsy of Stanislaus County is truly a "Good Deed" employer through its Go Green with UCP program.

Go Green not only provides employment training and opportunities for people with disabilities, but helps divert waste from landfills, as well as a cost-effective recycling solution for Stanislaus County businesses and residents.

The program accepts CA CRV Aluminum Cans, CA CRV plastic beverage containers, and all forms of CA CRV and non-CRV bottles and other forms of glass.

For those looking for CRV recycling only, there are numerous locations in the greater Stanislaus County region. You can find the closest place to your own address by visiting BottlesAndCans.com or calling 1-800-RECYCLE.

Modesto Peace/Life Center supporter Keith Highiet tells us Modesto Junk Company is no longer participating in the California Refund Value (CRV) program. The temporary change happened in March 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; the Company made the change permanent later in the Fall last year. Modesto Junk Co. turned 100 years old in 2020 and continues to be open to the public for the recycling of scrap metals, e-waste, lead-acid batteries, and cardboard, at its same location on 9th Street.

Though Go Green with UCP is not a buy-back recycling

program, its benefits far outweigh the few pennies buy-back programs return, since it provides individuals with disabilities a similar type of training like they would learn in other recycling centers and helps prepare them for integrated employment in the community. Some donations may be eligible for tax deductions. Go Green advises individuals to contact a tax professional for further information.

Go Green is a Certified Community Service Program through Cal Recycle, the State of California's Beverage Container Certification and Registration Branch, and a winner of the City of Modesto's Business Recycling Award from 2012 to 2020.

ACTION: To find out if Go Green picks up in your area and to get started, go to: <http://www.ucpstan.org> and follow the link to sign up for service.



The Great South Texas Birding Adventure

WHEN: Friday, July 9, 2021, 7:00 P.M.

HOW: By ZOOM*

On a very early Monday morning on April 26, 2021, three intrepid birders from California's Central Valley set out to travel to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in search of BIRDS. By the time they re-turned nine days later, a total of 206 life Texas birds would be checked off their combined eBird totals. Join

Jim Gain as he shares the adventures that he, Rich Brown, and Jim Rowth experienced along the Lower Rio Grande River, Texas.

Jim Gain has been a Stanislaus Audubon Society Board Member since 1988. He is serving as Website Manager, Stanislaus Birds Administrator, eBird Reviewer, and Stanislaus Bird Records Commit-tee member. Until recently, Jim was a teacher and administrator with Modesto City Schools. He taught Biology, Earth Science and Spanish for 20 years before serving as the District's Instructional Technology Supervisor for the past 14 years.

***Audubon Zoom Programs:** Note: the invitations to these online events will be sent to sasfieldtrips@yahoo.com both 48 hours before the program, and again on the day of the event. If you are not on this email group and wish to be included, send an email request to that address, or contact Ralph Baker, sasfieldtrips@yahoo.com

After Iraq War Authorization Repealed, Calls Grow to 'Do the 2001 AUMF Next'

"We must keep up our fight to repeal the 2001 AUMF so that no future president has the unilateral power to plunge us into endless wars," said Rep. Barbara Lee.

By BRETT WILKINS, STAFF WRITER

As the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday easily passed a bill by Rep. Barbara Lee to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, peace advocates called on Congress to enact similar legislation to end the 2001 AUMF upon which the open-ended so-called Global War on Terror has been waged for nearly 20 years.

Appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press Daily" on Thursday, Lee (D-Calif.), who was the only member of Congress to vote against the post-9/11 AUMF (pdf)—passed one week after the September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on the United States—told host Chuck Todd that H.R. 256, her bill repealing the 2002 AUMF that passed by a bipartisan vote of 268-161, "is an important step toward repealing the 2001 authorization."

"We must keep up our fight to repeal the 2001 AUMF so that no future president has the unilateral power to plunge us into endless wars," Lee said separately ahead of Thursday's House vote.

Rep. Katie Porter (D-Calif.) also called to repeal the 2001 AUMF, tweeting Thursday that "the power to declare war belongs to Congress because we are the branch most accountable to the people."

"Today, the House voted to repeal the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which has enabled endless war in Iraq," Porter added. "Let's do the 2001 AUMF next."

The anti-war group Peaceful Tomorrows, founded by relatives of 9/11 victims, published a statement Thursday calling for a repeal of the 2001 authorization.

"It has been almost two decades since the deaths of our loved ones, and for the entirety of that time, the U.S. has been at war," the group tweeted. "These wars have not brought justice for the crimes of 9/11. Instead, they have caused untold suffering and deaths among innocent civilians who bore no responsibility for 9/11. Rather than keeping Americans and other people throughout the world safer, these wars have inflamed and provoked violence."

Peaceful Tomorrows noted that while the 2001 AUMF gave then-President George W. Bush "the authority to use force against those responsible for the 9/11 attacks," the law "has been used by the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations to authorize the use of force in 19 countries, against groups that did not even exist in 2001, and have no connection to the attacks."

"To end the forever wars and end this chapter in American history, Congress must sunset the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force," the group said.

In 2001, Lee presciently warned that the AUMF would allow presidents to wage war "anywhere, in any country, without regard to our nation's long-term foreign policy, economic, and national security interests, and without time limit."

"That was a blank check; it was passed right after the horrific attacks of 9/11, it was 60 words, and it just authorized the use of force forever," Lee told Todd of the 2001 authorization. "So it set the stage for perpetual war."

The U.S.-led anti-terror war—which includes the Afghanistan War, the longest in U.S. history—continues to this day. At least 800,000 Afghan, Iraqi, Libyan, Pakistani, Somali, Syrian, and Yemeni people, as well as thousands of U.S. and allied troops, have died, at a cost exceeding \$6.4 trillion, according to the Costs of War Project at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

Stephanie Savell, co-director of the Costs of War Project,

told *Esquire* in an article published Wednesday that the 2001 AUMF is even more important than the 2002 authorization because it "grants the president broad authority to extend the war wherever and however he pleases."

Esquire politics editor Jack Holmes wrote:

The move to repeal the 2002 AUMF is welcome, particularly because, as the Trump administration demonstrated, it can also be exploited by the executive to justify unilateral decisions of war and peace. But if [Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York] is serious about reclaiming the war powers of Congress—and ending our endless wars—then the 2001 AUMF will have to go, too.

The Biden White House, like every administration, is fused to the extended military and intelligence apparatus... When the smoke clears, there are always new enemies. More bombs to drop, and give to our friends to drop. Eventually, this has to stop. It would help if the legislative branch, and its many individual members who have absolved themselves of responsibility for these endless conflicts by ensuring they never have to go on the record about them, would take some of that responsibility back.

On the House floor ahead of Thursday's vote, Lee cited some of the "lies and misinformation" disseminated by the Bush administration in its attempt to sell the Iraq War to a largely skeptical American public. And while it was not based on as many outright lies as the Iraq War, the Bush administration nevertheless brushed off multiple opportunities to avoid a protracted war in Afghanistan.

In the weeks following 9/11, the Taliban—whose members were previously supported by the U.S. government and courted by American business interests despite their human rights crimes—offered first to try al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and then to turn him over to the United States as Bush launched the invasion of Afghanistan.

In April, President Joe Biden announced he plans to withdraw all regular American combat troops from Afghanistan by this year's anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks. According to the Costs of War Project, the nearly 20-year war has claimed an estimated 241,000 lives and cost the U.S. \$2.26 trillion.

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Reconnecting: First Steps for the Formerly Incarcerated

Michael Baldwin Senior is a Modesto Community Advocate and Paralegal. This article is the second in a series on the challenges faced by current and formerly incarcerated individuals in their quest to successfully reenter society. It was written in collaboration with Tom Portwood.

By MICHAEL BALDWIN, SENIOR

April 7, 2021 is a day I'll never forget because just as I was getting out of bed, one of my former parole agents called me and gave me the big news I had been anxiously awaiting – that I had been granted early release from my parole by a full three years.

Let me tell you, when I got off the phone that morning, I couldn't contain myself. I rushed over to the parole office for confirmation. As I drove away – I stopped my car, jumped out, and ran down the street for a bit, screaming out of sheer joy! Yes, freedom is a precious thing, and only those who have lost it completely, as I did, or never experienced it, can fully appreciate how liberating it can be to regain it, or taste it for the first time.

For me, it was also a moment of reflection, and I reminded myself that it was only another day in the journey that I started on all those years before in one California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) prison after another – that quest to reclaim my life and be of service to my fellow inmates and the larger community was about to go to the next level, and on every level there will be a new devil. Something to test my stamina and endurance – and make me dig deeper.

In the first article in this series, I spoke of the need to overhaul the rehabilitation programs within the CDCR system, that more often than not it's the inmate population that's providing the most viable rehabilitation services, that a proactive inmate can make a big difference by enrolling

in a worthwhile regimen of programs that can set him on the path to self-awareness and reform. That's the starting point.

The next challenge is preparing for the parole board. That process often takes years and involves further soul-searching and finding insight into and remorse for his crimes and attaining a level of real

accountability. The commissioners usually want you to have some level of vocational skill, and a relapse prevention plan, which addresses how you are going to make sure that you don't fall into the same bad behavior or back onto a drug. But once you've been granted parole, that's when the real work begins. Now you're on your own, maybe for the first time in fifteen or twenty years. And that's scary.

Having some support – from your own family or friends or through a transitional program – as soon as you walk out the prison gates, is critical. It's not something that everyone always has in place but having some type of support before you leave can pave the way for your optimum success. If you don't have that support, it's as if you've been thrown out

into a foreign land and you don't speak the language.

That first day can be shocking and exhilarating all at the same time. Little everyday things like buying bubblegum or walking into a Walmart and seeing all those people, can trigger powerful emotions. Suddenly, it can seem like too many people, too many options, too much going on.

So, this is when the formerly incarcerated are at their most vulnerable: those first 24 hours, especially if they haven't a support system. The two hundred dollars CDCR gives them on their way out won't last long if they haven't a plan and even with a plan, two hundred dollars will not provide much. Without a plan or some sort of support, former inmates can find themselves living on the streets fairly quickly, and when you're on the streets – as they say, “when in Rome do as the Romans do.” Returning to custody can be very easy in those circumstances.

Meeting with your parole agent and beginning to build a constructive relationship is another top priority, of course, and typically occurs between 48 and 72 hours after release. Parole agents are only human, and there are definitely some who are not as stellar as others. But there are many phenomenal agents, and they want to see you succeed. They will work hard, but not harder, than you to get you to that success. I was blessed to have six extraordinary men who were my parole agents including one woman as well; and each one of them has been outstanding in helping me to get to the place where I am today as an individual.

Some formerly incarcerated individuals may have a strong family network and they may not require a transitional program, but I personally believe that even if you have a strong family network, a transitional program is a healthy way to transition successfully out of prison, especially if you have served more than fifteen to twenty years. There are some aspects of prison that you have to shed (internally and in some behaviors) that may be best let go of away from the family unit.

There are quite a few transitional housing programs for parolees but not enough. Also, some of them are located in areas that many of us may not want to parole into. We've been there, done that, and we don't want to go back to that type of environment. If at all possible, you want to carefully pick the area you would prefer to parole into, though not everyone has that option. Housing, generally, is a major challenge, not just for the formerly incarcerated but for all of us. Rent Café reports that rentals in Modesto now average \$1,414. <https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/ca/modesto/>

The first 30 days is the hardest part, and then, beyond that, it begins to smooth out in most cases.



Having some support – from your own family or friends or through a transitional program – as soon as you walk out the prison gates, is critical.

to have a computer, and many of those paroling may not know how to use a computer. That type of information or training is going to have to come from their social support network, or from a transitional program. I usually tell my friends to frequent AA and NA meetings immediately. During the pandemic, those meetings were available only virtually but perhaps now that will gradually change. I encourage the formerly incarcerated to frequent these meetings and to stand up and say your name and say where you've been and talk about your circumstances. Most people in recovery are looking for an opportunity to serve, to give a hand up to somebody. By telling people about your story, you're exposing yourself to the help that's available at those meetings.

The criminal elements that former convicts had associated with earlier are often still out there, sometimes with new tricks up their sleeves. They've found other ways to hustle because they always do. For myself, I haven't had to wrestle with that a whole lot, but this is another barrier that's frequently being thrown in the face of the new parolee. That pressure can show up immediately – especially if you find yourself struggling with finances. I've been able to push away all the offers just by staying true to who I am, and that's what I encourage all my friends to do – to just remember who you are now and what's at risk should you relapse. They left the light on for you in CDCR so you can't forget what it felt like to be in that cell and how you were willing to do whatever it took to be free. Now the rubber meets the road!

Reintegration back into the family can be a struggle, too; and of all the challenges faced by the formerly incarcerated



Employer misclassification of workers as independent contractors deprives millions of their rights

From the Economic Policy Institute

A new EPI report explores the widespread problem of employer misclassification of workers as independent contractors and analyzes California's recent law to fight employer misclassification in the context of current policy debates.

Employer misclassification affects millions of workers and costs government agencies billions of dollars each year. Misclassified workers are deprived of rights and protections under federal and state labor and employment laws, including wage and hour protections, anti-discrimination protections, workers' compensation, unemployment benefits, and the right to organize.

To combat employer misclassification, many states—including California in 2019—have adopted what is known as the ABC test, a strong, protective test for determining employee status. Under the ABC test, workers are only classified as independent contractors where an employer demonstrates that workers a) are free from control and direction by the hiring company; b) perform work outside the usual course of business of the hiring entity; and c) are independently established in that trade, occupation, or business.

As the report explains, up to 1 million California workers stand to directly benefit from the law that established the ABC test, known as Assembly Bill (AB) 5. Unfortunately, due to a corporate-funded ballot initiative, ride-share drivers and delivery drivers who work for app-based companies like Uber, Lyft, and Instacart are now exempted from AB5. The continuing efforts by platform companies and others to avoid the reach of AB5 have put enormous pressure on companies that continue to treat workers as employees.

"The national conversation around employer misclassification of workers lately has focused on platform-based companies like Uber and Lyft, but it's important to note that employer misclassification hurts millions of workers economywide, including construction workers, janitors, truck drivers, and retail and hospitality workers. Like gig workers, these workers need strong legal protections to ensure they get the rights, benefits, and protections they are due," said Lynn Rhinehart, co-author of the report and senior fellow at EPI.

The report authors recommend that federal and state



policymakers adopt the ABC test in their labor and employment laws to ensure workers are not misclassified and are covered by important workplace rights and protections. This includes passing the federal Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act—which the U.S. House passed earlier this year—to establish the ABC test for purposes of organizing and collective bargaining rights.

"A strong, protective legal test for establishing employee status is critically important to combat employer misclassification of workers," said Celine McNicholas, co-author of the report and director of government affairs and labor counsel at EPI. "Policymakers must pass the PRO Act to prevent employer misclassification—and accompany it with strong enforcement and full funding of enforcement agencies."

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. Visit the EPI Data Library at <https://www.epi.org/data/>

A Buddhist Cop's Approach to Justice

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compassionate as a police officer, and that, that way, the job is safer and more fulfilling. Back at work after my first retreat, I couldn't understand why everybody seemed to have gotten kinder in my absence — including the people I was arresting.

The crisis in policing today

It pains me to see the unnecessary use of force, especially deadly force, and racism that we've been seeing taking place in the police profession. The good news is that the extent of it is finally being uncovered.

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This crisis in policing has to do with unnecessary use of force, racial profiling, militarization of police departments, lack of trust between communities and police departments, lack of strategies to address trauma and emotional health of police officers, unconscious and unspoken organizational agreements in police culture, and a lack of informal safety nets for people across the country.

It's often hard for us to recognize that our hearts may have stopped quivering in response to the suffering of others.

In our police departments, we hear loud internal cries that we are losing the "war." In the '80s and '90s, it was the War on Drugs. Since 9/11, it's been the War on Terrorism. The problem is that we are not at war. We are protecting and serving our neighbors and fellow citizens. (Of course, police officers often see people at their worst. People generally don't call us when things are going well. When is the last time you were happy to see one of us in your rearview mirror or at your house?)

Many of the tragedies now being uncovered in policing are the result of the fact that as police officers we simply cannot see what is actually in front of us — a suffering human being in need of help.

Without the tools of mindful awareness, cynicism and an armored heart are almost an unavoidable effect of a police officer's job. It's often hard for us to recognize, admit, or remember that our hearts may have stopped quivering in response to the suffering of others.

What Buddhism offers police officers

As a police officer, I found Buddhism gave me an ethical framework that offered protection. It also gave me the ability to be a better curator of my own "museum of suffering," and to do the job with a more open and tender heart.

The most frequent question I got asked as a Buddhist cop was, "How can you do this kind of work?"

It was Thay who put this question to rest for me. First, he asked me, "Who else would we want to carry a gun besides somebody who will do it mindfully?" Then he said that carrying a gun can be an act of love if done with understanding and compassion.

Once I was able to view my work through the lens of kindness and compassion, I rarely regretted any action that I took. I am convinced that when a police officer starts with a commitment to non-aggression and preventing harm, the gun and badge become symbols of skillful means, rather than symbols of authority and power.

How the community can help

It's lonely out there. Those of us committed to nonviolence who are working in professions that sometimes demand the

use of force need your support.

If we want compassionate police forces, communities must get intimately involved with their police departments. Communities need to organize and call for changes in the leadership, hiring, use of force policies, and training practices of their local police departments. And they need to do so with awareness, right speech, understanding of a police officer's job, and compassion.

It's also important to remember that police officers need support in seeing with eyes of compassion. Without our encouragement, a police officer's initial yearning to alleviate suffering will become dormant.

The compassion that enables us to be with the families of the victims in these tragedies comes relatively easily to most of us. The compassion required to be with the officer and the family of the officer who pulled the trigger is much more challenging.

Cornel West has said, "Justice is what love looks like in public." We can only work for justice from a deep understanding of our interdependence with and our caring for each other.

Six questions we all have to ask ourselves

Creating the justice that leads to public safety is a shared responsibility between a community and its police department. Here are six questions to help us examine deeply with inquiry and action:

1. WHY IS RACIAL PROFILING HAPPENING?

This is not just a question for police officers but for all of us. How do we become more aware of the conscious

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Join the Modesto Peace/Life Center's **Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck** at Legion Park, Modesto on **Friday, August 6th at 6:00 PM**. Bring food, drinks to share as we converse and rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. Bring your own table service.

Social distancing guidelines may be followed. Please bring a mask and wear it if unvaccinated.

The evening will conclude with a candlelight vigil on the banks of the Tuolumne River.

Reconnecting

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this'll be the one that may take the most time and cause the greatest heartache.

Apologizing is a very important part of the 12-step process; and even outside of the family dynamic, it's an important part of transitioning back into society. I believe accountability is what propels us in our lives. Taking that ownership for my past mistakes has allowed my family to engage with me. I encourage my friends to make amends. A friend of mine was recently very upset because his son wouldn't let go of his anger toward him. And I told him, "Hey, you can't control how that's going to come out. Your responsibility is to simply leave the bridge intact so when that family member needs to cross back over the bridge it's still there. You need to realize that he's just hurt, and right beneath that hurt is probably deep sadness, and right underneath that is love. Your responsibility is just to hold space for him – to let him vent any way he can."

And leaving that bridge intact is the key – not just to rebuilding relationships within the family, but in just about every other aspect of a formerly incarcerated individual's life. I know, because I continue to live that life myself. I'm here in the community for those who want to talk about what's going on with them. I can be reached at Legacy Alliance Outreach, or visit my website: www.mabsenior.com; michael@legacyallianceoutreach.org



Look for
CONNECTIONS
online at:
<http://stanislausconnections.org/>

Remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Join Us on August 6 and 9

From Tri-Valley CARES

The U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki seventy-six years ago on August 6 and 9, 1945. The explosions created shadows where people had been. On many levels nuclear shadows have been with us each day since, and are with us today.

On August 6 and 9, 2021, Tri-Valley CAREs and a coalition of Bay Area peace and justice groups will commemorate the past and act to change the future.

We will stand with Hibakusha (A-bomb survivors) to say "never again" to nuclear annihilation. And we will dedicate ourselves to the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

This year's event will span both anniversary dates; there will be a short program at 9 AM on August 6 and a longer one at 9 AM on August 9 (all times local). This year's commemoration will be a "hybrid" event, featuring a virtual rally with music and speakers and a limited in-person program at Livermore Lab, one of two places where the U.S. designs all of its nuclear weapons.

Planning for these August peace events is ongoing. Visit our website regularly for updates. And "save the date" today. Find our initial announcement here: <http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/Save-the-Date-Aug-6-and-9-2021-FNL.pdf>

New Report Analyzes International Spending on Nuclear Weapons

From Tri-Valley CARES

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) issued a new report entitled *Complicit: 2020 Global Nuclear Weapons Spending* that outlines the \$72.6 billion spent by the nine nuclear weapons states on their nuclear weapons programs during the 2020 pandemic.

The country by country details provide a grim picture of increasing budgets to fund new generations of nuclear weapons. The report also sheds light on the numerous private weapons contractors that profit off of the nuclear weapon largess from these countries and the huge amounts these



companies spend on lobbying to keep the largess coming. This creates what the authors have deemed, "the nuclear weapons complicity cycle."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the United States spent by far the most on its nuclear arsenal in 2020. The report finds that The United States spent \$70,881 every minute of 2020 on nuclear weapons, for a total of \$37.4 Billion in 2020.

The report further points out that the nine nuclear weapons states found they had more than \$72 billion on hand for their weapons of mass destruction in 2020, \$1.4 billion more than 2019, despite the global pandemic. The report illustrates the how these governments are putting these weapons and their corporate benefactors before the needs of their people.

ICAN is a global campaign working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. ICAN is comprised of more than 600 partner organizations (Tri-Valley CAREs included) in over 100 countries. More information about ICAN can be found at www.icanw.org.

To read the Executive Summary [CLICK HERE](#). To download the Full Report [CLICK HERE](#). Para leer la información en español [HAGA CLIC AQUÍ](#).

SENIOR ADVOCACY NETWORK &
STANISLAUS COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING

NEW! HOMESHARE PROGRAM



What is HomeShare?

A NO COST program that helps match people who have a room to rent with people seeking housing!



...but is it a good fit for you?

HomeShare Benefits:

- ◆ Reduce financial stress by sharing costs
- ◆ Find companionship
- ◆ Feel safer in your home
- ◆ Optional household service exchange



Cleo Griffith: A Central Valley Poetic Mainstay

Cleo Griffith has been on the Editorial Board of *Song of the San Joaquin* for its entire eighteen-year life. She is Vice-President of the Modesto branch of the National League of American Pen Women. Widely published, she lives in Salida, CA with her cats, Amber and Neil. She has been published in *Cider Press Review*, *Homestead Review*, *Iodine*, *Main Street Rag*, *Miller's Pond*, *More Than Soil*, *More Than Sky: The Modesto Poets*, *POEM*, *the Aureorean*, *The Furnace Review*, *The Lyric*, *Time of Singing*, and others. She is a member of California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. and Ina Coolbrith Circle.



Am I Part of a Balancing Act?

When I don't sleep
does someone on the other side
of the world respond
by oversleeping,
is there some kind of balance required?

When I sleep long hours
during the day
am I repaying some absence
for time not used
in some foreign home,
are we connected
like the butterfly and the tornado,
the moon and the tides?
I am dazed, and dazzled
by the sun this bright day.
Does someone run about
with extra energy to tip the scales back?

Is there a place opposite
where someone looks at a dark moon
wonders about the universe?
What conversation could we have
if we could touch—
balancing moments--
perhaps begin
a counterculture to
right the world,
set up equalization boundaries,
systems and procedures,
there would have to be a chair
and a co-chair and committees
and that would probably end like
so many group endeavors in chaos,
which is where we are now
so where would we have risen?

I will just wonder alone, not request
the populations of the world to intervene,
their thoughts of butterflies
are probably more romantic than mine.

New Edges

Edge sounds hard – even the word,
but the edge of the sea is soft,
soothing - at low tide.

With high tide comes the sharpness,
harshness, mastery –
shapes of water and sand change,
edges blur,
water beats against itself,
pushes sand, plastic, wood,
all kinds of debris
into the shore, deposits it, rids itself
of man-made junk
but can't divest itself enough.

Miles out, where there is no edge,
piles accumulate –
plastics, cans, dead creatures,
joined together by mischievous tides,
new islands unwittingly made by man,
upon which nothing grows,
but more accumulates,
spreads,
new edges in the old tired sea.

Not Again the Hard Bell

Not again can the hard bell clang
ever the same way, not after two,
those tones that shuddered
through our hearts and broke them,
changed the tenor of metal itself,
not again can the bell sound quite the same.

Bells will ring, hard, harsh,
hearts will break yet more
but these two notices of souls in flight
were unique, future tolls fade
in anticipation next to memory
of sounds in the night, in dark and pain,
hard bells clang, we'll never forget,
though a thousand were to ring
on a single day,
not even they
can mute the pain
when two, two so close, rang through.
Not again can the hard bell clang
quite the same, never the same.



Shopping Spree

I would go to the sea
buy the mermaid's comb,
take a trip to the ocean floor,
bring live lobsters home
for pets, I would *paint* them red
but not *cook* them so,
leash-train them,
teach them to beg
or
I would go to the mountains
buy a condo in an eagle's nest,
hang with the eaglets,
follow their tests for leaving,
fly along the borders of reality,
chase a mouse or two
just for deviltry,
but not harm them.
or
I would travel into space,
gather the dust from a meteor,
bring it back, reproduce it,
make it the substance of my skyhouse
so I would have
in common with the stars
the qualities that make them
shine and twinkle.
I would do that, too, then,
wouldn't I?

Techno-Blues

My computer one-ups me
as I try to convey
my needs, my requirements,
desires, pleas,
it refuses to change,
no argument, just refuses,
will not,
does not,
obey my command.
I don't act with harshness,
or pound on the keys,
don't shake the screen
or console.
Neatly, with calmness,
I merely point with cursor
at what I would change.

It allows my meanderings
no alarm rings its chimes,
but the result is no change
none,
not the one
I requested
a MILLION TIMES now!

A simple change is all I need.
But I know,
I know,
I'll never succeed.

Listen to Local Programming, The Voice of the Valley, 95.5FM

Listen on 95.5 FM or streaming on www.kcbpradio.org
NEW PROGRAMS: AREA 5150 UFO
RADIO – Saturday night at Midnight.

Sounds Irish from County Wicklow – Saturday's, 7:00 p.m.

KeeHive – LaKiesha McDonald talks women who have overcome great odds. Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:00am

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

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

Women of the Valley with Linda Scheller and Leah Hassett – 8:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00am.



Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

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

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

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

The Ralph Nader Hour – 4:00pm Saturdays.

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

Local Music:

Modesto Area Music Show with Middagh Goodwin – Mondays 5:00pm; Fridays 9:00pm & Saturdays 6:00pm.

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

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

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

Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

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

Thom Hartmann – 2:00pm

Sojourner Truth – 4:00pm

Democracy Now! – 7:00pm.

Flashpoint Magazine – 10:00pm.

Children's Programming

Confetti Park – Saturday's 8:00am; & Sunday's 12:30pm.

The Children's Hour – Sundays 3:00pm.

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

What programming do you like or would like to hear? Contact us at programming@kcbpradio.org or call (209) 353-3066. Help put "Community" into community radio!

We can't do it without you. Please support us! Donate at <https://kcbpradio.networkforgood.com/>

Buddhist Cop's Approach to Justice

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and unconscious bias operating in our individual and organizational decision-making? How do we monitor and shift the unconscious agreements that lead to racial profiling?

2. WHAT IS THE POLICE STANDARD FOR USING DEADLY FORCE?

Police officers have great authority, including the ability to employ state-sanctioned violence, including deadly force, as they deem necessary and appropriate. The community has a right to know what the standard for deadly force is, how it is set, and how it is trained for.

Police departments across the country have chosen a very troubling standard for the use of deadly force, as outlined in the 1989 US Supreme Court case "Graham v Connor." This case provides the general legal framework and constitutional standard for assessing excessive use of force complaints under the Fourth Amendment. If a police officer cannot meet the standards delineated in this case, they are subject to either state or federal criminal prosecution.

Do we really want this lowest possible bar of conduct to be the standard for using deadly force in our community? A reverence for life includes not only asking such questions, but working to change and shift the agreements around the unnecessary use of force.

3. HOW CAN TRUST BE REESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMUNITY?

How can we build bridges to repair harm and create better understanding between members of the police department and those they protect and serve? We can find some guidance in the principles of restorative justice, which ask us to look at all harm that has occurred, recognize those who were harmed, and explore how to repair the harm.

Although forgiveness is hard, we pay a much higher price in the end by not forgiving.

In some of my own clumsy efforts, I've learned that an important part of the restorative process is respecting peoples' needs and timetables for grieving. However, it is also

important to recognize that, although forgiveness is hard, we pay a much higher price in the end by not forgiving.

The most important requirement for anybody involved in the hard work required to move forward in the wake of these tragedies is the intention to do no further harm. How do we foster and honor such intentions in ourselves, police officers, and community members? What is required for police officers and community members to step out of their fear, reactivity, aggression, and resistance?

4. HOW CAN COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSES BE SET UP IN RESPONSE TO PROBLEMS?

How can we build informal safety nets? How can we build neighborhood capacity, especially in challenged neighborhoods? This includes issues around mental health and poverty. Are there tools out there for doing these things that are not being utilized?

5. HOW DO WE ADDRESS THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND EFFECTS OF INCREMENTAL TRAUMA THAT OFFICERS EXPERIENCE OVER TIME (WHETHER THEY RECOGNIZE IT OR NOT)?

What are the early warning signs? What are the evidentiary signs indicating the need for departmental and community intervention?

6. WHAT ARE THE ROOT CAUSES THAT UNDERLIE PATTERNS OF CRIME IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

Different communities have different patterns. What are the methods of collecting data on these various patterns? What would appropriate and creative responses look like? Because all things arise due to causes and conditions, what we do in response matters. What we care about matters. What pathways we cultivate in our hearts and minds in response to these tragedies and problems matter.

Mindfulness, Peace, and Service

As part of my dharma teacher ordination ceremony in 2008, Thay and I exchanged *gathas*, or practice poems. I

composed one for him and he composed one for me. Because of his tremendous influence on me as a police officer, I composed the following poem for him:

Breathing in, I know that mindfulness is the path to peace.

Breathing out, I know that peace is the path to mindfulness.

Breathing in, I know that peace is the path to justice.

Breathing out, I know that justice is the path to peace.

Breathing in, I know my duty is to provide safety & protection to all beings.

Breathing out, I am humbled and honored by my duty as a peace officer.

Breathing in, I choose mindfulness as my armor & compassion as my weapon.

Breathing out, I aspire to bring love and understanding to all I serve.

Often, when challenges arise, a handful of people can make a huge difference. Thich Nhat Hanh talks about the people who fled Vietnam in rickety boats during the war as an example of this. When the refugees had no food or water and faced the threat of pirates, those individuals who remained calm made the difference between life and death for everybody.

Any one of us can make a difference in a similar way as we move forward in the wake of tragedy. Any one of us can be the person who, rather than exacerbating pain and violence, transforms it by the way we bear witness and respond to it.

About Cheri Maples

Cheri Maples was a dharma teacher, keynote speaker, organizational consultant and trainer, and the cofounder of the Center for Mindfulness and Justice. In 2008 she was ordained a dharma teacher by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, her long-time spiritual teacher. For 25 years Cheri worked in the criminal justice system, as an Assistant Attorney General in the Wisconsin Department of Justice, head of Probation and Parole for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, and as a police officer with the City of Madison Police Department, earning the rank of Captain of Personnel and Training. Cheri passed away in late July, 2017.

Reprinted from the non-profit *Lion's Roar*.

Ignoring Climate Goals, Biden Administration Greenlights Oil Drilling in Alaska

You cannot approve massive oil drilling projects if you want to swiftly reach net-zero emissions.

By **DERRICK Z. JACKSON**, From the Union of Concerned Scientists/Blog

It just takes common sense to see that the climate change math of the Biden administration is not adding up: You cannot approve massive oil drilling projects if you want to swiftly reach net-zero emissions.

That is exactly what the administration did when it sided with **ConocoPhillips** in the company's bid to drill for more than a half billion barrels of oil in the National Petroleum Reserve (NPR) in the Alaskan Arctic, erecting infrastructure that will be in operation for 30 years or more. After spending \$6 million in federal funds and generating more than 3,600 pages of environmental analysis, the Biden administration's **brief**, recently filed in federal district court, argues that the lease the Trump administration granted to ConocoPhillips is "valid"—including its impacts on the climate.

Not surprisingly, the decision drew **applause** from ConocoPhillips Alaska President Erec Isaacson. The 23.4-million-acre reserve, on Alaska's central north coast, and under the control of the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, was **created** in 1923 in case the Navy needed emergency oil.

Nearly a century later, that need has been outstripped by the need to leave as much oil in the ground as possible. In an Earth Day **fact sheet** in April, the Biden administration said it is **setting the nation** on a firm path toward cutting emissions in half over the next nine years, a carbon-free power sector by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2050. "The United States is not waiting, the costs of delay are too great, and our nation is resolved to act now," the fact sheet said. "Climate change poses an existential threat."

Given the dire threat we face, it cannot comport with any rationale for supporting ConocoPhillips. The project would make a mockery of being on a firm path in cutting emissions when the government **itself says** the project **might spew** 260 million metric tons of global warming emissions into the atmosphere over the next 30 years, **equivalent** to the annual emissions from 63 coal-fired plants.

The drilling would also threaten extremely fragile ecosystems for some of the world's greatest concentrations of nesting and migrating wildlife. While less publicized than the 19.3-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge along the **northeast coast** run by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the NPR is home to a **dazzling array** of polar bears, seals, walrus, loons, shorebirds, caribou, and peregrine falcons.

"A critical year at the start of a critical decade"

Climate change poses such an existential threat that this spring the International Energy Agency—the intergovernmental energy analysis forum for members of the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation—said all nations must act now. With global carbon dioxide emissions rising again as many COVID-19 restrictions end, the IEA **said** 2021 is a "critical year at the start of a critical decade" to **commit** to a "total transformation" of energy. It warned that achieving net zero emissions "hinges on a singular, unwavering focus," adding that: "There is no need for investment in new fossil fuel supply."

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The wavering by the Biden administration on extracting the nation from fossil fuel extraction threatens to neuter the many good things the administration is doing, such as suspending the Trump administration's leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, opposing the now-canceled Keystone XL pipeline, pausing new oil and gas drilling leases on federal lands (although that effort is now tangled in a court case), and bringing the United States back into the Paris climate accords.

Other actions and inactions are also concerning. Aside from upholding the Trump administration's permit for ConocoPhillips, the Biden White House **whiffed** on shutting down the **controversial** Dakota Access Pipeline **until** it could be fully reviewed. Particularly contentious to Indigenous tribes is how the pipeline, which carries oil from North Dakota to Illinois, goes under a reservoir of the Missouri River near the Standing Rock reservation. The administration has also taken **no position** so far on the proposed expansion of Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline, that would bring Canadian tar-sands oil through ecologically sensitive parts of Minnesota and tribal lands.

Sticky politics

The complicated, partisan **web of politics** offers a probable reason why the Biden administration is not going all out to fight climate change from the start. The ConocoPhillips project is championed by Alaska Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, both of whom were among the few Republicans to vote to confirm Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. Murkowski is also one of the tiny handful of Republican senators who has been known to very occasionally vote with Democrats on major legislation.

Just as **sticky** on the Democratic side are politicians such as West Virginia Senator Joe **Manchin**. In a Senate split 50-50 along party lines, Manchin (along with Murkowski) already hampered the Biden administration's carbon mitigation efforts by nixing Elizabeth Klein, Biden's first choice to be deputy energy secretary, **complaining** that she wasn't friendly enough with the oil and gas industry.

Manchin, the chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, supported the replacement nominee, Tommy Beaudreau, who was approved by the committee for a Senate confirmation vote by an 18-1 margin. As a lawyer, Beaudreau has represented the development of offshore wind and the fossil fuel industry, leading Manchin to **describe** him as someone whom both sides of the aisle "can work with."

Rising concern over muddled messages

Concern about the Biden administration's record to date prompted several environmental groups wrote a June 10 **letter** to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland urging her and the Biden administration to halt new drilling permits and cancel any oil and gas leases that were unlawfully rushed through by the Trump administration.

While diplomatically praising the Biden administration's general climate leadership in a press release, the signatories to the letter were adamant about the need for more action now.

One of them, Natasha Leger, executive director of the Citizens for a Healthy Community, said, "The Biden administration needs to stop the federal government's complicity in climate degradation by ending new oil and gas leasing and permitting on federal lands."

President Biden may be trying to avoid drawing a line in the sand, but it's looking likely that one may be forced upon him by his base. Back when he was vice president, the Obama White House, pushed an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy. Then-Vice President Biden presided during a period when rapid growth of fracked natural gas supplanted coal, which helped to **slash** overall global warming emissions in the United States. But those positive effects are now in the past; natural gas and its primary component, methane, are now major impediments to fighting climate change.

Even in 2014, then-Vice President Biden recognized that the time was coming for the nation to say no to any new fossil fuels. In a speech that year to a Goldman Sachs energy summit, he **said**, "What is the long play? To state the obvious, I'm not an investment banker, but I wouldn't go long on investments that lead to carbon pollution. I'd bid a little more on clean energy. There's a convergence around addressing climate change and carbon emissions, both here and abroad."

President Biden now has his chance to say no. The time for the long play is here and the opportunity won't last.

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Derrick Z. Jackson is a 2018 winner from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists, a 10-time winner from the National Association of Black Journalists and a Pulitzer Prize finalist and co-author of *Project Puffin: The Improbable Quest to Bring a Beloved Seabird Back to Egg Rock* (2015).

Homeless: The Punishing Effects of Market Forces

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surgery. Nevertheless, despite her recovery and hard work, she just recently came precariously close to another bout of homelessness. Though having a pet made her quest for a rental more difficult, she refused to give up her beloved dog, Coco, even when faced with another bout of homelessness. She also has a cat.

When housing costs move from merely difficult to impossible for people who have worked, obeyed the rules, and pulled themselves up from poverty and despair, it's not just wrong to blame homelessness on drugs and poor choices, it's a gross insult. It's also an affront to people like Brigett Moore, who worked the programs, got off drugs, and went to work, only to find that hard work, frugality and thrift could still leave her on the precarious edge of homelessness.

As long as homeless people continue to be lumped into abstract categories like "vagrant" or "transient," and dismissed as addicts, the human costs of punitive market forces can be ignored. But even a cursory look at the devastating effects of housing to income ratios on good people who worked hard offers a sobering reality of the human consequences of market forces.

More and more often, the homeless among us are just good citizens suffering from bad times. We need to accept those facts and begin acting humanely to address them.



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

JULY 2021

CHECK WITH MEETING HOSTS. ONLINE MEETINGS MAY BE PLANNED.

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

MAPS (Modesto Area Partners in Science: free MJC science programs. Resumes in the Fall. Watch past presentations at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2pMYnCos9w0xwd_5Icw3Pg

VIRTUAL FILMS are available at the State Theatre! Visit <https://thestate.org/virtual-screenings/>. NOTE: The State is open with limited seating.

The Prospect Theatre has continuing offerings: Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2020-2021-season/>

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

7 WED: NO VIGIL in July.

13 TUES: Second Tuesday Reading Series featuring poets David Campos and J.J. Hernandez 7:00pm. Zoom link will be on Facebook and at www.mostpoetry.org.

18: SUN: Sundays at CBS: California Zephyr. 3 pm. Info: <https://sundaysatcbs.com/zephyr21/>

AUGUST

4 WED: NO VIGIL in August.

5 THURS: Peace/Life Center ZOOM Monthly Board Meeting, 6:30 pm. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org. May be cancelled if not needed.

6 FRI: Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck at Legion Park, 6:00 PM. Bring food, drinks to share as we rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. Bring your own table service. Social distancing and masks may be required. Ends with candlelight vigil on the banks of the Tuolumne River.

6 & 9 FRI & MON: Tri-Valley CAREs hosts two events: Remembrance Hiroshima & Nagasaki. Visit Tri-Valley CAREs, for information, <http://www.trivalleycares.org/>

15 SUN: Poetry on Sunday Readings. Open mic available. Zoom link will be on Facebook and at www.mostpoetry.org

LOOKING AHEAD

Jan. 11: John McCutcheon returns to Modesto for Modesto Peace/Life Center Concert Benefit. More info: TBA

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

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

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

IMCV weekly Insight Meditation and dharma talk, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely, donations welcome. Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: info@imcv.org

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

MONDAYS

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the 2nd Mondy at 7p.m. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in their 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; <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.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 (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

Silver & Gold Support group for our senior LGBT communities' unique concerns and experiences. A group that will understand and accept you where you are. For LGBT folks over 50 yrs. old. Every Monday at 3 pm to 4 pm at various locations in Modesto. Info: Steven Cullen/Facilitator. Cell/text - (559) 799-0464. Email: stevencullen@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: SUSPENDED, 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, 720 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750.

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

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: merced-board@gaycentralvalley.org – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

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

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

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

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

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

THURSDAYS

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: jpmamodelsto@gmail.com

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

Third Thursday Art Walk, Will resume July 15. <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 – 5:00

pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

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

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

FRIDAYS

Overcoming Depression: Small group for men & women. Every Friday, 7:15 p.m. Cornerstone Community Church, 17900 Comconex Rd., Manteca (209) 825-1220.

Game Night and Potluck, third Friday of each month. For 21+ only. Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto. 7 pm to 10 pm. Info: John Aguirre, (559) 280-3864; jpmamodelsto@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

SATURDAY

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 kathyhaynesSES@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.