



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

Working for peace, justice and a sustainable future

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One year after George Floyd's death: Courage and conviction drive movement

By Margaret Huang, President and CEO,
Southern Poverty Law Center

One year ago today, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis policeman after being arrested on suspicion of using counterfeit money in a store. His killing was captured on video by a young woman, 17-year-old Darnella Frazier, who recorded the scene as a police officer knelt on Floyd's neck and

choked him for more than nine minutes. The events of that day and the rise of Black Lives Matter protests across the globe have been seared into our minds and the history books for decades to come – and that's because of the remarkable courage of many people and the conviction of one.

The courage was demonstrated by Darnella and other witnesses who stepped forward

to counter the excuses of the legal defense team. In addition to Darnella, who testified in the trial of the killer, others who showed great courage were Jena Scurry, a 911 dispatcher who reported her concerns about the treatment of Floyd; Alisha Oyler, who was working nearby and took video recordings;

Donald Williams II, a mixed martial arts fighter who warned the police that they were killing Floyd; Judeah Reynolds, Darnella's 9-year-old cousin who also witnessed the murder; Alyssa Funari, another 17-year-old girl who recorded the killing; Kaylynn Gilbert, also 17, who witnessed the murder; Genevieve Hansen, a firefighter who offered to render aid to Floyd and was rebuffed by the police officers; Christopher Belfrey, who videotaped the murder; and Christopher Martin, a 19-year-old store clerk who had reported Floyd's use of a counterfeit bill and later observed the murder.

It's especially notable that so many of the witnesses who came forward were young people, people who had reason to fear the

New Report: California's Tax Code Favors Wealthy, Blocks Californians of Color and Low-Income Households from Economic Opportunities

SACRAMENTO — A new report by the California Budget & Policy Center shows that how California policymakers choose to raise and allocate resources — taxes and ongoing revenue — contributes to the economic inequities for Californians of color and low-income households while providing many more advantages to wealthy individuals.



Also, in a 5 Facts report — **Promoting Racial Equity Through California's Tax and Revenue Policies** — the Budget Center outlines how a legacy of racist state and federal policies and practices, along with aspects of the tax code, block people of color from opportunities to build income and wealth while many of the state's tax policies privilege Californians with higher incomes and wealth. These policies and practices range from residential segregation, employment discrimination, tax benefits only available to those who opt to "itemize" tax deductions, and deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes.

Relatedly, another Budget Center report released this week — **Why Aren't Corporations Paying Their Fair Share of Taxes?** — found

corporations are paying less than half the amount in state taxes, as a share of their income, than they did four decades ago. This is largely due to policymakers' decisions to cut corporate tax rates and expand tax breaks. These tax policy choices by state leaders have significant consequences for the economic well-being of the state and Californians. As one example, California's state budget would have received \$13.3 billion more revenue in 2018 had corporations paid the same share of their income in taxes that year as they did in 1981, more than the state spends on the University of California, the California State University, and student aid combined.

Policymakers have an opportunity to generate ongoing revenue and invest in universal health care, in making child care, housing, and higher education more affordable, and in expanding children's savings accounts or creating a "baby bonds" program to help families save for their children's futures, position the state for greater and more equitable economic growth, and better prepare the state for the next crisis.

Read the full report here: <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/promoting-racial-equity-through-californias-tax-and-revenue-policies/>



Barry King / Alamy Stock Photo

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.



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The King Center Offers Camp NOW Leadership Academy for 13 to 19-year-olds

1st Year Students: June 21st – June 25th

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Camp Fee- \$199, Scholarships Available

Camp NOW Leadership Academy is a multi-year experience that begins each year with a one-week, virtual leadership development experience. We guide youth ages 13-19 in developing and enhancing their leadership, critical thinking and team building skills. The program continues with monthly engagement activities throughout the year.

The academy prepares youth to be global leaders and change agents as they engage in the six principles and the six steps of nonviolent social change based on Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy, which we call Nonviolence365®. The highly intensive program utilizes technology, financial literacy, public speaking, multi-level communication and Kingian leadership practices to develop our students to become complete global citizens who will inspire nonviolent change across the world.

Register at <https://form.jotform.com/200493860566157>

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



Friday June 18, 7 PM: Birds of Merced National Wildlife Refuge

Presenter — Linda Lagace

Linda has been visiting the Merced National Wildlife refuge almost weekly during the birding season for the past 15 years. But this slide presentation will include recent photographs taken since January 2018. Since the acquisition of her Tamron zoom lens, Linda has been able to get up close and personal with the birds. The presentation also includes a brief smattering of the birds Linda hasn't seen for a while as well as some rare behavior she hopes to see again. Linda is not a bird expert and hopes that many of the meeting participants will actively correct her attempts at bird misidentification.

Linda is a non-native Californian who moved here from New Jersey via Louisiana back in 1986. Educated in technology as well as the social sciences, Linda has had a diverse job history, including working as a petrochemical engineer, artisan distiller, and hospice social worker. She has lived throughout California from Mendocino to Santa Cruz, Menlo Park and Merced. Linda enjoys her retirement with her husband David and she enjoys photographing the beauty of the wildlife and wetlands of the Central Valley.

Sierra Club Monthly Programs will be hosted on Zoom. Send your RSVP to Jeff Olson, rayjeff49@gmail.com, in the week prior to each program. Your computer, tablet, or smart phone with internet access will enable you to watch programs live! Programs begin at 7:00 P.M. and last one hour.

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

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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!
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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.
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<http://thevalleycitizen.com>

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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.



Candlelight Vigil with Bereaved Israelis and Palestinians

The Parents Circle – Families Forum welcomes the cease-fire enacted May 21st. We continue holding vigil to help heal damage to hearts and minds and find our way back to the path to peace.

We, bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families, are devastated by the recent violence and the needless loss of more lives.

Join us by Zoom to light a candle, take a moment of silence and reconnect to our values of peace in this difficult time.

Register for the weekly candlelight vigil Sundays at 8:00 AM PDT. *Please note: registration is required for each of the weekly meetings, so be sure to sign up for each week.*

Joint Statement from the Jewish and Muslim Leadership of Modesto and Manteca

No doubt, the events that have occurred in the last couple of weeks in the Holy Land brought us severe heartache and sadness. During the final days of the Holy month of Ramadan with worshipers praying in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and during the Jewish pilgrimage festival of Shavuot, to see such violence and discord in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas in Palestine and Israel is truly horrific. We stand in solidarity, calling for calm, peace and security for all people - Muslim, Jewish, young, old... all. We completely deplore the loss of innocent lives - Palestinian and Israeli!

We affirm the Haram Al-Shareef, otherwise known as the Noble Sanctuary to Muslims, and the Har HaBayit, otherwise known as the Temple Mount to Jews, is very blessed and home to sites that are deeply sacred to both Muslims and Jews. We condemn and deplore any degradation of these holy sites, any violence and any restrictions of rights to worship the God of Abraham freely at these holy sites.

We wholeheartedly share in the same goals: Palestinians

and Israelis living side-by-side with respect, free to worship their Creator, with peace, security and stability for all, while ensuring the same rights for living and well-being. The time has come to work toward a common understanding and acknowledgment to bring an end to the pain and suffering and struggle in the Holy Land and we call upon all to refrain from speech and actions which will divide and delay this goal of peace and security. Hate crimes, prejudice and evil committed against the other is not what Islam nor Judaism calls for and it must not be tolerated.

**Shalom Bochner, Rabbi of
Congregation Beth Shalom of Modesto**

**Mohammad ElFarra, Imaam,
Islamic Center of Manteca**

**Doug Highiet, President of
Congregation Beth Shalom of Modesto**

**Ahmad Kayello, Imaam,
Islamic Center of Modesto**

Beyond the cease-fire: breaking the cycle of Israeli-Palestinian violence

By **STEPHEN M. COLECCHI**

Ed. Note: While *Stanislaus Connections* is not a religious publication, we are publishing this article because it lays out the pertinent issues involved.

With Pope Francis, I “thank God for the decision to halt the armed conflicts and acts of violence” and pray for “dialogue and peace” in the Holy Land. In solidarity with the [church of Jerusalem](#), I pray for “justice and peace.”

Nothing can justify Hamas [firing rockets](#) indiscriminately into civilian areas, killing a dozen people and terrorizing millions. Nothing can justify Israel’s disproportionate military response, [killing numerous civilians](#), including scores of children, and making thousands of families homeless.

As I contemplate the current crisis, I remind myself that violent conflict does not erupt in a vacuum. Repeated conflicts are evidence of a cycle of violence that needs to be broken. A cease-fire is only a first step on the long journey toward breaking the vicious cycle that has terrorized Israelis and Palestinians alike.

There has been a lot of focus on the immediate events that precipitated the latest Israel-Gaza war. In many ways, Jerusalem lies at the epicenter of the ongoing conflict. Sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, Jerusalem is a city that must be shared by two peoples and three faiths, but is increasingly claimed by one.

The church in the Holy Land identified two key precipitating factors that ignited the latest violence: Israel’s denial of access to Al-Aqsa Mosque and its threatened home evictions in Sheikh Jarrah.

On May 9, the [Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem](#) declared: “The violence used against the worshippers [at Al-Aqsa Mosque] undermines their safety and their rights to have access to the Holy Places and worship freely. The forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah is also an unacceptable violation of the most fundamental human rights, the right to a home.”

The patriarchate went on to declare: “Our Church has been clear that peace requires justice. Insofar as ... the rights of everyone, Israelis and Palestinians, are not upheld and respected, there will be no justice and therefore no peace in the city.”

This insight is a key to understanding the ongoing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. The recent Israeli provocations in Jerusalem lit a match, but the fuel for the fire was provided by longstanding injustices, systemic violations of human rights, and the daily acts of inequity and occupation.

From 2005 through 2018, I accompanied bishops of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on solidarity visits to Israel and Palestine. We met with the local church in the Holy Land and with Israelis and Palestinians. We also gathered with bishops representing episcopal conferences of Europe, Canada and South Africa.

The Holy Land Coordination, as our annual gathering was known, witnessed deeply disturbing instances of systematic discrimination against the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the terribly troubling realities of Palestinians living under occupation in East Jerusalem, the rest of the West Bank and Gaza. We also witnessed the security concerns of Israelis and the courageous work of some Israelis and Palestinians

building bridges of understanding.

In 2008, the bishops of the Holy Land Coordination issued a [communiqué](#) that described the harsh consequences of separation and occupation:

The separation wall through which we passed was a vivid reminder of the security concerns of Israel as well as the deepening division between ordinary Israelis and Palestinians who lack the human contact that can help foster justice and reconciliation. We heard moving stories of how the wall compounds suffering and compromises human dignity by separating families, devastating the Palestinian economy and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. We are particularly concerned for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has worsened since we visited there a year ago.

Tragically, the same is true today, only the situation is worse. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the stifling blockade of Gaza, the denial of building permits to Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the corresponding home demolitions, the humiliation of numerous checkpoints, the harsh police actions in Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank, and the increasingly frequent and violent attacks of radical settlers, together with the reprisals they engender, all have made a bad situation worse. And the Palestinian citizens of Israel suffer as well.

In 2018, the [Catholic bishops of the Holy Land](#) warned that the Nation State Law passed by Israel’s Knesset would “provide a constitutional and legal basis for discrimination among Israel’s citizens, clearly laying out the principles ac-

Division III Winner –2021 Peace Essay Contest

Confronting the Children's Crisis

Landon Arnold, Oakdale Junior High School

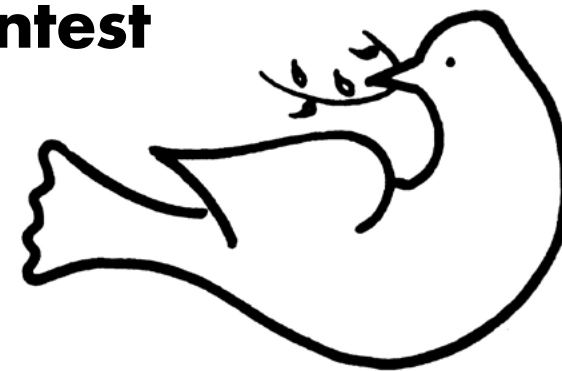
Teacher: Dee Hawksworth

Worldwide, a child dies every three seconds from hunger or malnutrition. This is just one of the hardships some children have to deal with on a daily basis. According to the Global Citizen, as of 2017 there were, "264 million children who didn't have access to an education," (McMaster). This is a startling number of children, many of them being girls. Most of these issues stem from a high level of poverty in the world. Across the globe about 1 billion children live in poverty, lacking the basic necessities they need. Numerous children are affected by these difficulties. Those of us who can, should try to help. This is where UNICEF comes in. They are a United Nations agency providing children around the world with humanitarian and developmental aid. The work that UNICEF accomplishes is crucial, benefiting millions of children across the world and ensuring that the future is a little bit brighter.

UNICEF stands for the United Nations Children's Fund. This organization was originally established with the mission to provide relief to children in areas devastated by World War II. Since then, UNICEF has put their efforts into improving

nutrition, health, education, and the overall welfare of children, and mothers. They work in many countries to protect children from domestic violence and abuse. They also strive to provide better healthcare for children and supply pregnant women with proper care. When disaster strikes, UNICEF is on the ground providing help for families during and after an emergency. During this Covid-19 pandemic, UNICEF has been working with partners and donors to supply families with guidance and protection. Another pandemic of sorts they help to manage is a lack of education. They work to provide learning opportunities for all children, no matter where, or what gender. Gender equality is one of the key areas of education UNICEF focuses on. Discriminatory school practices can bar girls from getting an equal education. In response, UNICEF provides learning environments where girls can feel empowered to be successful. This is only a fraction of what UNICEF achieves, and they are improving the status of children worldwide, every day.

UNICEF has accomplished much since the start of their foundation in 1947. UNICEF "works in over 190 countries and territories," (www.unicef.org) sometimes in the remotest of places. This organization's tireless efforts are also essential to many children across the world. UNICEF has secured a better future for thousands if not millions of



children. These actions have given a beacon of hope to people globally, showing them the importance of peace. As they say, actions speak louder than words. Securing the well-being of countless children also promotes peace because it shows these children they matter. Who knows, one of the children UNICEF has saved may grow up to be a leader, an innovator, or a pioneer of peace. Children are the future, and UNICEF is aiding them and the generations to come.

To conclude, these examples establish that the work UNICEF accomplishes is crucial and will continue benefiting millions of children across the world, ensuring that the future is a little bit brighter.

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

How to talk about COVID-19 vaccines with friends and family

From the Centers for Disease Control

Listen to their questions with empathy

COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it's normal to for people to have questions about them. The sheer amount of information—and misinformation—about COVID-19 vaccines can be overwhelming to anyone. You can help by listening without judgement and identifying the root of their concerns.

Acknowledge their emotions so they know they have been heard. For example, you can say, "It sounds like you are stressed at work and home, and concerns about the vaccine are another source of stress. That's really tough."

Ask open-ended questions to explore their concerns

Open-ended questions are meant to elicit more than a yes-or-no answer. Asking open-ended questions can help you understand what your friend or family member is worried about, where they learned any troubling information, and what they have done to get answers to their questions. For example, you can ask, "How did watching that news report make you feel? What did you do next?"

Try not to sound judgmental. Ask questions that help you understand their concerns. For example, avoid things like, "That's a silly concern," or "Why would you be worried about that?"

Ask permission to share information

Once you understand your friend or family member's question or concern, ask if you can provide some information, and tell them where you get information you trust. If they agree, they will be more willing to listen to you instead of feeling like you're pushing unwanted information on them. You can find answers to common questions from reputable sources, including www.CDC.gov, the local health department website, or other trusted sources such as their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Sometimes, sharing quick, accurate answers to common concerns your family or friends might have can go a long way toward moving someone from worry to confidence. If you don't know the answer to their questions, consider offering to help look for information.

Help them find their own reason to get vaccinated

Everyone who chooses to get vaccinated does it for a reason—to protect their family, to protect their children, to be less anxious, to visit their parents, or to get back to activities like seeing friends, resuming work, or returning to school. After addressing concerns with empathy and facts, you can steer the conversation from "why not" to the important reasons that matter to them—their "why." You may choose to share your reasons for getting vaccinated or discuss common goals you may have, like visiting with each other safely.



The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are most compelling to them personally.

Help make their vaccination happen

Once someone decides on their "why," help them make a commitment to get vaccinated. Help make the path to vaccination shorter, easier, and less stressful for them. Offer to help your family member or friend make a vaccination appointment at a location nearby and, if needed, go with them to the appointment. Offer to help with transportation or to babysit if they need childcare. Remember, every person who chooses to get vaccinated brings us all a step closer to moving past the COVID-19 pandemic. As a trusted messenger to your family and friends, you can play a role in their decision to vaccinate.

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"Glad You Could Drop By"

By TOM PORTWOOD

2021 marks the 40th year since the HIV/AIDS epidemic began to slowly emerge in the United States and around the world, though it would be years before scientists, health care professionals, political leaders, and society as a whole would begin to understand it, find ways to try and prevent or treat it, and respond to it appropriately.

Several years into the epidemic, I began working for the City of Houston, Texas, and was soon meeting and working with highly courageous people in the community who were giving their all in the struggle to build a support system of services for people with HIV/AIDS. Often suffering from HIV/AIDS themselves, and heedless of what was to become of their own lives, these valiant warriors fought ignorance, prejudice, and cowardice, at every turn, even in their final days, spending their last breaths in the fight. They were flat out fearless.

It was my distinct honor to be their colleague, and I was lucky enough to be friends with many of them. I remember their names, their passion to help their ravaged communities, the grinding certainty that each of them would die, and far too soon. Many years have passed, and the epidemic is in a different, better, place, but I have always remembered the sacrifices of those early activists. I wrote the following essay in the early 1990s upon the passing of one of these remarkable people – my friend, Bill Napoli.

It was six-thirty by the time we got there, not more than an hour after we learned by phone he was dying. A tight knot of friends encircled him, their eyes swollen with tears; some were still openly weeping, and moved around the bed as in a sad dance, hugging each other and whispering a word or two of comfort; others held his hands, and leaned across him

to whisper in his ear. One woman simply stroked his feet.

Around the bed lay the trappings of a long hospital stay – stuffed animals, a Bible, get-well cards, a pitcher of water, glasses – everything rested in leisurely disorder, as though awaiting further use at some indeterminate time.

At times his breathing seemed labored and abrupt; at other times his chest heaved as the machine took over, rolling slowly and gently like the swelling of ocean waves. The front of his bed had been lifted to a forty-five degree slope, allowing him to breathe a little easier. Plastic tubing ran out of his nostrils. The sunlight outside his window edged slowly away as the minutes passed, and the lush magnolia leaves shone peculiarly like polished metal. One of his friends left his side, swallowed some soda pop, and walked out into the hallway, head bowed. The other friends automatically made a series of small adjustments among themselves around the bed, casually touching their neighbor's shoulder or hand in passing.

Two more people entered the room, a husband and his wife, and they sat down on the cold linoleum floor, folding their knees. The woman's eyes welled with tears, and she leaned against her husband who gently stroked her hair.

On he breathed, his eyes shut for the most part, but at other times they fluttered open momentarily. One by one his friends sat down beside him, spoke a few private thoughts into his ear, and patted him on the shoulder, or clutched his

hand. Someone came into the room carrying three red roses wrapped in tissue paper; he glanced almost apologetically at Bill and walked swiftly over to the window where he deftly arranged the flowers in a vase. He stopped for a moment at the bedside then quickly left the room.

I stood just beyond the bed and the circle of friends for the better part of an hour, embracing friends as they left, smiling at acquaintances. I stood there watching Bill and thinking. I couldn't help but feel that everything seemed sweet and fitting, not at all tragic, even though Bill was only forty-five. How all of what we call life can be distilled into

these final moments, how the essence of what a person said and did and felt in a lifetime could be summed up so tidily, so peacefully – and how all of this seemed especially fair and decent for Bill whose life had been so marked by struggle and sorrow in the final years.

It was now a few minutes before eight. I walked over to Bill finally and squeezed his shoulder. "This is Tom," I said, and a pinpoint of absolute recognition glinted in Bill's eyes. "Hiya Coach," he seemed to be saying (he always called just about all his pals Coach), "glad you could drop by!"

Extending Food Support to Undocumented Californians Blocked by Federal Policies

From the California Budget & Policy Center

Did you know federal rules block undocumented Californians from receiving food support through the CalFresh program? CalFresh is a key resource to help families put food on the table and has been essential during the pandemic when Californians do not have stable income or jobs to pay for basic needs.

As a new report from the Budget Center shows, California children in families that include undocumented immigrants were an estimated three to four times more likely to be growing up in families struggling to meet their basic needs than children in non-immigrant families.

This is why policymakers should extend state food assistance benefits to undocumented Californians as part of their 2021-22 budget priorities. Policymakers can invest now in undocumented Californians and choose to reduce policy-driven inequities that exclude people based on immigration status from food, health, and economic support.

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Homeless: Falling into the Black Hole of Help

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

We first saw Cheryl Littlefield on south 9th Street in Modesto in late January. She was badly soiled and had obviously been sleeping outside for several weeks. Her fingernails and toenails were grotesquely long and dirty. Prior to living on the street, Cheryl had had a room at a nearby motel. She said she lost the room when it, “caved in.”

Her income is managed by a local payee. Payees are assigned to people who can’t manage their money. The payee makes sure rent and other necessities are paid before issuing whatever is left over to the client.

In March, the manager of Cheryl’s former motel room said the payee had moved her to a different location. She says she’s unaware of the move and seems determined to stay within a few blocks of the motel she lived in for years.

Around mid-March, after repeated attempts by county workers to get her to a shelter — she refused to go in — Modesto Police Sargent Mike Hammond and the Homeless Engagement and Rescue Team (HEART) were able to get her into an ambulance. She was taken to a Modesto hospital for evaluation.

Once released from the hospital, Cheryl went to the Modesto Gospel Mission. Or maybe she went to Stanislaus County’s Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) center. In a typical scenario, no one who has tried to follow her case is certain exactly where she went, or how, or when. Some think she was turned over to Adult Protective Services. Confidentiality rules prohibit hospitals, public agencies, and public employees from releasing information that might promote better understanding of the breakdown of our systems of care, so Cheryl’s exact path is difficult to follow.

For a while, once she was at the Mission, Cheryl slept on the concrete entryway at the entrance, sometimes in her own waste. After a few days, she began going inside at night, and using the beds and showers. By then, she had clean clothing and her nails and hair were tended. She spent her days outside on nearby sidewalks.

After a few weeks at the Mission, Cheryl wandered away. She was located and turned over to another agency, or maybe Adult Protective Services again. The few people who know exactly what happened won’t talk.

She then spent a few days at a transitional care home. At some point, Cheryl had a room at a motel on McHenry Avenue. The manager of that motel thinks she was there for “about eight days.” He says she was taken away by a, “blue van.”

Cheryl says her payee removed her from the motel and brought her back to her current location on south 9th Street, exactly where she was found in January. Her memory may or may not be reliable. When asked how long she’s been back on the street, she says, “Since June 1st.” She doesn’t know the year, day, or month, and doesn’t know who the president is.

When people talk about cases like Cheryl’s, they invariably invoke clichés about, “falling through the cracks” and “gaps in the system.” Those responses are misleading. There are no cracks and there is no system. For most homeless people in dire need of help, there is only a yawning hole, the upper rim of which is composed of social services, churches, charities, non-profits, and volunteers, all of them underfunded, under-



staffed, and overwhelmed. The least understood component is social services.

Government funded social services are the supposed safety net into which people like Cheryl Littlefield are placed. Again, it’s not a net, it’s a hole. People like Cheryl Littlefield often run the gauntlet of services, sometimes over a period of months, only to find themselves back on the street, often the very same places they fell into the hole we know as the, “system of care.” It’s also known more widely as, “help,” a misnomer that has thus far prevented the public from understanding the primary reasons homeless numbers keep growing.

For the seriously mentally ill, one of the stops along the

rim of the help hole is jail. That’s where Mary Baca is now. We first wrote about Mary almost six years ago. She’s clearly schizophrenic (see minute 4:33 of video and on) and to the best of our knowledge has had exactly one visit to BHRS during all her years on the streets. Once out of jail, she will almost certainly be returned to the streets.

Mary’s case isn’t unusual. In fact, jail has become the default alternative to the streets for mentally ill homeless people. Between 2009 and 2019, “the proportion of incarcerated individuals with an open mental health case in California jails rose from 19 percent to 31 percent.” Even more telling, the total number of prisoners actually decreased during that same ten-year period. Yes, the number of people incarcerated for crimes decreased even while the number of mentally ill prisoners rose.

Cheryl Littlefield may or may not be mentally ill; however, she’s clearly unable to take care of herself. At 74 years old, her money has to be managed, she sleeps on the streets, and when asked where the bathroom is, she points to her trousers.

This week, after county outreach workers were notified Cheryl was back on the street, they approached her with offers of assistance. She politely declined, and, in the public eye, will be seen as yet another homeless person who, “doesn’t want help.”

It may well be, however, that despite her diminished capacity, Cheryl Littlefield has learned firsthand that “help” for the homeless means a weeks- or months-long trip around our “system of care,” followed by a swift and efficient kick down the rabbit hole that leads back to the streets. No wonder she doesn’t want help.

The Modesto Peace/Life Center Homeless Project is still helping people

By FRANK PLOOF

The Modesto Peace/Life Center Homeless Project is still helping people in need thanks to the generous donations we receive.

Recently we were able to work with several other agencies to assist a Downtown Street Team employee with her rental deposit. She is now into housing for the first time in a long time.

This is just one example of the PLC working with other agencies in the community to assist our homeless folks in meeting their needs.

Another example is paying for notary fees for out-of-county birth certificate applications. For the last 12 months we have done 20 or \$300 worth. We also sometimes pay for Drivers License fees, Pet vaccinations, and share transporta-



tion costs to send someone home.

Many thanks to the folks that keep the Homeless Account funded.

To donate to this worthy project, send a check to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, PO Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353 and write “Homeless Project” in the memo. Or go the www.peacelifecenter.org and donate by PayPal. Please designate your donation to “Homeless Project.” Where is says, “Note.”



Endangered Homeless Woman Safe, United with Daughter

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Cheryl Littlefield's daughter, who prefers to remain anonymous, was stunned when she found her mother on the street last Thursday.

"The last time I saw her was in November," said the daughter. She still had her room then. It was packed full of her belongings and a lot of trash, but her rooms have been that way for years."

According to her daughter, Cheryl has a history of mental illness going back decades. "My father got custody of the kids when we were small," she says. "That's how bad it was, because back then the mother almost always got custody."

Despite being raised by her father and a stepmother, Cheryl's daughter has always tried to keep in touch, even through all her mother's erratic and sometimes threatening behavior. She says Cheryl lived with a man for years in a trailer park on south 7th Street in Modesto but has been on her own for at least a decade.

At one point, she lived in Shiva's Motel on south 9th Street, which became uninhabitable after a fire in 2014.

"She got worse after the fire at Shiva's," said her daughter Sunday. "But up until recently, she had another room and I



still checked on her."

Cheryl apparently lost her room not long after her daughter visited in November, but she kept telling anyone who asked she still lived there. Cheryl's daughter only learned Thursday that Modesto's Homeless Engagement and Rescue Team had removed her from the streets in early March.

No one is sure how the seventy-four year-old woman ended up back on the sidewalk after a circuitous journey through Stanislaus County's systems of care, but outreach workers acted swiftly when they learned on Thursday that she was back at her old haunts on south 9th Street. Despite clear signs of mental illness, Cheryl may have convinced people she still had a room and could take care of herself.

By Friday, Cheryl had been transported to a secure location in Modesto, not far from where she was found. Within a short time, she had clean clothes, a bed, a bathroom, and access to care. However, her situation is still precarious; her current location is a transitional facility. Her daughter is working with Stanislaus County authorities to find her a suitable place to live permanently. Even while aware of how difficult it is to find care for the mentally ill, she's determined Cheryl won't have to endure the peril of today's urban streets, where a mentally ill elderly woman can be especially vulnerable to cruel predators.

During a visit on May 16, mother and daughter enjoyed discussing a future that will include sleeping on a bed instead of the sidewalk, and ready access to compassionate care. Cheryl seemed delighted when her daughter knelt down and inspected her feet, saying, "We're really going to have to do something about those toenails."

One year after George Floyd's death

continued from page 1

consequences of their bravery. Many of these young women and men were Black – and all were familiar with the frequent stories of police harassment and violence against their community. These witnesses took the stand seeking justice for Floyd, regretting their inability to stop the murder and anxiously calling for accountability. Their courage should serve as an inspiration to all of us. What if each of us were given the chance to stand up to police brutality? Would we be as brave? As Dr. Martin Luther King noted, "we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Our country was well-served by these brave young people who spoke out to demand justice.

As a nation, we also owe mental health support and trauma counseling to all of the brave witnesses who took the stand in the case. The toll of being a witness and having to relive that trauma multiple times through the trial is a severe one. If we want to encourage witnesses to come forward, to be willing to share their experiences, we must also be prepared to offer them the support they will need. This case should lift up the importance of protecting witnesses and ensuring that their courage is recognized and appreciated.

This story is also unusual because it resulted in a conviction. According to Mapping Police Violence, 7,666 police officers killed someone in the U.S. between 2013 and 2019. Mapping Police Violence defines a police killing as "a case where a person dies as a result of being shot, beaten, restrained, intentionally hit by a police vehicle, pepper sprayed, tasered, or otherwise harmed by police officers, whether on-duty or off-duty." Of the 7,666 cases, only 25 officers were convicted of a crime. In another 74 cases, the officers were charged with a crime but not convicted. In 99% of the cases,

officers were not charged with any crime whatsoever.

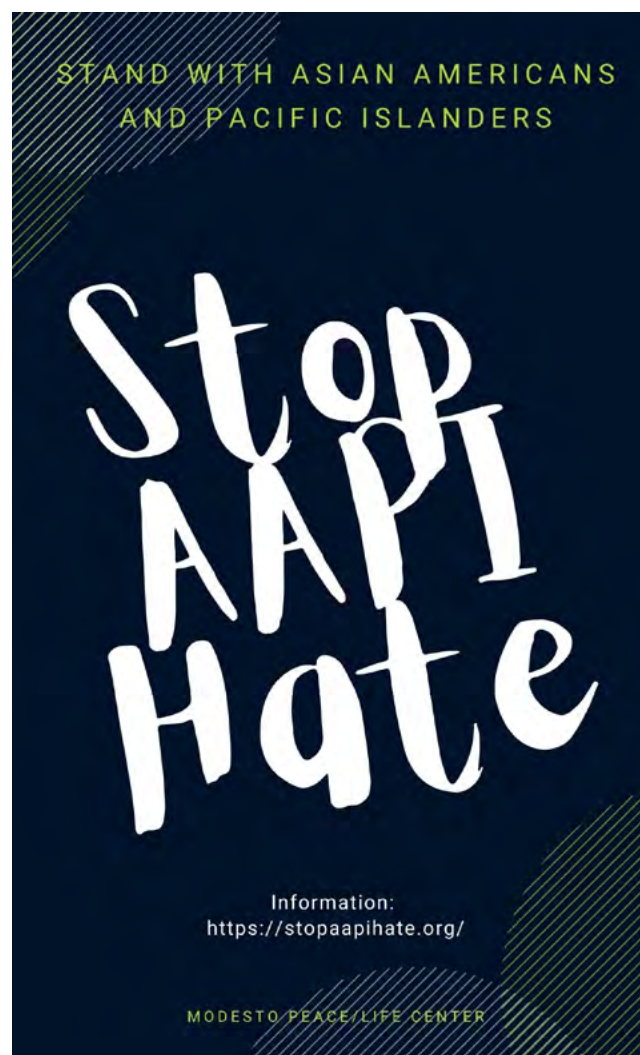
The conviction of Derek Chauvin for Floyd's murder most likely occurred because the police department turned against the officer. Witnesses included his supervisor on the day of the event, the head of the homicide unit, the head of training, the police chief and others in the law enforcement profession. All of them testified that the officer should not have taken the actions that he did and that the murder violated his training and his obligations to serve the community.

It is highly unusual for law enforcement officers to testify against their own. The facts of this case were indeed very compelling. But police departments should consider why it is so unusual to have official witnesses testify against those law enforcement agents who cause harm. If they want to build trust with the communities they serve, they must be willing to call out criminal behavior within their own ranks. Hopefully this conviction will reset expectations for police departments across the U.S.

On this anniversary date, we should take a moment to reflect on where we must go from here.

The conviction is a significant relief and highlights the importance of accountability. The courage of the witnesses and those who took to the streets to protest Floyd's murder and other police killings should become a call to action to all of us. We must be ready to stand up whenever we see injustice, to call out those responsible and to demand accountability. To the brave witnesses who stepped forward in the trial, we owe our gratitude and our commitment to follow in their footsteps. In George Floyd's name, we must continue the fight for justice.

From the Southern Poverty Law Center



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

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NEW PROGRAMS: AREA 5150 UFO RADIO – Saturday night at Midnight.

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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.

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

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Beyond the cease-fire

continued from page 3

cording to which Jewish citizens are to be privileged over and above other citizens."

Instead, the bishops demanded that "Christians, Muslims, Druze, Baha'i and Jews" be "treated as equal citizens." This law provides a legal basis for discriminatory practices in employment, education, housing and land ownership.

Throughout the years, I have repeatedly reminded myself that Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs both have compelling narratives. Both have profound and historic connections to the land. One need only visit [Yad Vashem](#), the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, for a vivid reminder of Israeli fears; or the impoverished homes of Palestinians in Gaza or the West Bank who fear occupying forces.

The United States bears a special responsibility, together with the international community, for helping Israelis and Palestinians to resolve the conflict. A [recent report](#) of the Congressional Research Service documents that "Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II," most of it in the form of military aid. This reality gives our nation enormous influence.

Unfortunately, our nation has not always played a helpful role. In 2017, the patriarchs and heads of churches in the Holy Land wrote a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump warning that changing the U.S. view on the [status of Jerusalem](#) as Israel's capital would "yield increased hatred, conflict, violence and

suffering in Jerusalem and the Holy Land." They were right.


For decades, the Holy See and the U.S. bishops' conference have supported a secure and recognized Israel, living in peace alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state. Facts on the ground have called into question the viability of a two-state solution in the eyes of some, but regardless of the shape of a final status, the fact remains that the status quo is unsustainable. The only way to foster peace is to dismantle systemic injustices and to protect the human rights of all.

In what I considered a prophetic [2016 message](#), the Holy Land Coordination argued: "The right of Israel to live in security is clear, but the continuing occupation eats away at the soul of both occupier and occupied. Political leaders across the world must put greater energy into a diplomatic solution to end nearly 50 years of occupation and resolve the ongoing conflict so the two peoples and three faiths can live together in justice and peace."

Beyond the cease-fire, the occupation must end, and respect for human rights must grow, if Israelis and Palestinians are to break the cycle of violence.

[Stephen M. Colecchi](#) is a freelance writer/consultant and the former director of the Office of International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Reprinted by permission of NCR Publishing Company www.NCROnline.org





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Peaceful Phoenix

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

K-6th grade

Modesto Church of the Brethren

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(209) 484-3163

POET: Pat Egenberger

Pat Egenberger taught for 36+ years in middle schools, high schools, and colleges. Her courses included English, foreign languages, sheltered English, drama/art electives, and video production. She received an award for classroom excellence from the California Association of Teachers of English. Her avocations include art, writing, foreign languages/cultures, and travel. Her poetry has been published in such journals as *Song of the San Joaquin*, *A Time of Singing*, *The Monterey Poetry Review*, *Penumbra* and in the anthology, *More Than Soil, More Than Sky: The Modesto Poets*. *The English Journal* and *California English* have published her articles on pedagogy.



Don't Miss these June Poetry Events

On June 8, at 7:00pm, **Stella Beratlis** will host the **Second Tuesday Reading Series** featuring poets Indigo Moor and Jennifer K. Sweeney. The Zoom link will be available soon on

Facebook and on our website, www.mostpoetry.org.

**MoSt
POETRY**

Modesto-Stanislaus
Poetry Center

SAVE the DATE for our first **MoSt Summer Poetry Workshop** of the year! Linda Scheller will be facilitating the workshop "Lyricism in Narrative Poetry" from 1:00-2:30pm

on Saturday, June 19. The Zoom link will be on our Facebook page and at our website, www.mostpoetry.org

Outfoxed

Milk toast they thought--a pol past his prime,
so clueless he'd think they'd deal. Crafty soul,
old man with tripped tongue triumphed this time,
too late, late, late for their damage control.

To Mask or Not to Mask

Opinions fly on gossamer wings...
"Why should I wear such cumbersome things?"
A guy refusing a mask screams,
"Not gonna fall for your Commie schemes!"

Scientists say when you breathe or talk
or more so when you sneeze or cough,
the Covid virus hitches a ride
on aerosols that range wide.

He barrels though the grocery line
spraying spit like bloated bovine.
"I have rights, you know. I plan
to work and play because I can."

A mask of tightly-woven layers
will make a wearer and others safer.
In Singapore ninety-five per cent
wore masks. Covid was a nonevent.

Our freedom-loving friend has left
not only his family and friends bereft
but coworkers and neighbors on whom
he spewed
his most unscientific views.

Covid Be Gone

When Covid occupied, I transformed from old
to elderly, dear, but doddering shell
of woman, a whisper. I closed windows
and doors, I, now devoid of contact, distressed
by germs, swept, scrubbed and sorrowed.

Later I learned how lucky I was,
first in line, finally to feel
just in time injection joy.
I will frolic with friends and family.
In life what's listless may turn to luster.

Gil's High Desert Morning

Bumble bee fumbles.
Big ol' lizard chomps him down,
does pushups for Gil.

Still Life

Potato vine's white
flowers pop from dark green leaves,
climb up grey-brown fence.

Come Hither

Fat-faced camellias
splay welcome north, east, south, west.
Hummingbirds hover.

Sierra Palette

I rage against the color gray--chilling
fog that socked me down in teen years
lived in Daly City, of interminable
Minnesota winters. Give me variegated
grey of Sierra granite which glitters
salt and pepper quartz, feldspar, biotite.

Inspid yellow's not my lodestone. I yearn
for gold that bursts hot, shakes my old bones.
I glow in warmth that rotates my sight
to light, that burns the cliffs to shine their splendor.
I crave color that sings, startles, surprises
to celebrate sunsets and sunrises.

Change

A cliff, an ocean, ideal image for pain
of change. Birds migrate like family and friends.
Some dive to depths, others disappear
beyond horizon. Some return. Others
do not. I wait alone, whipped by wind,
my tears the mist of sea spray. I hear songs
of sea lions, waves that feed sea life
between tides. I descend to lie on rocks,
to feel soft bodies, hard shells.
I remember--ride with tide, wing with wind.



Subject: Independent Police Auditor for Modesto, CA

Greetings City of Modesto, CA Mayor and Council Members,

My name is Anthony Finnell and I am a retired police officer, having served the City of Indianapolis for almost 24 years. I have worked in the field of oversight of law enforcement since 2013, first as a supervising investigator in Chicago, then as the Executive Director of an oversight entity in Oakland, and presently with the Seattle Office of Inspector General. I also sit on the board of the National Association for Civilian Oversight for Law Enforcement (NACOLE), <https://www.nacole.org/>, and have done so since 2015. Although I don't live in Modesto, I am aware of the community-driven effort to have civilian oversight of the Modesto Police Department and I want to express my support of this effort. There are many benefits to having meaningful civilian oversight of law enforcement and I wanted to list just a few for your consideration:

A FIRST STEP

Oversight is an important first step toward police accountability and transparency in our communities.

PROACTIVE

Not just reviewing misconduct complaints.

Can include independent analysis of police data related to Use of Force, Stop-and-Frisk, or other procedures; financial auditing and recommendations; review of policies, independent investigations, and proposals to address systemic issues; and more.

INDEPENDENT

Must be independent authorities, not subsidiaries of the police departments they oversee.

Must be independent from political processes.

Must be independent and permanently secured financially.

Must have independence of voice. Oversight should not keep secrets for law enforcement.

INDIVIDUALIZED

For each locality based on specific needs of the community.

This requires broad (not prescriptive) enabling legislation for each municipality to establish a structure that meets their unique needs.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

Oversight should be conducted—in part or in whole—by the people most impacted by policing in their communities.

EMPOWERED

Subpoena (witnesses) and subpoena *duces tecum* (documents) authority.

The statewide repeal of laws that prevent public access to and publication of police records on discipline and other

matters of public concern.

Final decision-making authority on:

disciplinary matters,
adjudicating use of force,
recruiting practices, and
creating policies.

TRANSPARENT

All meetings and reports should be public and all operations should be transparent.

AN INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Financial and administrative support (as requested by the individual oversight body) by municipalities is critical to the success of police oversight.

AN ITERATIVE PROCESS

Meaningful civilian oversight faces numerous hurdles in the United States due to the overwhelming protections law enforcement officers have, including statutory procedural guarantees when faced with discipline or firing that no other public official enjoys, qualified immunity, and more. Oversight will change as these landscapes change.

Pitfalls to Avoid

OVERSIGHT IS NOT A ONE-STEP SOLUTION FOR ALL POLICING ISSUES

OVERSIGHT IS NOT SOLELY A REACTIVE "CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD"

"Civilian Review Board" indicates that the only power an Oversight Body has is to "review" individual complaints. It leaves out the ability independently investigate (rather than relying on the police department's records) and to engage in work focused on systemic problems.

OVERSIGHT IS NOT CHOSEN OR HOUSED BY POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Appointees should not be chosen by the Chief of Police.

Oversight bodies should be independent of the Police Department in all ways.

OVERSIGHT IS NOT A STATEWIDE BODY

A statewide Oversight Bodies overseeing all law enforcement agencies in the state would disregard best practices identified by the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement ("NACOLE").

OVERSIGHT IS NOT DONE FROM THE TOP-DOWN

Localities should be encouraged and empowered to create strict Oversight Bodies membership criteria based on the history and patterns of local policing to ensure that communities most impacted by policing are represented.

OVERSIGHT IS NOT PERFORMATIVE

State laws already afford extraordinary protections to law enforcement officers and conceal extensive information regarding their work from the public. Civilian oversight bodies must be given real power or else they risk being performative political statements with no actual "teeth" or power.

OVERSIGHT IS NOT SECRETIVE

This is a public-facing process and all efforts should be made by the Legislature and localities to ensure that policing matters are able to be discussed in public settings and all reports are made public.

OVERSIGHT IS NOT SOLELY VOLUNTEER-BASED

Staff can and should be able to be hired by localities, with

statewide and/or local permanent financial support.

OVERSIGHT IS NOT A QUICK FIX

Community-Police distrust is not new. We are at a critical moment in our nation's history and, as Civilian Oversight Bodies become more widespread, additional statewide legislative pushes may be needed to ensure meaningful oversight and community legitimacy of the oversight process.

I appreciate the time you have given in consideration of this matter and I hope you move forward with meaningful community driven civilian oversight of the Modesto Police Department in the very near future.

Respectfully,

Anthony W. Finnell, Sr.

To the Modesto City Council,

Like any public agency, the Modesto City Police Department should be subject to a fair and independent review process of its procedures, hiring practices, and its law enforcement actions. The recent killing of Trevor Seever as well as past incidents occurring in this department indicate that a fair, independent process must be put in place. The key part of any review process should be a well-qualified, Independent Police Auditor who can issue public reports in concert with a police review commission composed of citizens of diverse backgrounds. This model has been successful in several California cities.

The establishment of such an apparatus should not be seen as necessarily adversarial or punitive to law enforcement but rather as an independent body that can support law enforcement when police actions are justified but suggest changes and improvements when they are not. This kind of proactive, transparent oversight, if done properly, can help develop trust between citizens and law enforcement, especially among citizens of color.

Members of such a commission should be required to actually understand what police officers do on the job, not just be bodies who attend meetings once a month. To that end, selected members should be expected to participate in frequent ride-alongs with officers as well as understand what trainings officers must go through and what situations they face on a daily basis. Included in this should be actual participation in use-of-force training. Furthermore, these citizens must understand the processes of judging evidence fairly and impartially. Anyone chosen should view such voluntary service as a serious commitment.

From an economic point of view, such a review process would most likely save the City millions of dollars in court actions and lawsuits especially if police actions were found to be independently justified.

As an adjunct to the establishment of a review process, the City of Modesto, possibly in concert with Stanislaus County, should investigate and establish ways to free up law enforcement from duties it is not well-equipped to handle such as dealing with the homeless and the mentally ill. To that end, the City should create a program similar to the CAHOOTS program which has operated successfully in Eugene, Oregon for many years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,
James Costello
Ceres, CA

History Shows That Sustained, Disruptive Protests Work

By KEVIN A. YOUNG

All disruptive social movements are met with stern warnings from people who think they know better. The current movement to “Defund the Police” is no exception.

Thus an editor of the *Detroit Free Press* professes sympathy for the protesters’ aims but says their “awful slogan” is “alienating” to the public, including to “White people who feel more reassured than threatened” by the police. Other pundits insist that “activists who are demanding radical change” are paving the way for Trump’s reelection: “Defund the Police” is “music to Trump’s ears” because it baits the Democrats into endorsing this presumably unpopular demand.

These critics share an assumption about how change happens: Movements must win over the majority of the public; once they do so, that sentiment soon finds its way into policy changes.

This argument has several problems. One is that government so frequently disobeys the will of the majority. Statistical analyses that compare public preferences and policy find that the opinions of non-wealthy people “have little or no independent influence on policy.” Having the support of the majority is no guarantee of change, to say the least.

Also problematic is the assumption that radical demands or actions scare away the public. The empirical evidence is mixed, but the 54% support for the recent burning of the Minneapolis police precinct should make us skeptical of conventional wisdom.

But the biggest problem with the We-Must-Persuade-the-Majority argument is that most progressive victories in U.S. history did not enjoy majority support when they were won. In case after case, a radical minority disrupted the functioning of businesses and state institutions, which sought to restore stability by granting concessions and ordering politicians to do the same.

Their Own Emancipation Proclamations

Before the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had criticized slavery but opposed immediate abolition. In 1837 he wrote that “slavery is founded on injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends to increase rather than abate its evils.” Even 16 months into the war, Lincoln still stressed that “my paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union,” and that “if I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it.” By all indications, most Northern Whites shared Lincoln’s position.

In contrast, the formerly enslaved Frederick Douglass criticized “those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation,” saying that they “want crops without plowing up the ground,” and “the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.” Douglass celebrated John Brown’s 1859 raid on the Harpers Ferry arsenal, which forced slavery into the center of debate: “Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy, and uncertain.”

Enslaved workers themselves played a decisive role. By fleeing the plantations, burning property, fighting for the Union, and numerous other acts of resistance, they weakened the Confederacy and impelled Union leaders to embrace the pragmatic logic of emancipation as a way of undermining their enemies. This “general strike” of enslaved people was

a key theme in W.E.B. Du Bois’ classic 1935 book *Black Reconstruction in America*, and that thesis has been confirmed and expanded by more recent historians. In Vincent Harding’s words, it was “courageous Black men and women and children” who “created and signed their own emancipation proclamations and seized the time.”

Thus it was a militant minority—enslaved Black people in the South, aided by abolitionists such as Douglass and Brown in the North—who transformed the war to “save the Union” into an antislavery revolution.

The Moderates Get Alienated

The Black freedom struggles a century later were likewise the work of a minority. Most of the public either favored segregation outright or criticized segregation and the disruptive tactics of civil rights activists. Even many established Black leaders criticized the disruptive approach, favoring a purely legal strategy instead.

In a 1961 Gallup poll, 61% of respondents disapproved of the Freedom Riders who rode integrated buses into the South. A similar percentage condemned the sit-ins at lunch counters. Three years later, 74% said, in an echo of Lincoln, that “mass demonstrations by Negroes are more likely to hurt the Negro’s cause for racial equality.”

Such attitudes inspired Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” which brilliantly skewered “the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice.” King later dismissed warnings about alienating “white middle-class support” by saying, “I don’t think that a person who is truly committed is ever alienated completely by tactics.” Ultimately, “I don’t think in a social revolution you can always retain support of the moderates.”

Like the enslaved people who sabotaged the Confederate war effort, Black activists of the 1960s faced opposition or ambivalence from the majority. They succeeded because they imposed massive and sustained economic costs on the Southern elite, through boycotts, sit-ins, and other means. Thus it was the White business owners in places such as Birmingham who capitulated first, and who directed the rest of the White power structure—police, mayors, legislators, and so on—to allow desegregation.

The Wise Men Get Shaken

Another major progressive victory of that era, the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, came about for similar reasons. Public opinion and Congress were peripheral to the war’s end. Far more important was the unabating Vietnamese resistance, most notably the January 1968 Tet Offensive against the U.S. occupation and client regime in South Vietnam.

Tet catalyzed two decisive shifts. One was among U.S. business leaders, who concluded that the war was a drag on their profits. Lyndon Johnson’s March 1968 decision to de-escalate the war came five days after he met with his “Wise Men,” a group of top business leaders and former government officials. Insider accounts report that Johnson was “deeply shaken” by the meeting and left with “no doubt that a large majority” of the Wise Men “felt the present policy was at a dead end.”

Tet also accelerated the rebellion among U.S. soldiers. The people needed to fight the war increasingly disobeyed, deserted, declined to enlist or reenlist, and even killed the commanding officers who sent them on death missions. By 1971 military leaders warned of “a personnel crisis that borders on disaster,” and actually demanded that Nixon speed up the withdrawal. My co-authors and I tell this story in more detail in a new book, *Levers of Power: How the 1% Rules and What the 99% Can Do About It*.

Public opinion often shifts toward the radicals after the fact. In 1966, 59% thought the Vietnam War was “morally justified.” A decade later, 70% said the war was “fundamentally wrong and immoral.” In the years in between, radicals such as MLK had condemned U.S. intervention in Vietnam as “one of the most unjust wars that has ever been fought in the history of the world.” As usual, the radicals endured a barrage of vitriol from respected commentators, and King and many others paid for their radicalism with their lives.

The lesson of these past victories is that successful change depends not on majority opinion, but on the ability of the key participants in a system to disrupt that system: enslaved Black people in the Confederacy, Black consumers in Birmingham, the Vietnamese people and U.S. soldiers in Vietnam (or workers in a workplace, tenants in a building, and so on).

This is a major advantage of non-electoral forms of activism. Electoral campaigns require a majority of voters. Non-electoral strategies do not.

It’s not that the opinions of the majority are irrelevant. Certainly it’s good to have more people sympathizing with you. Most of the radicals in the above movements realized that. They understood the importance of organizing, building relationships, and doing educational work among the public. They thought carefully about tactics.

But they also recognized, as King did, that “you can’t always retain support of the moderates.”

Interested in Kevin Young’s new book, *Levers of Power: How the 1% Rules and What the 99% Can Do About It*? Read an excerpt here.

Kevin A. Young teaches history at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He is a co-author, with Tarun Banerjee and Michael Schwartz, of *Levers of Power: How the 1% Rules and What the 99% Can Do About It* (Verso, July 2020).

From *Yes Magazine*



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



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

JUNE 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/>

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

2 WED: NO VIGIL in JUNE.

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

7 - 11 MON-FRI: Peace Week. Hosted by the Modesto Church of the Brethren. Children, Grades K-6. Call 209-484-3163 to register.

8 TUES: Stella Beratlis hosts the **Second Tuesday Reading Series** featuring poets Indigo Moor and Jennifer K. Sweeney. 7:00pm. Zoom link will be on Facebook and at www.mostpoetry.org.

16 WED: Dine Out - Support KCBP Radio at Black Bear Diner, 2200 Plaza Parkway. Eat in or order online all day. Must use coupon in this issue or email jcostello@igc.org for barcode.

19 SAT: MoSt Summer Poetry Workshop. Linda Scheller facilitates the workshop “Lyricism in Narrative Poetry.” 1:00-2:30pm. Find Zoom link on our Facebook page and at www.mostpoetry.org

20 SUN: Dine Out - Support KCBP Radio at Panera, 2103 McHenry, 4:00pm to 8:00pm. use coupon in this issue or email jcostello@igc.org for code.

LOOKING AHEAD

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

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

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

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.

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: jpamodesto@gmail.com

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

Third Thursday Art Walk, Will resume July 21. <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; jpmadesto@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.