



# Stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable environment

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## Future Peace Center Vigils will focus on Stopping U.S. Drone Attacks

By JOHN LUCAS

Predator drone attacks were started under former President Bush's Administration. Drones are remotely piloted aircraft that wreak death and destruction from the sky. These aircraft are remotely controlled by U.S. military and CIA pilots from bases in our country and around the world. President Obama has not only continued these attacks, but has increased them, not only in Afghanistan, but also in countries in which the U.S. is not involved in a war. Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen are at least three countries where drones have been used. As this article is being written, President Obama may be planning to use drones in Iraq, due to the current insurgency. **In our names, our government is acting as judge, jury, and executioner in these attacks!**

On July 6, 2008, the Dih Bala wedding party, made up of 47 Afghan civilians, mostly women and children, were hit by a U.S. military drone. The group was escorting the bride to a wedding ceremony in the groom's village in Dih Bala, district of Nangarhar province, Afghanistan. The United States Government initially denied that civilians were killed in the incident, but an investigation by the Government determined that 47 civilians had been killed, including the bride.

Since 2004 through March of 2013, U.S. drones have killed 3105 men, women, and children in Pakistan, according to Pitch Interactive, in Berkeley California. (See link from Huffington Post [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/26/drone-visualization-pakistan\\_n\\_2957779.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/26/drone-visualization-pakistan_n_2957779.html)) In these attacks, only approximately 1.5% of the people killed have been considered, by the US Government's own assessments, "high profile Al Qaeda targets".

In August 2013, the Human Rights Watch



reported that U.S. missile strikes and drone strikes have killed dozens of civilians in Yemen. According to research data done by Charles Tan ([www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)) up until March 14, 2014 the United States drone attacks have killed 747 people in Yemen and 33 in Somalia. (see [http://www.academia.edu/6693934/A\\_Statistical\\_Analysis\\_of\\_American\\_Drone\\_Attacks\\_in\\_Somalia\\_and\\_Yemen](http://www.academia.edu/6693934/A_Statistical_Analysis_of_American_Drone_Attacks_in_Somalia_and_Yemen))

**Drone attacks are bringing more death and destruction around the world, and are still going on today!** President Obama still considers predator drones attacks part of his strategy to fight the "war on terror". We as citizens of this country and the world need to do what we can to stop these lethal attacks. Drone attacks are not only immoral and violation of international law, they only create more hatred and violence.

**ACTIONS:** Come to the Modesto Peace/Life Center Vigils first Wednesdays of the month from 5 PM to 6 PM at Five Points, (where McHenry Ave, Needham Ave, and J St. meet), in Modesto. The next vigil is Wednesday, July 2.

Write a letter to the President, your congressperson, or senators asking them to stop drone attacks now. Write a letter to the editor in your local paper. Talk to friends and family about drone attacks.

## Hundreds Demand Fair Wages, Union Representation and Dignity for Abused Temp Workers at World's Leading Salad Processor

From the Teamsters

(TRACY, Calif.) – Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa led a major rally on Thursday in support of 900 food processing workers at Taylor Farms, the largest supplier of fresh-cut produce in the world. More than 700 Teamsters, Taylor Farms workers and community supporters packed in front of a stage outside the company's plant in Tracy, Calif. where low-wage workers have been organizing against poverty pay, abusive working conditions, and extreme anti-union retaliation by the company. See <http://teamster.org/justice-taylor-farms>

"I bring you greetings from the 1.4 million members of the Teamsters union," Hoffa told workers at the rally. "I've heard about the lack of respect here, the fact that people can't use the restroom when they need to, and that workers have been here ten years and are temporary employees. That's got to change – and we're going to change it."

Hoffa stood before a large crowd of workers holding signs that said "Dignity for All Workers" and "Food Workers Feed America." Chants of "Si Se Puede" (Yes We Can) and "Teamster Power" erupted as other speakers took to the stage, including workers like Brenda Vega.

"I've seen the injustices inside Taylor Farms," Vega said to the crowd. "Pregnant women are forced to work over 12 hours. They're not allowed to go to the bathroom. They're not allowed to go to the doctor. We don't have the right to insurance for us or our families. We don't have the right to wage

increases. We're called temporary workers for ten years or more. This has to stop. We need a union."

Taylor Farms supplies packaged salads and fruits to major retailers, food stores and restaurant chains, including Wal-Mart and McDonalds. In 2012, the company's revenue was \$1.8 billion – almost five times its revenue in 2007. But its workers in Tracy are paid as little as \$8 an hour while working up

**FAIR WAGES . . . . . cont. p 10**

**Join the Modesto Peace/Life Center's Annual Hiroshima Remembrance and Potluck at Legion Park, Modesto on Wednesday, August 6th at 6:30 PM. Bring food and drinks to share as we converse and rededicate ourselves to reversing the efforts to rebuild and proliferate nuclear weapons. The evening will conclude with a candlelight vigil on the banks of the Tuolumne River.**



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

## Ecology and Climate Justice Delegation to Peru: Taking the Struggle to the Streets for the UN Climate Summit in Lima!

Dec. 3-13, 2014

An Alliance for Global Justice delegation hosted by the *Forum Solidaridad Peru* (FSP -Peru Solidarity Forum) and the *Movimiento de Ciudadanos frente el Cambio Climatico* (MOCICC-the Citizens Movement Confronting Climate Change).

- Join MOCCIC and the FSP as we meet with activists from Peru and around the world to discuss real solutions to the ecological crisis and take our demands to the streets of Lima and the doors of the UN Climate Summit!
- Take a trip with us to the beautiful highland lake country of Cajamarca! Learn about the US based Newmont Corporation's mega-gold mining Conga project. See a first hand example of environmental destruction by transnational Capital. Encounter a struggle against the mine

rooted in the rights of Mother Earth and the indigenous people who live there.

- Visit the fascinating coastal city of Trujillo, home to amazing archaeological, ecological and cultural resources—and an ecosystem under direct threat due to global warming!
- Meet those resisting new US military bases! Peru is the top recipient of US military aid after Mexico and Colombia
- Meet with student, farm and labor representatives leading struggles for sustainability versus neoliberal ecocide!

**COSTS:** \$1400, not including international airfare. Delegation cost covers all lodging, in-Peru travel, two meals a day, and other delegation-related expenses.

**Information:** Visit <http://afgj.org/ecology-and-climate-justice-delegation-to-peru> or email [james@afgj.org](mailto:james@afgj.org)

## Modesto's Relief Inc. to host fireworks stand

By PHEBE DENNIS-FORTT

Relief, Inc. will have its first ever 4th of July Fireworks Stand at 1617 Carpenter Rd. in the Wendy's Restaurant and Home Depot parking lot from June 28th through July 4th, 2014. in Modesto. Advance Fireworks Scrip at (209) 545-1700.

Since 2003, Relief, Inc., of Modesto has supported community service projects including holiday food and toy giveaways, leadership training and goal setting and Valentine Healthy Baskets for 383 deserving Modesto students.

Relief Inc., a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, grassroots NGO organization in Modesto, works in partnership with local businesses, high school and college students, and trained individuals who specialize in development work in Liberia, West Africa. Learn more at <http://www.reliefinc.org>

## Summer Fundraiser Gala at Mistlin Gallery Saturday, July 26, 6 - 10 p.m.

"Light up the Night," is this year's summer fundraiser. The event complements the "Sixties Retro" exhibition being held in the gallery from July 15 - August 16. Come as a flower child or wear your favorite tie-dyed tee shirt. Costumes are welcome.

Enjoy gourmet food and wine, silent auction, and rock out with live music from the Beatles, Three Dog Night, and other popular music from that era. Funds go toward a new gallery lighting system. Tickets: \$20 for members; \$25 for non-members available at the Mistlin Gallery. Info: visit [www.ccartassn.org](http://www.ccartassn.org)

## New Camp Erin® to Help Modesto Children and Teens Cope with Grief

New Camp Erin® to Help Modesto Children and Teens Cope with Grief

Community Hospice is partnering with The Moyer Foundation to launch Camp Erin® Modesto, a free, weekend camp for children ages six to 17 who have experienced the death of someone close to them.

*Registration is open for the camp. Space is limited, and campers are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.*

### Camp Erin Modesto Details

- Camp Erin Modesto will be held August 22-24, 2014 at Camp Jack Hazard in Dardanelle, CA.
- All campers must complete an application packet and attend an open house. The application deadline is **July 9, 2014**.
- To download an application, or to volunteer at camp, visit <http://www.hospiceheart.org/camp> or call (209) 578-6300.

At Camp Erin, children learn that they are not alone in their grief. The fun, familiar environment of camp is combined with activities that give children a chance to honor their loved ones, express their feelings and make lasting friendships with their peers facing similar life experiences. Led by grief professionals and trained volunteers, Camp Erin helps children learn to cope and to heal.

"A child should never have to grieve alone," said Karen Moyer, co-founder and vice president of The Moyer Foundation.

## Pancake breakfast successful thanks to YOU!

By DEBORAH ROBERTS

The Pancake Breakfast raised \$2,555.00 to benefit the Modesto Peace/Life Center!

The Pancake Breakfast Committee would like to thank the following organizations for their outstanding support:

The Modesto Church of the Brethren for the use of its facility and supporting the Modesto Peace/Life Center year after year. Deva for drinks; The Brighter Side for its generous yearly donation of fruit; Crazy Horse for time, money and potatoes; Rockwell, Kelly and Duarte, LLP for all the juice.

The call went out for help and over 40 (count em!) of you responded and pitched in, from set-up, to batter and fruit mixing to griddle cooking, serving, collecting the money and cleanup to make our event a success! This event would not happen without your voluntary dedication of time, work and donations. And, of course, we thank all of you who ate pancakes!



Next year is our 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast. Sign up now to be on committee. Email David Tucker if you can help at [david.tucker@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:david.tucker@stanfordalumni.org). Email with your favorites or suggestions for pancakes to Jim Costello at [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org). He will pass them on to Deborah Roberts.

### FOR SALE

The Modesto Peace/Life Center has as stunning 54 volume set of the *Great Books of the Western World* produced by the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Most volumes still in their shrink wrap.

The books did not make it into our recent rummage sale. If interested in purchasing these, make an offer to Jim Costello at [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org), 209-402-9191.

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CONNECTIONS

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## July Film Night features Bayard Rustin

By DAN ONORATO

Though hardly a household name for most Americans, Bayard Rustin was one of the heroes of our country's civil rights struggles. On **Wednesday, July 16, at 6:30 p.m.**, the Peace/Life Center will present the PBS acclaimed documentary about this great man.

Long before Martin Luther King, Jr. became a national figure, Bayard Rustin routinely put his body — and his life — on the line as a crusader for racial justice. Rustin's commitment to pacifism and his visionary advocacy of Gandhian nonviolence made him a pioneer in the 1940s, and captured King's imagination in the 1950s. In 1963, with more than 20 years of organizing experience behind him, Rustin brought his unique skills to the crowning glory of his civil rights career: his work organizing the historic March on Washington, the biggest protest America had ever witnessed.

But Rustin was also seen as a political liability. He was openly gay during the fiercely homophobic era of the 40s and 50s; as a result, he was frequently shunned by the very civil rights movement he helped create. Nancy Kates and Bennett

Singer's compelling new film **Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin** chronicles Rustin's complex life story, a tale of race, prejudice, and idealism at the heart of 20th century America. Though he had to overcome the stereotypes associated with being an illegitimate son, an African American, a gay man and a one-time member of the Communist Party, Rustin — the ultimate outsider — eventually became a public figure and respected political insider. He not only shaped civil rights movement strategy as a longtime advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., but was known and respected by numerous U.S. Presidents and foreign leaders.

On November 20, 2013, President Obama bestowed a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation's highest civilian honor—on Bayard Rustin. His surviving life partner, Walter Naegle, accepted the award.

Our next film night will be on Wednesday, September 17. Film TBA.

**ACTION:** Mark your calendar now! For more info, go to [www.pbs.org/pov/brotheroutsider/film\\_description.php](http://www.pbs.org/pov/brotheroutsider/film_description.php).

## US Forced to Release Memo on Extrajudicial Drone Killing of US Citizen

### Court-ordered release of DOJ 'drone memo' reveals legal arguments for targeting of US citizen Anwar al-Aulaqi in Yemen

By SARAH LAZARE, staff writer, CommonDreams.org

The U.S. government on Monday partially released the formerly-classified Department of Justice "drone memo," dated 2010, in which Obama administration lawyers argue they have the right to extra-judicially kill U.S. citizen Anwar al-Aulaqi in Yemen. [http://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/assets/2014-06-23\\_barron-memorandum.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/assets/2014-06-23_barron-memorandum.pdf)

Anwar Al Aulaqi, who had been placed on a "kill list," died by U.S. drone strikes in September 2011, along with Samir Khan, as well as three other people. Just weeks later, another U.S. drone attack on a restaurant in Yemen killed Anwar Al-Aulaqi's son Abdulrahman, also a U.S. citizen, and six other civilians.

In the memo, which is addressed to attorney general Eric Holder, David Barron—then head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel—argues that the targeted killing is legal "where, as here, the target's activities pose a 'continued and imminent threat of violence or death' to U.S. persons, 'the highest officers in the Intelligence Community have reviewed the factual basis' for the lethal operation, and a capture operation would be infeasible."

Yet the drone memo was redacted before release, leading to the omission of key information, including alleged factual evidence for the government's claim that al-Aulaqi posed a threat to the United States.

Barron claims the killing is justified by the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force—a highly controversial and expansive congressional act that has been expan-

sively interpreted by the Bush and Obama administrations to authorize ongoing war and occupation in Afghanistan, covert drone wars in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, military intervention in countries from Ethiopia to Iraq, indefinite detentions at Guantanamo Bay and Bagram prison, and more. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/sjres23> and [http://lee.house.gov/sites/lee.house.gov/files/AUMF%20Brief%20Background%20Memorandum%20%28w%20Appendix%29\\_Released.pdf](http://lee.house.gov/sites/lee.house.gov/files/AUMF%20Brief%20Background%20Memorandum%20%28w%20Appendix%29_Released.pdf)

"We believe that the AUMF's authority to use lethal force abroad also may apply in appropriate circumstances to a United States citizen who is part of the forces of an enemy authorization within the scope of the force authorization," states the memo.

Center for Constitutional Rights Senior Attorney Pardiss Kebriaei, who was CCR's lead counsel on two lawsuits with the ACLU challenging the killing of Al-Aulaqi, declared in a statement, "The DOJ memo confirms that the government's drone killing program is built on gross distortions of law. This forced transparency comes years late, long after the memo was drafted and used to justify the premeditated killing of a U.S. citizen without trial and far from any battlefield."

She adds, "The United States loosening and redefining international rules governing the use of force and war is ultimately not going to make anyone any safer." <http://ccrjustice.org/newsroom/press-releases/al-aulaqi-case-attorney-responds-doj-drone-kill-memo>

The memo notes that the CIA had an "operational role" in the targeted killing of al-Aulaqi. According to Brett Max Kaufman, Legal Fellow of the ACLU National Security Project, "[T]he official unveiling of this fact should open the

## Next meeting for the Non-Violence Book Club on Aug 23

By JOHN FRAILING

If you attended the MLK, Jr. event sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center and other organizations on February 1, you heard Diane Nash speak about the power of non-violence and how to successfully change society through non-violent actions. The operative word here is "actions." To further understand this method, Ms. Nash recommended three books to read. They are:

*The Power of Non-Violence* by Richard Gregg

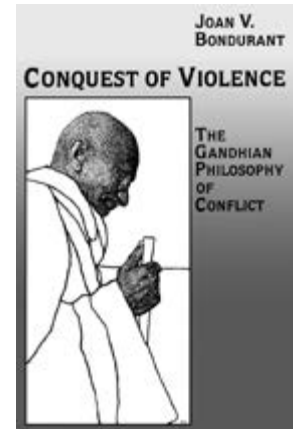
*Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* by Joan Bondurant

*My Experience with Truth* by Mahatma Gandhi (aka The Autobiography of)

To further our knowledge and group understanding of these books, the Center has created a book club to discuss them.

We discussed *The Power of Non-Violence*, We now turn to the *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* by Joan Bondurant

**ACTION:** We will meet on Saturday morning, August 23rd from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at the Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St. Modesto. This should be educational and lots of fun. Please join us in this new adventure.





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# They Work for Food

By JENIFER WEST

The City of Patterson's newest 'maintenance crew' arrives early, ready for work. They require little in the way of supervision, and even less compensation. They work with single-minded determination – and don't even take lunch breaks. And they're the most unconventional group around, with more than a few beards, lots of legs – and an equal number of hooves.

This 'crew' was 'hired' because Victorio Tostado, Wastewater Manager at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Patterson, CA, had a problem: Weeds. 240-acre's worth. Part of his responsibilities include control of unwanted vegetation – the aforementioned weeds. The ponds at the Plant provide the perfect habitat for them, and the City was spending ever-increasing amounts of money, both in chemicals and man-hours, to combat them, but still couldn't keep up. And with weeds come an even bigger problem: Mosquitoes. Those tiny, winged pests can cause no end of headaches for a city, county or other jurisdictions. So the weeds must be kept under control. But the vegetation management program that had been in use for years just couldn't keep up.

Little did Victorio know that the solution, which 'modern' methods had failed to provide, would be found in a most unusual workforce, and based on a practice in use around the world for thousands of years.

Pondering the weed challenge, Victorio realized that the neighboring property owner, who farmed about 20 acres, had the same problem. Then he noticed something interesting: The owners had turned cattle – 200 head or so – loose on the overgrowth. In a surprisingly short time, the neighbor's weed problem literally disappeared.

Interested in trying the approach on the land surrounding the treatment plant, Victorio contacted a number of animal owners before he found one willing to give it a try. He then pitched the idea to Mike Willett, Public Works Director for the City of Patterson. He pointed out the benefits of using livestock to "clean up" weedy areas: Reduced or eliminated chemical use, which in turn would mean reduced regulatory hassles, dramatically increased protection of the environment,

and huge savings on the chemicals themselves. This approach would also save wear and tear on the city's heavy equipment, as the tractors, disks and spray rigs would not be needed in the areas where the animals worked. The mosquito population should be drastically reduced, decreasing both a biohazard (the possibility of West Nile virus being always of concern) and a nuisance. Finally, the animals would also help reduce or eliminate fire hazard – weeds that don't exist can't burn out of control! The livestock owner should benefit as well, by way of significantly reduced feed and labor costs.

At that time, no one involved could have imagined just how successful the project would be.

A plan was formulated to use sheep, horses and cows to feed on the tall vegetation, followed by goats that would complete the clean-up of weeds around the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The original project was so successful that the plan was adapted as necessary for the various drainage basins and other open areas around the city. (To ensure their safety, the animals are removed from the basins and other areas in the city during the night hours, and returned to the site where they are working during the day.)

At first, Tostado said, the paid employees, accustomed to spending part of their working hours battling the weeds using both chemical and mechanical methods, weren't sure what to think of their furry colleagues. However, they soon realized that the animals, particularly during the month or so it took them to clean up a 13-acre stretch along a local creek, would save them the hassles involved in spraying chemicals (particularly dangerous along the steep creek banks). They also found that they enjoyed working with the animals.

Public reaction to the program has been positive from the beginning. Neighbors have been known to offer water to the



animals, and even helped on a couple of occasions when a baby goat or lamb wandered from the area in which the animals were working. (This writer, residing less than a block from the creek, certainly enjoyed the sounds of the animals "talking" to one another during the week or so they spent cleaning up the area!)

The project has been so successful that it is now an ongoing part of the City's weed management program, and has been expanded to as many areas as possible. This ancient practice has proven to be far more effective, and certainly more earth-friendly, than even a combination of the most up-to-date methods for controlling weeds and their accomplices.

They may not say much, and you won't find a city uniform or name tag in the bunch, but the City of Patterson's newest 'crew' certainly gets the job done.

## Drone memo

from page 3

door to further disclosures about the CIA's role in the program and about factual information, like numbers of civilian casualties caused by the program, that the government continues to maintain cannot be disclosed to the public." <https://www.aclu.org/blog/national-security/five-takeaways-newly-released-drone-memo>

The Obama administration has for years fought the release of the document but was forced to make it public in response to Freedom of Information Act lawsuits by the American Civil Liberties Union and The New York Times.

"The US drone wars have now been going on for over a decade, have killed thousands of individuals, —including a handful of American citizens, and serves as the cornerstone of President Obama's 'light footprint' national security policy," said Stephen Miles of Win Without War in an interview with Common Dreams. "The American people—in whose name

these strikes occur—have a right to know far, far more about this program than they currently do."

"We will continue to press for the release of other documents relating to the targeted-killing program, including other legal memos and documents relating to civilian casualties," said ACLU Deputy Legal Director Jameel Jaffer.

Journalist Jeremy Scahill noted on Twitter that the memo leaves key questions unanswered:

First known attempt to kill Anwar al Awlaki was Dec. 2009. Legal memo justifying US plot to kill him is dated July 2010.

— jeremy scahill (@jeremyscahill) June 23, 2014

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## Remember Hiroshima at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

### Failure to Disarm: Holding our government accountable

*Gather at Livermore Lab Wednesday, August 6, Hiroshima Day 2014*

On the 69th Anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, we invite all who seek peace and justice and a world free of nuclear weapons to gather at the location where scientists are developing new and modified nuclear weapons. Each weapon type designed at Livermore Lab involves new and “upgraded” features able to rain unimaginable devastation on a moment’s notice anywhere on Earth. The Lab’s budget request reveals that 89% of the money (more than a billion dollars) will go to nuclear weapons activities in the coming year.



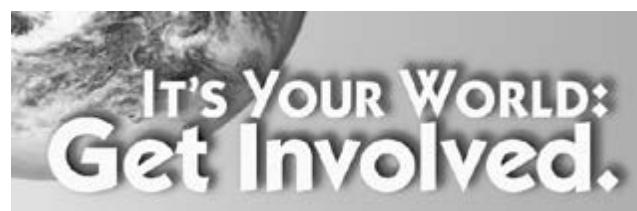
### Timeline:

7:30 AM: music, speakers, art, and a solemn moment of silence to honor radiation victims.

8:30 AM: short procession to the gate where those who choose will peacefully risk arrest.

**SAVE THE DATE.** Come to the Livermore nuclear weapons laboratory’s northwest corner, at Vasco and Patterson Pass Rds. in Livermore. There will be parking at the rally site and vanpools from the Dublin-Pleasanton BART station (call 925-443-7148 to reserve a seat).

Sponsored by Tri-Valley CAREs, No Nukes Action, Livermore Conversion Project, Western States Legal Foundation, American Friends Service Committee, Jane Addams Peace Assn., Asian Americans for Peace & Justice, and many more. Call Tri-Valley CAREs: 925-443-7148; <http://www.trivalleycares.org>



## Commission announced to review the effectiveness of the National Laboratories

From Tri-ValleyCares

Thanks to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), a nine-member “Commission to Review the Effectiveness of the National Energy Laboratories” was established pursuant to the Fiscal Year 2014 “Omnibus” or Consolidated Appropriations Act. While the law falls short of creating a formal process to close or transition facilities similar to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process used to shutter or realign excess Defense Dept. sites, its language enables important steps in that direction.

Tri-Valley CAREs supports a BRAC-like process for the Dept. of Energy (DOE) and its nuclear weapons labs in particular, and will press the new Commission to take full advantage of the broad scope of its authority to recommend management, mission and structural changes in the national energy laboratory system.

Specifically, the Commission is charged with examining all seventeen Dept. of Energy (DOE) and National Nuclear Security Administration labs, including the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) and the Sandia, Livermore site, to ensure that their missions are not redundant, that they align with departmental priorities, and that they are appropriately sized to accomplish those priorities. Further, the law tasks the Commission with evaluating the labs’ governance model and determining whether there are opportunities for “consolidation and realignment,” which is a distinctly BRAC-like term.

On May 20, 2014, Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz announced the membership of the Commission. The Secretary’s choices were made from nominations submitted to him by the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

The Commission will be co-chaired by Jared Cohon and T.J. Glauthier. Cohon is President Emeritus at Carnegie Mellon University and Glauthier is a former Deputy Secretary at DOE. Cherry Murray, a former Associate Director for Science and Technology at LLNL, has also been named to the Commission. Overall, the Commissioners include a few fresh faces and a number of people who regularly turn up on advisory panels, including former Lockheed Martin CEO Norman Augustine and former Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Richard Meserve. (See the DOE press release for the full list at <http://energy.gov/articles/secretary-moniz-announces-members-new-commission-national-labs>)

This is where a grassroots group like Tri-Valley CAREs comes into play. The question is not whether the Commissioners have the necessary scientific and managerial expertise to carry out their assignment, they do. Rather, it is whether they will be sufficiently bold, courageous and innovative to make a difference. In a word, will they be leaders or merely tweak the status quo before going to their next assignment? It falls to “watchdogs” like us to hold their feet to the fire and keep them accountable.

We plan to meet with the Commissioners and will press them to hold public hearings and interact with a wide array of stakeholders with diverse viewpoints as part of their decision-making process. We understand from conversations with congressional staff that the Commission will roll out



recommendations in two phases, with their strategic review of the laboratory system due February 1, 2015 and their recommendations on the thornier management and realignment and consolidation issues coming later in the year.

On the plus side, the Commission’s findings and recommendations could focus national attention on a BRAC-like process for DOE labs. In this regard, we note that the DOE Inspector General, Gregory Friedman (pictured below with Tri-Valley CAREs’ Staff Attorney Scott Yundt) has repeatedly called for a BRAC-like process to analyze, realign, and consolidate the DOE national labs in order to avoid their continued mismanagement and excessive waste.

While waste and redundancy may permeate the DOE lab complex, LLNL certainly rises to the top of any list of facilities ripe for realignment. LLNL shares an oversized and outdated Cold War weapons design mission with the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Moreover, LLNL has failed security tests and lost its authorization to house bomb usable quantities of plutonium and highly enriched uranium, which means its ability to compete Cold War-style with Los Alamos is severely diminished.

Tri-Valley CAREs advocates a major change in mission away from nuclear weapons R&D for both labs. Specifically, as the neighbors of Livermore Lab, we have long recommended that it be taken entirely out of the nuclear weapons complex and re-missioned as an unclassified “green lab,” devoted to civilian science activities. We will be advocating this and other 21st Century realignment opportunities to the Commission.

It is our hope that the Commission will illuminate the glaring problems that exist throughout the DOE laboratory system and recommend practical, unbiased and far-reaching solutions. But, we have seen past federal advisory panels formed with the best of intentions issue only limited recommendations that are then never implemented. This Commission is being given a broad mandate and a fresh start by Congress. Will it live up to its potential?

It is Tri-Valley CAREs’ goal to ensure that the Commission and its recommendations receive the amplification and public attention they deserve. If the recommendations are courageous, we will laud them and work diligently for their implementation. If they are timid or wrongheaded, we will likewise make certain that sad truth is spoken. Which will it be? Stay tuned.

<http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/BRACcommission.html>

# The Top 5 Claims That Defenders of the NSA Have to Stop Making to Remain Credible

By **CINDY COHN** and **NADIA KAYYALI**

Over the past year, as the Snowden revelations have rolled out, the government and its apologists have developed a set of talking points about mass spying that the public has now heard over and over again. From the President, to Hillary Clinton to Rep. Mike Rogers, Sen. Dianne Feinstein and many others, the arguments are often eerily similar.

But as we approach the one year anniversary, it's time to call out the key claims that have been thoroughly debunked and insist that the NSA apologists retire them.

So if you hear any one of these in the future, you can tell yourself straight up: "this person isn't credible," and look elsewhere for current information about the NSA spying. And if these are still in your talking points (you know who you are) it's time to retire them if you want to remain credible. And next time, the talking points should stand the test of time.

## 1. The NSA has Stopped 54 Terrorist Attacks with Mass Spying

### The discredited claim

NSA defenders have thrown out many claims about how NSA surveillance has protected us from terrorists, including repeatedly declaring that it has thwarted 54 plots. Rep. Mike Rogers says it often. Only weeks after the first Snowden leak, US President Barack Obama claimed: "We know of at least 50 threats that have been averted" because of the NSA's spy powers. Former NSA Director Gen. Keith Alexander also repeatedly claimed that those programs thwarted 54 different attacks.

Others, including former Vice President Dick Cheney have claimed that had the bulk spying programs in place, the government could have stopped the 9/11 bombings, specifically noting that the government needed the program to locate Khalid al Mihdhar, a hijacker who was living in San Diego.

### Why it's not credible:

These claims have been thoroughly debunked. First, the claim that the information stopped 54 terrorist plots fell completely apart. In dramatic Congressional testimony, Sen. Leahy forced a formal retraction from NSA Director Alexander in October, 2013:

"Would you agree that the 54 cases that keep getting cited by the administration were not all plots, and of the 54, only 13 had some nexus to the U.S.?" Leahy said at the hearing. "Would you agree with that, yes or no?"

"Yes," Alexander replied, without elaborating.

But that didn't stop the apologists. We keep hearing the "54 plots" line to this day.

As for 9/11, sadly, the same is true. The government did not need additional mass collection capabilities, like the mass phone records programs, to find al Mihdhar in San Diego. As ProPublica noted, quoting Bob Graham, the former chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee:

U.S. intelligence agencies knew the identity of the hijacker

in question, Saudi national Khalid al Mihdhar, long before 9/11 and had the ability find him, but they failed to do so.

"There were plenty of opportunities without having to rely on this metadata system for the FBI and intelligence agencies to have located Mihdhar," says former Senator Bob Graham, the Florida Democrat who extensively investigated 9/11 as chairman of the Senate's intelligence committee.

Moreover, Peter Bergen and a team at the New America Foundation dug into the government's claims about plots in America, including studying over 225 individuals recruited by al Qaeda and similar groups in the United States and charged with terrorism, and concluded:

Our review of the government's claims about the role that NSA "bulk" surveillance of phone and email communications records has had in keeping the United States safe from terrorism shows that these claims are overblown and even misleading...

When backed into a corner, the government's apologists cite the capture of Zazi, the so-called New York subway bomber. However, in that case, the Associated Press reported that the government could have easily stopped the plot without the NSA program, under authorities that comply with the Constitution. Sens. Ron Wyden and Mark Udall have been saying this for a long time.

Both of the President's hand-picked advisors on mass surveillance concur about the telephone records collection. The President's Review Board issued a report in which it stated "the information contributed to terrorist investigations by the use of section 215 telephony meta-data was not essential to preventing attacks." The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) also issued a report in which it stated, "we have not identified a single instance involving a threat to the United States in which [bulk collection under Section 215 of the Patriot Act] made a concrete difference in the outcome of a counterterrorism investigation."

And in an amicus brief in EFF's case *First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles v. the NSA*, Sens. Ron Wyden, Mark Udall, and Martin Heinrich stated that, while the administration has claimed that bulk collection is necessary to prevent terrorism, they "have reviewed the bulk-collection program extensively, and none of the claims appears to hold up to scrutiny."

Even former top NSA official John Inglis admitted that the phone records program has not stopped any terrorist attacks aimed at the US and at most, helped catch one guy who shipped about \$8,000 to a Somali group that the US has designated as a terrorist group but that has never even remotely been involved in any attacks aimed at the US.

## 2. Just collecting call detail records isn't a big deal.

### The discredited claim

The argument goes like this: Metadata can't be privacy

invasive, isn't very useful and therefore its collection isn't dangerous—so the Constitution shouldn't protect it. Even the President said, "what the intelligence community is doing is looking at phone numbers and durations of calls. They are not looking at people's names, and they're not looking at content"—as if that means there is no privacy protection for this information.

### Why it's not credible:

As former director of the NSA and CIA Michael Hayden recently admitted: "We kill people based on metadata." And former NSA General Counsel Stu Baker said: "metadata absolutely tells you everything about somebody's life. If you have enough metadata, you don't really need content."

In fact, a Stanford study this year demonstrated exactly what you can reconstruct using metadata: "We were able to infer medical conditions, firearm ownership, and more, using solely phone metadata." Metadata can show what your religion is, if you went to get an abortion, and other incredibly private details of your life.

## 3. There Have Been No Abuses of Power

### The discredited claim

President Obama stated in an interview that "there are no allegations, and I am very confident — knowing the NSA and how they operate — that purposefully somebody is out there trying to abuse this program..." And General Alexander stated in a speech that "We get all these allegations of [abuses of

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Modesto Chapter  
Parents, Families, and  
Friends of Lesbians  
and Gays

# Free the Kidnapped Israeli Teens

By RABBI MICHAEL LERNER

Kidnapping anyone, anytime is always a violation of a basic human right. But is even more outrageous when done to children or teens who are particularly vulnerable.

So it is with shock and outrage that we at Tikkun and the Network of Spiritual Progressives respond to the kidnapping of 3 Israeli teens who were returning from their study at a yeshiva in an Israeli settlement in the West Bank.

We demand the immediate release and safe return of those teens to their families!

We were shocked and outraged at the kidnapping of hundreds of Christian girls by Muslim fundamentalists in Africa, with the implied story that these girls would be raped (the functional equivalent of “forced marriages” along with forced conversions to Islam).

We are shocked and outraged when girls are kidnapped (or sold or persuaded by starving parents who see no other way to get money for their remaining starving children) into sexual slavery or forced marriages.

We are shocked and outraged when children or teenagers are forced into armies (whether through a supposedly “legitimate” draft process or through outright kidnapping) where they are forced to kill or be killed.

We reject any attempt to imply that somehow these acts are understandable given the oppressive conditions faced by the perpetrators. In the case of the Israeli teens some commentators have rushed in to remind us that there are thousands of young Palestinians, some of them younger than the teens who were teenagers, who sit in Israeli prisons or “detention camps,” without trials and sometimes for many months. Yes, this is also a human rights violation. But so what? It doesn’t justify or legitimate the crime committed against these Israeli teens.

There are those who have pointed out that the teens were attending a Yeshiva in a right-wing settlement and that that Yeshiva doesn’t teach about the humanity or the suffering of the Palestinian people, but instead justifies and defacto increases that suffering by participating in discriminatory practices that are part of the daily reality of the Occupation. Again, so what? No matter how reactionary the teachings, it is never appropriate to kidnap or inflict pain on others, except possibly in circumstances of immediate self-defense.

And these teens were not the perpetrators or the creators of the Occupation. They were children doing what their parents had brought them up to do and to be.

I’ve recently heard another such ridiculous attempt to “contextualize” this kidnapping. Just as, when Palestinian children have been shot or killed by Israeli forces enforcing the Occupation, some Israelis and American Jews have said (publicly and in a variety of Jewish newspapers) “these Palestinians don’t really care about their children, else they wouldn’t let them participate in activities that are known to be at risk,” so now some are saying that “Israelis don’t really care about their children, else they wouldn’t be sending them to study in a war zone in which violence against Palestinians is sometimes met by violence against Israelis—so anyone raising their children in the settlements or sending them to study in the Occupied West Bank really have only themselves to blame for whatever happens to them.” This reasoning is

as obnoxious when applied to Israelis as it was when applied to Palestinians (or for that matter, when applied to parents who let their children get drafted into an army). The reality is that most parents whatever their religious, national, ethnic or racial backgrounds care equally and intensely about the well-being of their children, and the reasons that they get convinced to put their kids into situations of danger have little to do with how much they love their kids. When I signed permission for my own son to serve in the Israeli paratroopers, I was terrified and remained so throughout the time he was jumping from airplanes and serving in the Israeli army. I cared deeply for my son’s welfare and loved him intensely, spent all week waiting for him to return to our Jerusalem apartment just before Shabbat so I could wash his clothes and feed him home made Shabbat food. I’m not going to go into all the factors that led me to allow him to serve (“allow” because the Israeli military won’t allow an only child to serve in a combat unit without the signed agreement of their parent), but it certainly wasn’t lack of love. And I’ve spoken to many Palestinians whose children have been wounded or killed and they too care just as much about their children as any Israeli or American or any other parents on the planet.

For those of us who want to see an end to all this kind of suffering, it is appropriate for us to demand an end to all wars and all violence, and to an end of conditions that create this violence, including ending global poverty, ending the xenophobia and racism and homophobia and demeaning of “the other” (whether that other be Jewish Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or whatever), and to urgently seek to end the environmental destructiveness that will soon become the source of more violence between “the haves” and “the have nots.” And it is appropriate to demand an end to the Occupation of the West Bank, to the occupation of Tibet by China and Chechnya by Russia and an end to every other unjust denial of rights to people who want their freedom.

Yet none of this should replace our outrage at the acts of kidnapping that go on “in the meantime.” And that is why we start and finish this note with a demand that whoever has those Israeli teens must return them immediately and safely to their families. And as a rabbi, I add to that demand a prayer for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families.

Rabbi Michael Lerner

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Editor, *Tikkun* magazine and Chair, the (Interfaith and Secular-Humanist-Welcoming) Network of Spiritual Progressives [www.spiritualprogressives.org](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org), rabbi of Beyt Tikkun Synagogue in Berkeley, Ca. and author of eleven books, most recently *Embracing Israel/Palestine*.

P.S. None of our outrage should be taken as legitimization of blaming the entire Palestinian people for this kidnapping or for assaulting the people of Gaza or a renewed military assault by the IDF beyond a narrowly pin-pointed search for the kidnapped teens. Punishing an entire population for the sins of a few was developed by Roman imperialists two thousand years ago and remains a disgusting and God-denying act of brutality that should never be tolerated by any humane society.

## World Powers Keeping Firm Grip on Nuclear Weapons Arsenals: Report

**Despite pledges to disarm, nations in possession of nuclear weapons are modernizing their inventories as some expand their stockpiles**

By SARAH LAZARE, staff writer, [CommonDreams.org](http://CommonDreams.org)

A 23 kiloton tower shot called BADGER, fired on April 18, 1953 at the Nevada Test Site, as part of the Operation Upshot-Knothole nuclear test series. (Photo: Wikimedia / Creative Commons)

Nations known to possess nuclear weapons are modernizing their arsenals while failing to rapidly cut stockpiles, showing that nuclear weapons remain embedded in military strategies around the world, a new report finds. <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/nuclear-forces>

Released annually by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the report finds that China, France, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S.—the five countries with nuclear arsenals deemed ‘legal’—are either deploying new nuclear weapon delivery systems or have announced programmes to do so.” Meanwhile, China, India, and Pakistan are actively expanding their nuclear weapons.

At the beginning of 2014, the U.S., U.K., France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea possessed a combined total of 16,300 nuclear weapons.

This is a reduction from the 17,270 at the beginning of 2013, thanks largely to cuts by Russia and the U.S., which together own 93 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons. Yet “the pace of reductions appears to be slowing compared with a decade ago,” note authors Shannon Kile and Phillip Schell.

Furthermore, the fact that these reductions occur alongside the ongoing modernization of weapons stockpiles shows that “none of the nuclear weapon-possessing states are prepared to give up their nuclear arsenals for the foreseeable future,” according to a [press statement](#) about the report.

The U.S. has a stunning 7,300 nuclear warheads, the report shows.

While the Israeli government has never publicly admitted to owning nuclear weapons, report data shows that Israel is illegally in possession of 80 nuclear warheads, making it the only nuclear weapon state in the Middle East.

The report notably does not include Iran among the list of nuclear weapon states.

This data shows that nuclear weapons remain endemic to militaries across the globe, despite international agreements to disarm, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea are not currently signatories to. <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml>

<https://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/06/16-1>

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## Poets' Corner Contest Winners announced

The judging results are in for the 2014 Poets' Corner Contest sponsored by the City of Modesto, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department. Over one hundred entries were submitted for the Adult and Youth divisions of this contest, which marks its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of celebration of the written word in our community. The special theme for this year's contest was poems exploring the world of insects and or spiders.

**Adult winners:** Ed Bearden, Roberta Bearden, Linda Benham, Cleo Griffith, Lynn M. Hansen, Nancy Haskett, Louise Kantro, Nancee Kinkaid Maya, Tom Myers, Clifford M. Parker, Tom Portwood. Linda Marie Prather, Steve Reyes, Doug C. Souza, Nicole Santana Souza and Gary Thomas.

**Adult Honorable Mentions:** Brett Ashmun, Virginia Dall, Clifford M. Parker and Linda Marie Prather.

**Youth Winners** included Keila Aguayo, Brian Anglim, Grace Benham, Seth Berschneider, Vinay Channaveerappa, Emily Cline, Reece Costales, Arjun Dulai, Keoni Fatanum, James Forkner, Natalie Garcia, David Gorman, Sean Gutowski, Cassidy Houck, Isabel Dakota Jennings, Sarah Mah, Victoria Morales, Sophia Orlando, Lyla Patel, Cory Rogers, Shawn Spani, Kylee Sullivan and Liam Willerup.

**Youth Honorable Mentions:** Ashley Grace, F. Cabral, Katie Holmes, Arnav Krishnamoorthi, Haley Lehikainen, Danielle Rukezo, Julia Schauer .

The **Poets' Corner Celebration Reading** was held on **Sunday May 18** at the **McHenry Museum**.

## Poetry Correction

In last month's article, "Modesto has Grand Prize Winner in the 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Ina Coolbrith Poetry Contest," one poet/writer was left out of the non-fiction awards received by Modesto Branch Pen Women in the California Federation of Chaparral Poets Annual Poetry Contest.

Linda Prather received the 3<sup>rd</sup> Place award in the Norman E. and Marjorie J. Roller prize for non-fiction on Wildlife or The Outdoor Life with her chapbook, *Unforced Rhythms*.



## Untethered

I am a child with "bad blood"  
I am not "able", not accepted, put away  
Halls ring with silence, cries gone unanswered for too long  
We've all learned that no one is coming

Foggy memories of a snowy day  
A man and a woman who dress and smell different  
Big white teeth and laughter  
Arms around me, strange and uncomfortable  
Yet I hope they do it again  
"We're coming back for you" they say in awkward, just-learned Russian  
My heart doesn't know why it soars!  
The nanny says long-lasting good has come to me this day

But the snow melts and the birches leaf out  
My long-lasting good never returns  
The stroke of a vengeful pen in one man's hand  
Sentenced me to be untethered for all my days  
I shall wallow in my "bad blood"  
How stupid of me to forget:  
Cries in these halls always go unanswered

We've all learned that no one is coming

— Linda Benham

## Rain

My leaves are browning, I have but a few left  
It is easy to notice me, I am pale, and I stand out  
The meteorologist breaks the news, No Rain in the horizon  
I have lost the fruit; there are only a few remnants on the floor  
How good it feels to see the sun, but miss the clouds, I can count the clouds, there are few  
In am cold in the morning, the sun is warm but the cold hurts  
My roots must reach out for water, must share with my neighbor, his leaves have begun to brown  
I want to help my quest but there is no place to make a nest, the wind blows right thru me  
My owner covered me with blankets to keep me warm, but the corners don't reach my tips  
He tries everything possible to help, he turns on the hose to prevent my death and keep me alive  
My unwanted quests are not helping, because of them, the flow escapes down tunnels  
Winter is here but summer is approaching, I see blooming by the Almonds  
The few rain drops that have fallen disappear like magic in the dry dirt  
My fruit may not come this season, Katy will miss her lemonade  
In the past I was strong, I am not old, but feel weak  
My roots are thirsty, what will become of me

— Steve Reyes

## Life of an Insect

The greatest pain  
For all of us insects  
Is those humans  
They hate us  
For what reason?  
We annoy them?  
They annoy us more  
They are many times our size  
So we can do nothing  
Swatted  
Stomped  
Smashed  
This is the life of an insect  
Murdered every day  
By those contemptible humans  
The ones who "study" us  
Do more harm than good  
Even though they mean good  
They just harm us  
By making us uncomfortable  
Humans are monsters  
Even if they don't mean to be.

— Brian Anglim, grade 8  
Oakdale Jr. High

## Stumble into Nature

Should I go on a hike,  
Or take a bike?  
Should I sit on a rock,  
Or just talk?  
Should I lie down and rest,  
On a bear's chest?  
Should I chase butterflies,  
Or stare at the skies?  
Maybe I will do it all,  
With a big smile on my face!

— Emily Cline, grade 6  
Lakewood Elementary

## Haiku #1

Outside the rain drops  
Inside fire crackles warmth  
It warms me all night

## Haiku #2

The heat gets you hot  
But the pool pulls you closer  
Then you dive in fast

## Haiku #3

Colored leaves spin down  
Bugs buzz and fly in your ear  
You pause as you watch

— Victoria Morales, grade 6  
Somerset Middle School





## At the Little Big Horn

*In August 2013, I made a car trip with a good friend to Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore. On the road from Rapid City, South Dakota to Billings, Montana, we stopped at the Little Big Horn National Monument. While listening to a park ranger tell the story of the battle that occurred there on June 25, 1876, I looked out at the rolling hills of the battlefield and saw a young man walking by himself up the steep incline to Last Stand Hill, where General George Custer is believed to have fallen.*

I am Lakota Sioux  
I am young, strong, singing with passion  
I make my pilgrimage to this place today  
To remember, to live again among my people  
This is the sky and the earth  
And the blood of rivers  
Where we fed our families and rode with the buffalo  
And watched the sun give life to the shadow-dancing  
Of the hills and ridges  
This is where the fish and beavers thickened the waters  
Of the Yellowstone, Big Horn, Little Big Horn, Snake  
Where the white men raped the sacred hills for gold  
Tore through our villages like soulless, lusting beasts  
This is where we caught Custer and his murderers out in the open  
And uncovered nest of new-born mice

Where today I slowly walk up to this highest point  
On this near-treeless field of ancient death  
And raise my fist three times – in honor, in pride, in communion  
This is where I triumph  
We triumph –  
Lakota, Ogallala, Cheyenne Arapaho –  
Trample on the white man's myths  
This is where my soul bleeds into the soil  
Nurtured by these soft grassy hills shimmering above the river bed  
This is the Little Big Horn and I am Lakota Sioux  
I stand alone on Last Stand Hill  
— Tom Portwood

## Mrs. Two Shoes

*In memory of Doris Lesta Scanlon  
July 4, 1930 – January 23, 2014*

It's the shoes you notice first,  
identical except the color –  
one red, one yellow or one red one navy –  
and for this reason the inmates call  
her Mrs. Two Shoes.

She is a volunteer, a Friend Outside  
who schedules regular visits to those incarcerated  
at the honor farm, county jail, state prison –  
she visits the living dead.

When removed, her shoe heel serves as the door-knocker  
she bangs on the steel door giving her entry  
to the cell block. She brings her gift of a smile  
and listens to inmate concerns then carries  
their messages to people outside.

Where ever she goes her footwear garners attention.  
Inmates, desperate to know someone's secrets,  
create the myth that as a child she was poor,  
couldn't afford matching shoes, so wears  
two colors of shoes now as reminder  
of her humble roots – a story that empowers them.  
People in cars stopped at a red light notice her feet  
standing at the corner, are intrigued then fail to drive off  
at the light change –her shoe fetish literally stops traffic.

When asked why the mismatched shoes, she says  
*God and my mother think it's ok.*  
Independent in her fashion statement  
she enjoys having fun with her feet  
carrying her into places where joy is spare.  
After 28 years doing her time –  
sporting a red and a blue pump –  
Mrs. Two shoes self-paroled.

— Lynn M. Hansen

## What is Green?

Green is the forest  
When you are camping  
And you feel peaceful  
Green is a pine tree  
Green is fresh  
And it brings hope  
Green is a jewel like an emerald  
Green is a plant like a fern  
A jumping frog, a lucky four-leaf clover  
A dry desert cactus  
The sound of green is a soft breeze  
whistling in the wind  
Green is significant  
It is nature  
The energy a plant absorbs for  
photosynthesis  
The caterpillar blossoming into a butterfly  
Green is cool grass  
And stubborn weeds  
The tropical rain forest and  
The planet Earth  
Green is a feeling of tranquility  
Like a quiet walk in the country  
And the swift current of a river  
Green is the mint in a soothing cup of tea  
Green is springtime  
In its full bloom  
The sprouting of a fava bean  
In the rich soil  
Think of growth and renewal

— James Forkner, grade 8  
Oakdale Jr. High

## The Bald Eagle

The bald eagle  
Almost never seen.  
Few have been lucky  
To see its brown wings,  
Its brown tail,  
Its yellow beak,  
And its ever so alert white head.

The bald eagle  
A bird of prey  
Searching for fish in a lake,  
All of these days.  
Looking for meat to take to its nest  
To feed its chicks  
So they may be full and rest.

The bald eagle,  
A sign of glory,  
Strength and valor,  
An example of courage and power,  
A symbol of our great country.

— David Gorman, grade 6  
Lakewood Elementary

## My Mentor

Torn by fear  
Lost in fright  
My whole world lost  
In a single fight

But then I see  
From distant light  
A beautiful creature  
In plain sight

A web it weaves  
A home it makes  
Safety it leaves  
And takes high stakes

A droplet claims  
The spider whole  
But nothing can tame  
The perseverance it holds

Down with the water  
Taken by this river  
The beast doesn't care  
Not even a sliver

Up it goes  
Like insanity it seems  
To try again and again  
To achieve his dreams

At last, he does it  
The web has been made  
And like him I must  
Make the war my parade

Thanks to my mentor  
I shall not ever give up  
All I need is hard work  
And a bit of good luck

— Vinay Channaveerappa,  
grade 9  
Modesto High School

# Green Tips for a Green Planet: Be cool, BBQ and be green, too!

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

July and August, historically the hottest months, can take a toll on our green footprints and wallets. We can reduce our carbon footprint and save money, while still enjoying all the opportunities hot weather offers.

One of the costliest summer expenses is air conditioning. There is a simple fix...turn up the thermostat. Setting it to 78 degrees or higher (we keep ours around 80) will save much energy and lots off your summer energy bills. Remember to turn the AC off or way up, when out of the house, and to open windows and screened doors at night to enjoy the many nights of cool summer breezes. If you have not updated your air conditioning system to a higher seer unit to save money, you will probably spend much more in dollars and energy in the long run.

Summer means vacations, which often involve the family car. Planning ahead to spend the lazy hazy days of summer closer to home will save dollars and cut down the use of fossil fuel energy. Think about walking or taking public transportation to parks, water slides, or recreation centers near home. If you're into challenges, want to lose weight, and take part in eco-friendly activities near home, consider walking.

Summer is barbecue season, a great way to keep the house cooler and enjoy the outdoors with friends and family in your own backyard. Check out How to Green Your Meals or a guide to grilling green or Fun Times Guide on line for tasty, eco-friendly outdoor cooking suggestions.

Consider using a propane grill, which is cleaner than charcoal or wood (Cooking a hamburger with charcoal generates 105 times more carbon monoxide than if cooked with propane!). A Pot de Feu (Pot of Fire) grill-to-go made of recycled propane tanks might be a choice or search out a

much cleaner burning natural charcoal product if charcoal is a must for you,

Solar cookers are the ultimate outdoor cooking choice. Several Modesto Peace/Life members have made their own. Options for constructing a home made solar oven or purchasing one are available online.

Serving those yummy grilled vegetables and meats brings to mind reduce, reuse, recycle. The grill allows for the use of less cookware, and using everyday dishes and utensils should take the place of disposable dinnerware and environmentally unsafe plastics and Styrofoam. If you decide to use compostable disposables, be sure to throw them in the compost pile or your city green can.

Cleaning your outdoor grill or cooker with a non-toxic eco-friendly cleaning product is something you may not have thought about, but a wise choice to prevent unsafe chemical residues from leaching into your food or the environment

when barbecuing.

In the Central Valley summer, as well as spring and autumn, are all safe months for drying clothes outside, either on a clothes line or portable drying rack. In much of Europe, drying racks are inside many, if not most, homes.

Finally, it goes without saying that we are in a serious drought, which reminds us to be ever vigilant and mindful about water usage. Drip systems in the garden make maximum use of water, which should be limited to the days of the week prescribed for your area and to very short periods of time during those days. Remember to run a full dishwasher and washing machine, wash cars at a car wash that reuses water, and that a little elbow grease with a push broom will help keep you fit and your sidewalks spic and span.

Hot weather and being green can go hand in hand. Enjoy the rest of your summer and all the benefits of being green all year long.

## Fair wages

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to 16 hour days, 6 days a week in rooms chilled to 34 degrees. The workers are organizing for better conditions, fair wages and union representation with Teamsters Local 601 (<http://www.teamstersjc7.org/locals/roster/local-601.html>)

"The person that I am today is the person who had the opportunity to go to school and have a better life because my parents went to work for a Teamster cannery," said Ashley Alvarado, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 601 in Stockton, Calif. "Two years later we had our own house, a middle class lifestyle, and insurance. This is the kind of opportunity you all deserve in America."

"We know that working in the valley and working as Teamsters in the canneries and in food processing is the ticket for many people to move into the middle class," said Teamsters International Vice President Rome Aloise, who heads Teamsters Joint Council 7 in Oakland. "We are going to bring Taylor Farms workers with us into the middle class."

Taylor Farms workers began organizing for a union last year. Their efforts have dovetailed a broader statewide campaign to crack down on the abuse of temporary workers by companies like their own, which uses temp agencies to staff

two-thirds of its operations in Tracy.

Earlier in the day before Thursday's rally, workers were in Sacramento with Hoffa and other leaders to support AB 1897, a bill that would hold companies responsible for workers' rights violations committed by their labor suppliers. They held a press conference with the author of the bill, California Assemblymember Roger Hernandez, to hail its passage out of the Senate Labor Committee this week; the bill passed the full Assembly in May. Hoffa and Hernandez called the increasing use of long-term temp workers a corporate shell game that is holding down wages and working conditions for workers throughout the economy.


"We have to decide what kind of America we want to live in – what kind of California we want to allow corporate bosses to give us," Hernandez told workers at the rally in Tracy. "This stand we are taking here is the front line in the war between workers and greedy corporate owners."

Other unions came out to the rally in support of Taylor Farms workers. "When you knock a few of us down, you

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John Lucas (r) with Sergio Lara. Photos: John Lucas



## NSA claims

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power] but when people check... they find zero times that that's happened. And that's no bullshit. Those are facts."

### Why it's not credible:

We already have evidence of abuses of power. We know that NSA analysts were using their surveillance powers to track their ex-wives and husbands, and other love interests. They even had a name for it, LOVEINT. The FISA court has also cited the NSA for violating or ignoring court orders for years at a time. And those are just self-reported abuses – the only oversight that occurs is that the NSA investigates itself and reports on the honor system to Congress or the FISC about what it finds. A real independent investigation might reveal even more. Unfortunately, until we get something like a new Church Committee, we are unlikely to see such details.

## 4. Invading Privacy is Okay Because It's Done to Prevent Terrorist Attacks

### The discredited claim

We keep hearing the same thing: Surveillance is a "critical tool in protecting the nation from terror threats." When we reform the NSA, it must be done in a way that "protect[s] the operational capability of a critical counterterrorism tool." The implication is that the stopping terrorist attacks is the government's only goal.

### Why it's not credible:

We know that NSA surveillance is not used just for stopping terrorists and it's not even just used for national security. The Intercept recently revealed leaks detailing the NSA's role in the "war on drugs,"—in particular, a 2004 memo detailing how the NSA has redefined narcotics trafficking as a national security issue. We also know that the NSA feeds

data to the DEA, where it ends up playing a part in ordinary law enforcement investigations. And internationally, the NSA engages in economic espionage and diplomatic spying, something detailed in Glenn Greenwald's recent book *No Place to Hide*.

## 5. There's Plenty of Oversight From Congress, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, and Agency Watchdogs

### The discredited claim

We've repeatedly heard from the President and from NSA defenders like Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Mike Rogers that Congress knows all about NSA spying. Right after the first Snowden leak, President Obama said: "your duly elected representatives have been consistently informed on exactly what we're doing." We've also heard that a court has approved these programs, so we shouldn't be concerned.

### Why it's not credible:

EFF and others have long documented that Congress has an incredibly hard time getting information about NSA spying. And it's not just Congress. We learned a few months ago that the Department of Defense's deputy Inspector General, in charge of Intelligence and Special Program Assessments, was not aware of the call detail collection program.

What's more, the secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) is completely incomparable to an ordinary adversarial court. It makes decisions in a vacuum, and it doesn't always have complete information, much less a second adversarial voice or technical help. Its chief judge has said that it's not equipped to conduct oversight. EFF recently had to tell the court that its *Jewel v. NSA* case even existed

– the government had apparently decided that it didn't have to. We also know that the FISC isn't much of a block, since in 11 years "the court has denied just 10 applications, and modified several dozen, while approving more than 15,000."

## So why are we giving up our rights?

It's time for NSA and its supporters to admit what we all know is true: what is at stake in this debate is the simple ability for any of us—in the US or around the world—to be able to use the Internet without fear of surveillance. They continue to be willing to overstate their case in order to scare us into allowing them to continue to "collect it all." But the American people are getting wise and the media are increasingly double-checking their claims. As a result, more Americans than ever now say that the NSA has gone too far and those tired old stories are starting to wear thin.

That's why it's time to tell Congress that these excuses won't work anymore. Right now, Congress is considering legislation that could be a first step to reining in NSA mass spying. But there's a contentious political battle taking place on Capitol Hill, with NSA defenders pushing a weaker version of the reform bill while civil liberties groups campaign for powerful reform. Please add your voice and call on the Senate to pass real NSA reform.

*Cindy Cohn is legal director for the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), as well as its general counsel, coordinating over 40 national class action lawsuits against the telecommunications carriers and the government seeking to stop warrantless NSA surveillance*

*Nadia Kayyali is a member of the activism team at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.*

For links associated with this article, visit <https://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/06/04>

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## Fair wages

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knock us all down and we take it personally," said Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the 2.1 million-member California Labor Federation.

"I come here from Los Angeles with a message of unity and support," said Ron Herrera, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 396 in Covina, Calif. "It is extremely important for Taylor Farms to know that not only is Northern California in this fight, Southern California – with 130,000 Teamsters – is in this fight today. We can't let any company exploit Latino workers."

Workers who spoke at the rally described harsh conditions in the plants. They said workers don't report workplace injuries for fear of being fired, as has happened to other workers. They are denied sick leave, vacation time, and retirement benefits. The company refuses to provide workers with insulated clothing and protective gear to perform their jobs. Meanwhile, Taylor Farms workers in nearby Salinas, Calif. are Teamsters and make up to \$3 more per hour than workers in Tracy. They also have good health care, retirement benefits, paid sick and vacation days, and fair work rules.

When workers in Tracy came together to fight for what

their coworkers in Salinas have, the company responded with retaliatory firings, intimidation, and other extreme tactics. An election for union representation held in March ended with the National Labor Relations Board impounding ballots due to the company's unfair labor practices, which are currently being investigated.

"I've been working here for six years and have not seen change," said Taylor Farms temp worker Jesus Herrera. "I've worked 80 hour weeks and I'm still a temp worker – how is that possible? These past few months have been tough on us. Some of us have been harassed and threatened. And some of us have even been fired for standing up for our rights. But every time I see them treat somebody wrong it makes me fight harder for this union."

"They've got three companies here. When we're done there's going to be one company with good wages and good health care," Hoffa said. "The one thing we want CEO Bruce Taylor to know is this: change is coming!"

For the complete links in this article, visit <http://teamster.org/news/2014/06/hoffa-and-calif-teamsters-descend-taylor-farms-rally-food-worker-justice>



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

## ACTIONS FOR PEACE

### Sonora - Stockton

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

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

## JULY

**10 THURS: How Should We Balance Access and Excellence in the Arts?** A discussion moderated by Modesto Bee editor, Joseph Kieta. Open to the public. 5:30 pm at the McHenry Museum, 1402 I St., Modesto, CA. RSVP at <http://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/event/?postId=54166>

**12 SAT: Rim Fire Effects Hike.** Explore effects 2013 Rim Fire along the Tuolumne River. Easy 4 mile round-trip hike up the South Fork, Tuolumne; wear good hiking shoes/boots. Bring: 1 liter water/beverage, lunch, hat, sunscreen, jacket, hiking poles (optional) and other personal necessities. Meet at Laveroni Park, Groveland at 9:00AM, then carpool 30 min. to the trailhead. Return by 3:00PM. Sign up with trip leader Elaine Gorman, (209) 586-9640 or [vevado@yahoo.com](mailto:vevado@yahoo.com). Sign up by July 5th. Limited to 20 hikers. No entrance fee to YNP is required because the hike begins in the Stanislaus National Forest. Sponsored by Tuolumne River Trust, <http://www.tuolumne.org/>

**15 TUES: Stanislaus County Commission for Women Annual Meeting.** Marian Kaanon speaks on "Paths Toward Leadership." Free. 6 pm. Fuzio Universal Bistro, 1020 10th St., Modesto. Info: [sccw01@gmail.com](mailto:sccw01@gmail.com)

**16 WED: MPLC July Film Night: *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*** at the Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St, 6:30 pm. FREE. See article, this issue.

**26 SAT: Summer Fundraiser Gala: "Light up the Night,"** fundraiser for Mistlin Gallery complement the "Sixties Retro" exhibition held in the gallery from July 15 - August 16. Costumes welcome.

Gourmet food, silent auction, live music from the Beatles, Three Dog Night, other music from that era. 6 - 10 pm. Tickets: \$20 for members; \$25 for non-members available at the Mistlin Gallery. Info: [www.ccartassn.org](http://www.ccartassn.org)

**27 SUN: Modesto Film Society** presents *Casablanca*. 2 pm. State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/313>

## AUGUST

**17 SUN: Modesto Film Society** presents *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. 2 pm. State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/317>

**23 SAT: MPLC's Non-violence Book Club** discusses *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* by Joan Bondurant. 8:30 am to 10:00 am, at the Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. All welcome. See article, this issue.

**24 SUN: Modesto Film Society** presents *Airplane*. 2 pm. State Theatre, 1307 J. St. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/318>

**31 SUN: Festival Del Nopal/Cactus Festival.** Nopales/Cactus Cooking Contest; Nopales/Cactus Tasting; Live Entertainment; Bouncy Houses; Car Show; Gift Drawings; Food Vendors; Arts & Crafts Vendors. Ceres Flea Market/Drive In, 1651 E. Whitmore Ave., Ceres. Free Admission, \$4.00 parking. Sponsored by Latino Community Roundtable. Info: Tony Madrigal, (209) 579-4776.

## ONGOING

**Calculators for a sustainable environment:** valuable website which contains car payment and car use calculators and links to many calculators to help people reduce their energy footprints. <http://www.carpaymentcalculator.net/calcs/environmental.php>

**Valley Improvement Project's** mission is to improve the quality of life of under-represented and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley. For ongoing

## 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), (NOTE TIME), 5:00-6:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

**MEDIA:** Listen to local Valley Community Radio KQRP 104.9 FM, <http://www.kqrp.com>

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

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

**CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS:** Info: 537-7818, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

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

ing events visit V.I.P. at <http://valleyimprovementprojects.org/about>. Email: [valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com](mailto:valleyimprovementprojects@gmail.com) Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ValleyImprovementProjects?ref=br\\_tf](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyImprovementProjects?ref=br_tf)

**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.

**CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ART ASSOCIATION AND MISTLIN GALLERY.** Exhibits by local artists; art classes for children and adults; art teachers for schools. Open Tues. - Fri. 11:30 - 5 and Sat. 12-4. 529-3369 or [www.ccartassn.org](http://www.ccartassn.org)

**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: Modesto, Patterson, and Oakdale. For more information, call Neil Hudson at 847-0540.

**CHILDRENS STORY HOURS** Stanislaus County Library: Modesto, WiggleWorms! Program for children age 2 and younger and their caregivers; combines age appropriate stories and movement activities that promote essential pre-reading skills. Mondays: 10:15 am & 11:15 am, Tuesdays, 11:15 am. Preschool StoryTime (children ages 3 - 6 years) Tuesdays: 6:15 pm; Wednesdays: 10:15 am. Cuentos en espanol-jueves, 6:15. Bilingual StoryTime/Cuentos bilingües - Saturdays 10:15 am. All Library branches have story hours. All branches closed Fridays. Info: [http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk\\_kids\\_storytime.shtml#mod](http://www.stanislauslibrary.org/tk_kids_storytime.shtml#mod)

**Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE:** used and new quality materials, 630 Kearney

Ave (across from Post Office), and at 3124 McHenry Ave., Modesto. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org/home/restore>

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

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

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

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

For complete calendar information and regularly scheduled activities, visit [www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm](http://www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm)

**DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS:** Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org) Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing. For up to date information, visit [www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm](http://www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm)