

## Don't Miss the Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Team Play in Modesto!

By **JAMES COSTELLO**

The 2023 league champion Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Team, sponsored by the NBA Golden State Warriors, will visit Modesto for a fundraising event for KCPB Community Radio 95.5 FM and the non-profit Road Warriors. KCBP Radio is a non-profit project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center. Ten percent of the proceeds will go to scholarships for Modesto Junior College students with disabilities. Brian Bell, the Warriors' Olympic Gold Medal recipient, will play with the team.



Basketball Team versus school basketball team members and various community celebrities. Audience members will play in wheelchairs and experience the sport. There will be a silent auction and raffle prizes.

This one-of-a-kind audience-interactive event will occur from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on **Saturday, March 22, 2025, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.** at the Modesto Junior College Gymnasium, 435 College Ave., Modesto.

*ModestoView* and KCBP's SKA dynamic musical expert, Middagh Goodwin, will MC.

You will witness the Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Team play top-level basketball, all from their wheelchairs! The strength and determination of these players will surprise and inspire you! Bring your friends and family out for an uplifting, fast-paced, fun-filled day.

The public is invited to attend. Tickets are \$5 per person, \$2 for students (MJC students are free), and \$3 for veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities. For more information, call Jocelyn Cooper at 209-422-0119 or email [jocelyncoper2012@gmail.com](mailto:jocelyncoper2012@gmail.com). Visit <https://www.goldenstateroadwarriors.com/>

The total experience will consist of the Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair



STANISLAUS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
presents  
**OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF STANISLAUS COUNTY 2025**

Angela Drew      Rosizela Perez Jordan  
Gabriela Hernandez      Theresa Kiehn  
Polet Hernandez      Andrea Pegarella  
Danyel Jacobo      Carrie Stephens  
Lourdes Uranday  
Outstanding Trailblazer  
Janet Lancaster

And Bette Belle Smith Award winner  
Mr. Gil Howard

STANISLAUS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
presents  
**OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF STANISLAUS COUNTY 2025 BRUNCH CELEBRATION**

SATURDAY MARCH 15, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. | GREENS ON 10TH  
TICKETS STANISLAUSWOMEN.NET

STANISLAUS COUNTY  
**SCCW**  
COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

### MODESTO PEACE/LIFE CENTER ANNUAL MEETING

In Person and on Zoom\*

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 829 13<sup>th</sup> St., Modesto

9:00 AM Coffee, Conversation

9:30 AM Business Meeting, Financial Report, Committee Reports, Board Member Nominations

Discussion: Action plans, ideas, and strategies

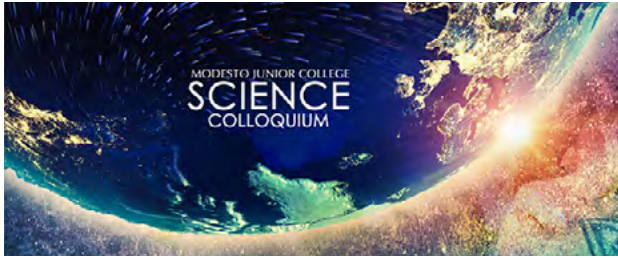
12:00 PM Adjournment (\*Link to be sent)

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**Modesto Science Colloquium**, Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., MJC West Campus, SCC 115. Free to the Public. Talks recorded for the [Science Colloquium's YouTube Site](#)

**March 12, 2025: Who Was the Iceman?** A 5,300-Year-Old Mummy Reveals Details About Life and Death in the Copper Age of Europe. Dr. Susan Kerr, Professor of Anthropology, MJC

Discovered in a melting glacier in 1991, Otzi (aka "The Iceman") is one of the most studied mummies in the world, from analyses of his stomach contents to the clothes he wore. Every year, a new method gives us more information about his life, and death. This presentation will share updates on Otzi, as we know him today.

**March 26: Engineering Better Health: Possibilities as a Biomedical Engineer.**

Alex Martin-Ginnold is a product Engineer at Noah Medical. Engineering is applied to many areas of medicine to create new technologies that improve patient outcomes. From lab-grown organ replacements to autonomous assistive robotics to better medical diagnostic tests, biomedical engineers create the technology we increasingly rely on to stay healthy.

100% of proceeds go to provide mobility for disabled kids through Hope Haven West



**MAPS Showcase of Scintillating Experts.** A gateway for the exploration of the wonders and mysteries surrounding us. MJC West Campus Sierra Hall 132\* at 7:30 pm, FREE.

**March 21:** Dr. Douglas Weiser - Adapt or Die: *How the Unfolded Protein Response Allows Cells to Decide Between Responding to Stress & Programmed Cell Death.* Dr. Weiser will discuss his research on the UPR, where he uses zebrafish as a genetic model for studying stress-induced apoptosis. He will also share the implications of this research on treating neurodegenerative diseases

\*West Campus Mary Stuart Rodgers Center. Current recordings since 2020 are housed on the [GVM YouTube page](#). Previous recordings before 2020 can be found [HERE](#).

## Love Modesto is Coming!

By JEFF PISHNEY

Mark your calendars for Love Modesto on April 26 - our 17th year! These past 16 years, you have shown up – over 64,117 total volunteers, 300,292 volunteer hours, and \$9.5+ mil in community service! We love Modesto!

We are finalizing our April 26 projects now. If you have any projects that you would like to see, please email [kim@lovestanislauscounty.org](mailto:kim@lovestanislauscounty.org)

Do you want your business or organization to be known for caring about our community? Learn more about being a Sponsor: [LoveModesto.com/sponsor](https://www.lovemodesto.com/sponsor)

If you live in another area or city, learn about your April 26 Volunteer Day:

[LoveStanislausCounty.org](https://www.LoveStanislausCounty.org)

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions for this year. Jeff Pishney, CEO & Founder, [LoveModesto.com](https://www.LoveModesto.com), [LoveStanislausCounty.org](https://www.LoveStanislausCounty.org), 209.409.8135.

## Yokuts Group Sierra Club Student 2025 Scholarships

The Yokuts Group Sierra Club \$1,000 Scholarship for 2025 is open for applications to students attending any accredited community college, junior college, or university in the fall of 2025. These students must be enrolled in a Stanislaus County high school or an accredited community college, junior college, or university.

The application letter should include a short essay on the applicant's classwork and activities related to environmental stewardship.

**Deadline for applications is April 30, 2025. Application:** visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts>

**ACTION:** For more information, contact Laura Stokes at [LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com](mailto:LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com) or (206) 371-4853 (Seattle Area Code).

## Aileen Jaffa Memorial Youth Poetry Contest 2025 is Open for Submissions

By LYNN M. HANSEN, Contest Chair

The Modesto/Stanislaus Poetry Center, in collaboration with the National Association of American Pen Women (NLAPW), Modesto Chapter, is sponsoring a youth poetry contest, The Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest.

Any Stanislaus County school student, grades K through 12, is eligible to submit up to 3 entries at **\$1 per entry**. Each entry, except for typing, must be the student's original creative work. Poems may be in any style but no longer than 24 lines—**no simultaneous submissions** of poems to Poets' Corner or other contests.

In addition to awards in various categories, the Modesto Chapter of NLAPW will award a \$60 Aileen Jaffa Outstanding Poem award in each of two combined categories.

**Submission deadline is April 3, 2025.** Contest winners may present their work at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N Broadway, Turlock, at 2 p.m. Saturday, May TBA, 2024.

For an entry form and complete entry instructions, contact [info@mostpoetry.org](mailto:info@mostpoetry.org)



**April 26**  
[LoveModesto.com](https://www.LoveModesto.com)  
An Part of Love Stanislaus County

**KICK OFF PARTY BEGINS AT 7AM**  
**DOWNTOWN MODESTO (I & 10TH STREETS)**



# Ten Reasons for Modest Optimism

By **ROBERT REICH**

Friends,

If you are experiencing rage and despair about what is happening in America and the world right now because of the Trump-Vance-Musk regime, you are hardly alone. A groundswell of opposition is growing — not as loud and boisterous as the resistance to Trump 1.0, but just as, if not more, committed to ending the scourge.

Here's a partial summary — 10 reasons for modest optimism.

## 1. Boycotts are taking hold.

Americans are changing shopping habits in a backlash against corporations that have shifted their public policies to align with Trump.

Millions are pledging to halt discretionary spending for 24 hours on February 28 in protest against major retailers — chiefly Amazon, Walmart, and Best Buy — for scaling back diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in response to Trump.

Four out of 10 Americans have already shifted their spending over the last few months to be more consistent with their moral views, according to the [Harris poll](#). (Far more Democrats — 50 percent — are changing their spending habits compared with Republicans — 41 percent.)

Calls to boycott Tesla apparently are having an effect. After a disappointing 2024, [Tesla sales](#) declined further in January. In California, a key market for Tesla, nearly [12 percent fewer](#) Teslas were registered in January 2025 than in January 2024. An [analysis](#) by Electrek points to even more trouble for Tesla in Europe, where Tesla sales have dropped in every market.

X users are shifting over to Bluesky at a rapid rate, even as Musk adds more advertisers to his ongoing lawsuit against those that have justifiably boycotted X after he turned it into a cesspool of lies and hate (this week, he added Lego, Nestle, Tyson Foods, and Shell).

## 2. International resistance is rising.

Canada has helped lead the way: A grassroots boycott of American products and tourism is underway there. Prime Minister Trudeau has in effect become a “wartime prime minister” as he stands up to Trump’s bullying.

Jean Chrétien, who served as prime minister of Canada from 1993 to 2003, is urging Canada to join with leaders in Denmark, Panama, and Mexico, as well as with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, to fight back against Trump’s threats.

Mexico’s President Claudia Sheinbaum is standing

up to Trump. She has defended not just Mexico but also the sovereignty of Latin American countries Trump has threatened and insulted.

In the wake of JD Vance’s offensive speech at the Munich security conference last week, European democracies are standing together — condemning his speech and making it clear they will support Ukraine and never capitulate to Putin, as Trump has done.

## 3. Independent and alternative media are growing.

Trump and Musk’s “shock and awe” strategy was premised on their control of all major information outlets — not just Fox News and its right-wing imitators but the mainstream corporate media as well.

It hasn’t worked. *The New York Times* has done sharp and accurate reporting on what’s happening. Even the non-editorial side of *The Wall Street Journal* has shown some gumption.

The biggest news, though, is the increasing role now being played by independent and alternative media. Subscriptions have surged at [Democracy Now](#), [The American Prospect](#), [Americans for Tax Fairness](#), [Economic Policy Institute](#), [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), [The Guardian](#), [ProPublica](#), [Labor Notes](#), [The Lever](#), [Popular Information](#), [Heather Cox Richardson](#), and, of course, [this](#) and other Substacks.

As a result, although Trump and Musk continue to flood the zone with lies, Americans aren’t as readily falling for their scams.

## 4. Musk’s popularity is plunging.

Elon Musk is underwater in public opinion, according to polls published Wednesday.

Surveys by Quinnipiac University and Pew Research Center — coming just after Trump and Musk were interviewed together by Fox News’ Sean Hannity, with Trump calling Musk a “great guy” who “really cares for the country” — show a growing majority of Americans holding an unfavorable view of Musk.

In [Pew’s findings](#), 54 percent report disliking Musk compared to 42 percent with a positive view; 36 percent report a *very* unfavorable view of Musk. [Quinnipiac’s results](#) show 55 percent believe Musk has too big a role in the government.

## 5. Musk’s Doge is losing credibility.

On Monday, DOGE listed government contracts it has canceled, claiming that they amount to some \$16 billion



in savings — itemized on a new “[wall of receipts](#)” on its website.

Almost half were attributed to a single \$8 billion contract for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency — but that contract was for \$8 *million*, not \$8 billion. A larger total savings number published on the site, \$55 billion, lacked specific documentation.

In addition, Musk and Trump [say](#) tens of millions of “dead people” may be receiving fraudulent Social Security payments from the government. The table Musk [shared on social media](#) over the weekend showed about 20 million people in the Social Security Administration’s database over the age of 100 and with no known death.

But as the agency’s inspector general found in [2023](#), “almost none” of them were receiving payments; most had died before the advent of electronic records.

These kinds of rudimentary errors are destroying DOGE’s credibility and causing even more to question allowing Musk’s muskrats unfettered access to personal data on Americans.

## 6. The federal courts are hitting back.

So far, at least 74 lawsuits have been filed by state attorneys general, nonprofits, and unions against the Trump regime. And at least 17 judges — including several appointed by Republicans — already have issued orders blocking or temporarily halting actions by the Trump regime.

The blocking orders include Trump initiatives to restrict birthright citizenship, suspend or cut off domestic and foreign U.S. spending, shrink the federal workforce, oust independent agency heads, and roll back legal protections and medical care for transgender adults and youths.

In other cases, the Trump regime has agreed to a pause to give judges time to rule, another way that legal fights are forcing a slowdown.

## 7. Demonstrations are on the rise.

We haven’t seen anything like the January 2017 Women’s March, the day after Trump 1.0 began, but over the past weeks, demonstrations have been increasing across the country. Last Monday, on Presidents Day, demonstrators descended upon state capitol buildings.

In Washington, D.C., thousands gathered at the Capitol Reflecting Pool, chanting “Where is Congress?” and urging members of Congress to “Do your job!” despite nearly 40-degree temperatures and 20-mile-per-hour wind gusts.

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# Merciful

By **ELAINE GORMAN**

Our quest for observing wintering migrants continues on this cool day in early January. When Linda, Julie, and I arrive at Merced National Wildlife Refuge, we are immediately greeted with honks, whirrrrs, buzzes, rattles, whinnies and squawks. On the observation platform we identify Long-Billed Dowitchers, egrets, Black-Necked Stilts, Killdeer, and giant flocks of Ross's and Snow Geese. Julie's keen hearing alerts us to a Sora, an elusive and perfectly camouflaged rail.

Merced NWR is part of the 45,000 acre San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex in the San Joaquin Valley. These wetlands and surrounding grasslands are the winter home for more than one million waterfowl. Merced NWR is a favorite, as it combines birding with a bit of walking. As this refuge is mostly accessible only by auto, the trails allow visitors to observe birds up close, and stretch leg muscles. Geese, ducks, and Sandhill Cranes are the main attractions.

Donning hats, scarves, gloves, and jackets, we head over to the one-mile Meadowlark loop trail (gravel road). A stoic Great Blue Heron strikes a one-legged pose, likely stalking a meal. Cottonwoods are filled with holes of various sizes, to accommodate the many cavity nesters. We spot a Northern Flicker whizzing through the trees.

We reach the pond and see a flotilla of American Coots. A swarm of geese take off, spooked by an unseen predator, creating a startling din. Their white bodies and black and white wings create changing patterns in the sky as they turn. We snug our jackets against the cold, as the dry thistles, grasses, and umbels, stiffly blow in the wind like a many-armed conductor. As we approach the parking lot, a Golden Eagle erupts from a nearby cottonwood tree and swoops away.

We begin the 5-mile auto tour around the large ponds. Pintail and Shoveler ducks go "butts up" searching for food. We notice a group of about 15 Black-Crowned Night Herons in some vegetation by the pond, hunched over as if braced against the wind. Drivers are cautioned to stay inside their vehicles to protect wildlife.

At the far end of the pond, we park to check out another observation platform. A group of birders point out two Bald Eagles on the far side of the pond. Sure enough, two adults appear to be feeding on the ground. As we dive into our snacks, a nearby White-Crowned Sparrow nibbles on some mushrooms. It must be lunch time....

The one-mile loop Bittern Marsh Nature Trail has ponds, grasslands, and tall trees, providing diverse habitats. On every visit, I look for the nesting Great Horned Owls, and sure enough, we spot the cat-like ears poking out of the large stick nest toward the top of one of the cottonwoods. We get a nice long look with our binos. Other birds include Yellow-Rumped Warblers, Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, and Golden-Crowned Sparrows. I begin to have crown envy.

As we continue the auto tour, we have a close sighting of an immature Bald Eagle (dark with white patches on the back of the head), and see a small grouping of Sandhill



Cranes. Back at the parking lot, we spot a coyote eyeing the geese. The parking lot has filled with cars.


Before we leave, we check out the view from the observation platform again, to soak in the avian marvel of this place. Nature is a healing balm, held tight with bonds of friendship.

Notes: There are two other trails in this refuge, the 0.5-mile Kestrel Nature Trail, and the 1.5-mile Cottonwood Nature Trail (located east of the main part of the refuge). Pick up brochures at the kiosk in the main parking area of the refuge. And don't forget your binoculars.

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/merced>

Getting there — 50 miles from downtown Modesto, 1 hour drive. Take highway 99 south to Atwater. Take exit 195 toward Applegate Road. After about 3 miles, turn left on highway 140. After about 3 miles, turn right on Gurr Rd. After about 8 miles, turn right on Sandy Mush Rd. After 3 miles, turn left into Merced NWR.





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# Skipping Rocks: It's up to Me, and You

By A.J.

My dear husband is, among many other things, a world-class rock skipper. I'll never forget the first time I watched him send one skittering across the water – it bounced so many times I lost count. I couldn't help but laugh out loud! And although he's tried to teach me, I've never been able to manage more than two or three hops (which is two or three more than before I met him). But I can now, at least, identify a rock with skipping potential.

Each bounce off the water sends out little ripples. We can, too, though of a different variety: the feel-good kind that lifts spirits – including our own.

Unfortunately, it's become evident to me that the forces of evil are currently wielding far more power than they ever have. No matter your political persuasion, if you're aware of what's going on in the world at all, it must be obvious by now that those currently in power are actively working to cause as much chaos and destruction as possible – and in the process, causing trauma and suffering on a scale that only efforts rooted in evil can.

The actions of those currently in power have already caused a tidal wave of misery. And unless we're able to stop them, and reverse the damage, they will continue to do so.

An unholy wave is upon us.

But, by skipping a few feel-good stones of our own, we can all help counter it. And we all need to actively try. All we have to do is make it a point to look for little ways to lift others up, every single day, as we go about our ordinary lives.

While the most we can do to impact things going on in Washington, D.C. is bombard our elected representatives with voicemails and texts, which we should all be doing, there is much we can do to make a very real difference for those right around us, and also for ourselves.

It often costs nothing, but the Return on Investment is huge. All it takes is paying attention to what's happening around us, staying on the lookout for little ways to lift others up, *and acting on them*. You never know who might be flagging, but doing an Oscar-worthy job of concealing it.

A really nice, not necessarily hidden benefit is that we can't lift someone else's spirits without our own going along for the ride.

It might be as cheap and easy as a smile, a kind word or a hug, or we might make a little more effort. It could be a loved one, friend, acquaintance, or the person next to us at the grocery store, bank, or gas pump. Wherever and whoever, we can all make someone else's burdens a little easier to bear, and in the process, lighten our own.

And the best thing about offering that smile or those kind words is that those ripples can just keep on going, buoying up many others – sometimes even years later. And those uplifting ripples are the best way to fight the unholy waves currently being sent out into the world.

Another thing we can do is pay attention, and act, when we find ourselves thinking about someone in our orbit more than we might normally. Someone I care about has been going through a difficult situation with a child who is now a young adult. The family had crossed my mind several times

recently, and when I finally had the sense to get in touch, it turned out they were scheduled to be in a very difficult situation the very next day.

I did what I could to help right then, and then made it a point to pause for a moment and think about them at the appointed hour the next day. It may not have had any direct impact on the outcome of their situation, but I believe it did help them to get through it. And the lift that came back to me in turn made what was otherwise a difficult week at our house more bearable.

Another example: quite a few years ago, I was knocked flat by a nasty bug; too ill to go grocery shopping for a good week. One day, around dinnertime at the end of that week, I was staring into the empty fridge, fighting tears, when the doorbell rang.

Standing there with a somewhat bewildered expression on his face, holding a bucket of chicken, was a friend. (For any LDS folks in the crowd, he was also our Home Teacher

at the time.) He said he was on his way home, and he didn't know why, but he had a strong feeling that he should bring us dinner.

That act of kindness came to us so many years ago, when someone in our orbit received a little nudge, and went out of his way to act on it. All these years later, the good that rippled out from that selfless act has been multiplied exponentially: By as many times as we have shared the story, and by the many hearts that have been touched by it, and in turn shared it themselves, and so on, and on, and on.

It is so important for all of us to continually look for ways to lift one another's spirits, especially right now. Wherever we go, whatever situation we find ourselves in at any given moment, there will surely be a chance to lighten someone else's load. Let's all make it a habit to watch for those opportunities and make the most of them.

Let's skip some rocks, every single day.

It's up to me, and you.



Stone Skipping. Photo-Roy Smith

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# Love in Action: Remembering bell hooks

By MELANIE BERRU

## How do we heal a hurting world?

Bell hooks believed the answer lies in practicing love as a radical act. Hooks was a passionate educator, a brilliant scholar, and a deeply influential writer. This February, the month of love, let us reflect on the profound life lessons she offered about the act of loving. The life and work of the late bell hooks continues to inspire all who have encountered her groundbreaking ideas. As a trailblazing Black feminist, she fearlessly challenged the whiteness, heterosexism, and classism often embedded in mainstream feminism. Hooks led with love for community, embodying the essence of a true revolutionary; unafraid to confront the status quo or critique the white establishment, including white feminists. Her work lovingly urges us to think more deeply and strive to become better versions of ourselves, not just for our own benefit but for the well-being of our families and communities. She understood our intrinsic interconnectedness; how the self and society are intertwined and emphasized that when theory is transformed into the flesh, it creates the possibility for healing and collective action.

Love, as bell hooks taught us, is not simply an emotion; it is a practice, a commitment, and a radical force for change. Her work challenges us to ask: What does it mean to truly love? How can love transform not just our personal lives but also our communities? It is through love that we begin to see one another fully, to break down barriers of fear and oppression, and to build a world rooted in justice. Being introduced to hooks' work is like walking into an enlightening and illuminating portal, a doorway into newfound possibilities. Hooks lovingly challenges us to question our relationship to the art of loving; whether it is from *All About Love* or *Communion: The Female Search for Love* or perhaps the profound writing of *The Will to Change: Men Masculinity and Love*, there are gems for all those that want to learn to love wholeheartedly.

## Romantic Love/Maternal Love

It is important to consider the context and culture of the lessons we learn about love. Hooks asserted that much of what we were taught about love was shaped by patriarchal thinking. This profound truth helps uncover one of the core beliefs many internalize about love; that it was taught to be hierarchical. Love, as American culture teaches us, comes with power dynamics. At the top of this pyramid was romantic love, particularly for women, where social value of

love was tied to men more particularly fathers and husbands. All other forms of love whether friendship, self-love, or community love were seen as not as significant. Romantic love, especially when attached to husbands, carried the most social value and power. Closely following romantic love in this structure was maternal love. Many never make the connection between these two relationships: romantic and maternal love and their deeply patriarchal roots. Women who were single, unmarried, or who either chose not to have children or were unable to, were often viewed as incomplete or lacking in some fundamental way.

These weren't explicit rules, but they were embedded in historical and cultural norms; silent but powerful forces shaping how love was understood and experienced. Currently, in today's culture, much of the younger generation love so freely. They are not as bound by the patriarchal pressures of yesterday and can dream and live beyond the hierarchy. This includes the crucial act of loving oneself.



## Self-Love

Hooks reminds us to come back home to ourselves. She insists on reminding us of our value as people, as human beings, without the requirement of being in relationship with spouses or children but that our value is intrinsic. Self-love is fundamental for our well-being and our relationships. We are the common denominator in all our relationships. Loving ourselves is the best investment we can give ourselves and others, giving others our abundant self. This is not selfish, but it is rather being full of self. Love is found in the courageous decision to believe in oneself despite overwhelming odds, choosing to love themselves into new possibilities. It is in their determination to break cycles of pain. In this pain we find that

friends emerge like bright stars in the dark night.

## Self Love — Friendship love

Bell hooks' work reminds us of the profound importance of friendship love. Hooks claims that community is as important as the individual, and friendship is the foundation of a community of care. Friendship love was often seen as important but undeniably less valuable than the love between marrieds. Friends were thought to serve a purpose but not *the* purpose.

Many women began to challenge this notion and deeply value the love of friends. We discovered that, in times of great need, a dear friend could stand by our side, call to



check on us when we were "too" quiet, invite us to holiday dinner during a divorce, or listen to our messy lives without judgment, just acceptance and love.

Women, as a gender category, statistically, are often less lonely than their male counterparts. Over the years, women have learned to highly value platonic love. Observe how female friendships love each other; it is life-giving, a medicine for the spirit. Thanks to early feminist scholars, particularly women of color feminists like bell hooks, younger generations are now encouraged to expand their understanding of love. No longer must we place love on a hierarchy of social worth. Where there are friends there is a warm community.

## Community Love: Love as a Transformative Agent

Bell hooks calls us to embrace love as a transformative force; a power that can move us toward healing and justice. When we deeply engage with this noble concept, we learn to "see" others more fully, to extend compassion to ourselves, and to treat others with greater care and dignity. Love, when understood as an active choice and a guiding principle, can shift not only personal trajectories but collective realities.

In times of crisis, love shines in remarkable ways. During the devastating Southern California fires, love emerged in the actions of strangers who arrived faster than governments, offering water, clothing, shelter, and warm embraces to those in need. During ICE sightings & sweeps in the Central Valley, love rose in solidarity against fear. Entire communities, gripped by uncertainty and terror, find hope in the voices of advocates and activists and the collective strength of neighbors who demand justice. Together, they embody an undeniable truth: love, as an action, defies division and reminds us of our interconnectedness.

In moments like these, love becomes a great mobilizer.

continued next page



# Declaring our Existence: Central Valley ¡Presente!

By **MELANIE BERRU, Professor of Sociology**  
Modesto Junior College

Representation is more than just visibility; it is a declaration of existence, a refusal to be erased. It is a statement that we are here and that we matter. I have spent my entire adult life watching my home, the Central Valley, be overlooked, underestimated, and misunderstood. When I tell people I'm from California, they assume I mean Los Angeles or the Bay Area, never the land that feeds the nation. The need for visible, regional representation has weighed on my mind and heart for what feels like a lifetime.

True representation is not just about numbers; it is about presence with influence. It includes race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, social class, diversity of experience, skin color; along with region and all the intersecting identities that shape how we move through the world. When representation is limited or nonexistent, entire communities are left feeling invisible, their stories unheard, their contributions dismissed. But when it is done right, representation affirms, empowers, and expands what is possible for those who have long been pushed to the margins.

I came of age in the late '90s and early 2000s in Stanislaus County, at a time when most progressive people left the stifling Central Valley for more open-minded, forward-thinking places if they had the means to do so. I stayed, but not because I felt I had a choice; rather, because I felt I had none. I found refuge in the old Aztlan Book store in downtown Modesto, the Stanislaus State University Pow Wow in Turlock MJC Pow Wows, and the occasional

## Love in Action continued

It lifts us beyond fear and tragedy, compelling us to see the light in one another. Even as strangers, we are moved to act by the unshakable connection we share. These moments remind us, however fleetingly, that we belong to one another in profound and transformative ways. Love has the power to shatter boundaries, transcend limits, and propel us toward a future defined by deep connection. It renders irrelevant the barriers we once thought defined us.

As we face a presidency that openly and unapologetically dehumanizes groups of people, let us not despair. Let us embrace the radical teachings of bell hooks, who reminds us that love is more than an emotion; it is a choice, an action, and a "practice of freedom." Her writings, such as *All About Love*, challenge us to examine how we love ourselves, our communities, and even those we perceive as "other." Hooks believed that when we engage love as a radical force, we reclaim our humanity and forge pathways to justice. We will need one another in the days to come. Let love, as a verb, lead the way back to our shared humanity. Together, we can create a world where love, when practiced collectively and with intention, becomes the foundation of liberation.

Let us act boldly.

Let us act lovingly

And, let us act now.

Raza performers, such as Lila Downs or Ozomotli, that performed in the independently owned State Theatre in Modesto or at the many lowrider car shows in Stanislaus County. By the time I left for graduate school, I had already decided that my impact belonged at home, in the Central Valley. When I returned, I carved a path for visibility and Chicano upliftment, hoping to create a shift so that if the next generation left, it would be by choice, not by necessity or escape.

I wanted to become what I wanted to see more of: to be the embodiment of the *Chicanada* in modern human form. The feelings that occupied my body when I was wrapped up in my Chicano identity were unparalleled. I wanted to be part of creating spaces of unapologetic pride and belonging, void of assimilated pressures. When others see their reflection in me, it heals the younger version of me that yearned for such representation so long ago. It was my calling to do this at home, in the C.V.

Us, proud Chicanos, are here and have always been here but may have lacked visibility.

California is more than just LA and the Bay; the Central Valley is an essential part of the state's heart and history. But even within the state, the Valley is treated like the forgotten relative. We are either invisible or dismissed, as if we have nothing to contribute, as if we do not carry a long legacy of struggle, resilience, and impact. When people do acknowledge us, it is often through harmful narratives, the so-called "brain drain," the idea that there's "nothing there" except crime, drugs, and a lack of education. While challenges exist, reducing the Central Valley to a single, negative story is both inaccurate and dangerous, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie warns in her powerful TED Talk on the danger of a single narrative. The truth is, we are and have always been a region of resistance and movement-building. From the United Farm Workers, with Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, to the Brown Berets, MEChA, NAK, Phi Lambda Ro, from grassroots organizing to art and music, the Central Valley holds a history of power, culture, and activism that cannot and should not be erased. One generation building on the very next one.

It's not a lack of talent, brilliance, or ability; it's a failure of visibility and inclusivity from those outside the region. Every place has its own echo chambers, but too often, a select few control the narrative and opportunities, shaping who gets seen and who gets left out. When a region is made invisible, its people are overlooked for experiences and opportunities that could expand their potential beyond

the borders of their hometowns. As a lifelong resident of the Central Valley, I know firsthand that this place is rich with beauty, talent, and brilliance. In many ways, this is a love letter to my home; I am the Tía eager to introduce the world to her incredible nieces and nephews. Years ago,

while working at a community center, I saw this truth unfold: people don't lack talent or drive; they simply need the chance to shine.

I hope that one day in my lifetime, the Central Valley will be readily and positively recognized; not as an afterthought, but as an integral part of California. That it will no longer be overlooked but firmly placed on the map. That people outside this region will know us, collaborate with us, and invest in their Central Valley neighbors.

In the past eight years, I've noticed a shift in our corner of the Valley. My generation and those younger are reclaiming space, staying rooted, and shaping the narrative. More

grassroots businesses, podcasts, workshops, and brands proudly incorporate "Central Valley" into their names and missions. This is both refreshing and necessary. It is a declaration: We are here. It is a collective voice saying, ¡Presente!

For those who have left the Valley, I hope you find ways to carry your home with you; to represent it with pride in your new city, to uplift and highlight it whenever possible. At my recent talk at Harvard, I was reminded yet again of the profound importance of representation. Students expressed excitement and joy in seeing someone like me; a Chicana, a Californian, a West Coaster, someone from the hood, someone from the Central Valley on that stage. Different women found belonging in me, and I, in them. This moment would not have happened if someone hadn't spoken my name into that space, nor if Harvard hadn't taken a chance on a couple of Chicanas from the C.V.

There is still so much work to be done for the Central Valley to be fully acknowledged in all its abundance, diversity, and contributions. But recognition does not come from waiting; it comes from action. It comes from amplifying our voices, continuing to telling our own stories, and refusing to let others define who we are. The Valley has so much to offer, and we invite others to see its brilliance and invest in its future. The call is simple but vital:

**Invest in the Central Valley within its regional boundaries AND beyond.** Because we have always been here and we will not be erased.



## BWE: The Black Woman Experience

Sometimes,  
I feel like...  
a bonafide chameleon,  
flexing and flowing and morphing and  
changing  
into the depiction of me that makes YOU  
comfortable.  
I show up like camouflage...  
beige and brown and green and grey, any  
other subdued shade BUT black, for my  
blackness is YOUR threat.  
They stay telling us,

girrrrrl, don't be too aggressive or assertive,  
too loud or too proud,  
keep that neck and head off swivel, no side-  
eye allowed.  
Don't be too feisty, too spicy, too forward,  
too bold,  
don't defend, just concede, Black girl,  
do as you're told. Don't rock the boat  
sideways maintain status quo,  
do your job and four others, but keep that  
deed on the low.  
Braids on you, yeah that's ghetto but on  
others, exotic,  
better wig it or weave it, don't you FRO it  
or LOC it.

You should smile more...nah really, watch  
your words, check your tone, keep that  
code switch on lock when you answer  
the phone.  
Don't be too strong or too loose,  
emasculating Jezebel.  
Soften up a lil bit, sis...  
they don't know you mean well. Girl, you  
damned if you do,  
and damned if you don't, judged when  
you will  
and questioned when you won't.  
Disrespected and neglected and this much  
is true,  
Black girl, when you go missing, no one's  
checking for you.  
Microaggressions on a daily, girl you strong,  
suck it up,  
that black skin's pretty thick, right?  
Shouldn't bother you much.  
Wait, it shouldn't bother me...right? Yo,  
check this out...quite frankly,

And I am so tired...  
of worrying and wondering, when my sons  
and my husband leave our home for the  
day, what harshness and hatefulness they  
will encounter  
from people who do not recognize their  
humanity but instead fear their very  
existence.  
So, I say a daily prayer, speaking sacred  
words  
to cover them in love and protection  
to ensure that they make it home safely to  
me at the end of the day.  
And I am so exhausted,  
from carrying the world on my back like a  
mule carrying cargo,  
for yes, I am strong,  
but I, too, have weak moments. I, too, am  
vulnerable.  
I feel, I love,

## This Is How We Become

We built the world a wire framework  
of copper, knots, and wisteria. Folding  
and  
resistance, twisted exigencies –

Our vines burst flowers, shiver and  
sound—  
we are attached to our sadness  
we are attached to our joys

We keep a coin in the world's pocket  
examine the heads & tails, and all states  
of being  
tossed about.

By degrees, degrees of being. Not by  
either/  
or, looking past the binary world. Not  
with one voice  
but with multiplicity.

This is how we become: I am typography,  
I am proportional, not monospaced. I am  
the text block  
and the margin,  
the waves and the rocks,  
the barnacles in the crags.

This is how we become: We are one  
hundred percent sure  
of our visions, know they reflect  
the shattered surface of the world.

We are one hundred percent sure of our  
visions

know they will make it whole  
by holding space for possibility:

we mix, we mingle; we put everything  
in our measuring cup.

We recombine  
We mutate  
We strengthen  
We boil.

This is how we become:  
We spill over/the page  
our cells are used for ink.  
We increase, we multiply  
We write shadows and light,  
pen marks, narrative, inkstains,  
revolution.

This is how we become: we evolve  
we drag you in the future  
we are a riot a frame of skin, bone and  
muscle

We are here, intertwined, history, the  
present—  
We are doing everything  
to carry you across, to finish this page;

I am just one person,  
I am holding a sign,  
I am strumming this guitar,  
I am holding a pen--  
I am carrying you.

– Stella Berattis; from *Dust Bowl Venus*, 2021

being a Black woman in America is  
exhausting,  
and I'm not angry, I'm tired!  
Tired of being reduced to a monolithic  
caricature  
of everything I am and everything my  
ancestors have survived. Tired of being  
told that my history began with slavery,  
when I know that I am the descendent of  
queens and kings. I'm tired of the masses  
buying my features,  
my lips, my skin, my hips, and not buying  
into me  
and the wealth of all that I am.  
I'm tired of explaining to our daughters,  
MY daughter,  
why she gets dress coded for the same length  
of shorts that Becky wears because they  
try to police and control our bodies  
because they can't control themselves. I'm  
tired of being labeled angry,  
when I stand up for myself,  
when I stand up for what I believe in,  
when I fight for truth and righteousness and  
justice and equality and EQUITY, yet,  
I am labeled angry, while my peers are  
labeled passionate.  
I'm tired of being told that Black women do  
not get along, when we were,  
we ARE,  
the movers of the movement  
and when we come together in sisterhood,  
magical  
moments happen.

I worry, I hope,  
see me, feel me, acknowledge ME. I have  
breakdowns,  
and I have breakthroughs, but I refuse to  
be broken. I  
will no longer  
fold myself  
into four right angles,  
tucking my layers and complexities inside  
of your neat little boxes,  
for I am round and robust,  
with curves in all the right places, and I  
will rise...  
like the sun,  
like the phoenix from ashes, wiping gold  
dust from my eyelids, rubbing shea  
butter on my skin, to soothe the burns  
I have acquired on my journey through  
the fire.  
And say, "YES" to Black girl magic, and  
say, "YES" to sister girl shine, for now  
is OUR time,  
no longer confined,  
to their simplistic definition of our  
immaculate design.  
Black women, you are #EVERYTHING!  
I love you,  
I love me, I love US!  
And I trust that YOU will love you, harshly,  
fiercely,  
with reckless abandon, and our love  
collectively, will change the trajectory of  
a thousand  
tomorrows.

– Angela K. Drew



# Our Poetry for Women's History Month

A **Gathering of Voices** asked several outstanding local poets for their thoughts as the nation and Stanislaus County again commemorate Women's History Month. We are honored to share each of their unique voices.

## Bully

1 -  
Please stop.  
You ride ahead  
then circle back on your bike  
like a boomerang  
to taunt me.  
Mom says to ignore you  
so I look away,  
pretend you're not there.  
This makes you  
madder, meaner  
and you circle some more.  
You're scaring me now.  
Don't turn around again  
or jump the curb.  
*Go away!*  
The words catch in my throat.

2 -  
I just want to do my job.  
Every day you seek me out,  
violate my space.  
Even though I step back,  
ask you to stop  
you persist, hissing  
dirty words  
explicit fantasies  
cruel taunts.  
I tell a few colleagues.  
Some sympathize.  
Some make excuses  
or act like I must be exaggerating.  
I could go to HR  
but, despite official policies,  
going public would taint me.  
What should I do?

– Louise Kantro

## Climbing

– *in honor of Junko Tabei*  
Icy, slick,  
the mountain  
shrugs, shifting  
its heavy burden.  
Cascading boulders  
of snow and rock  
sweep sleeping  
hikers buried  
breathless.  
Slipping  
and falling  
too often ends  
in flowers and ash.

Despite the dangers,  
she planned, prepared,  
and climbed higher peaks  
as friends fell and steep years  
made every step more difficult.  
Bracing air and rugged beauty  
enamored her; challenging  
old roles and obeisance  
to limiting traditions  
spurred her; fierce  
resolve fed her.

Junko Tabei,  
first woman to  
scale Mt. Everest,  
first woman to crest  
all Seven Summits,  
guide us onward.  
In the icy winds  
of skepticism  
and bigotry,  
we climb,  
intrepid.

– Linda Scheller

## Ghazal for My Sisters

I open my hands to you, because  
after all we are all sisters  
Differences don't matter,  
the patterns of our days, our  
languages, do they, sisters?

What matters are our dreams,  
our intellects, the thousand ideas  
flung forward  
Into minds ready for a more just  
world, a more equal world for  
our brothers *and* our sisters.

I follow the news, the griefs of  
the world, the unsung joys,  
The women who follow the  
coffins or throw the flowers are  
my sisters.

We live in a place that others  
speed through without seeing,  
but we are here.  
We stop, we look, and when  
something needs to be changed,  
we turn to our sisters.

And yes, we've heard the voices  
behind us – that it can't be done,  
that it's been tried  
And failed, that it can't change,  
that girls can't, that it's too hard.  
We know better, sisters.

The rains don't come as we'd  
like them to, but still  
In late winter, there are blossoms  
in the hair of all these sisters.

We are singers, students,  
teachers, mediators, activists,  
organizers, advocates, soldiers,  
listeners, fundraisers, scientists,  
poets, daughters, wives, mothers,  
friends, sisters.

But it isn't just us in the world:  
Brothers, we open our hands to  
you too. This wide world  
rests on *all* our shoulders, and  
we're stronger as a community  
of brothers *and* sisters.

One at a time, our voices come  
together for change, so we move  
forward,  
We work, we put our backs  
and hearts into it, all the time  
watched by our younger sisters.

We live in a world made of  
stardust and ash, stitched  
together with threads of memory  
And loss, punctuated with the  
calls of gunfire and birds. What  
will we add, sisters?

We've often had our ways paved  
for us, so many brave women  
who have held candles  
So we could see through the  
dark, so many who have loved  
us, so many previous sisters.

And we will march. We will  
raise our voices until they hear  
our voices.  
We will no longer be ladylike.  
We will no longer give in, step  
aside, lay down, keep quiet. We  
will no longer keep quiet, sisters!

And now, here, we stand  
together, hands open, the long  
spring and summer ahead.  
There's work to do and we're  
ready. The days will warm,  
sisters. Our world awaits!

– Gillian Wegener

## Mostly Just

All Americans are not  
dangerous, mostly just the men.  
All men are not dangerous,  
mostly just the younger ones. All  
young men are not dangerous,  
only the angry, hateful,  
misguided ones. They weren't  
born knowing how to hate. They  
could be changed if we only  
knew in time who they were and  
what their futures held.  
It may not be too late to love  
them.

Hateful, misguided young  
men are not dangerous until  
Something Dark is triggered in  
their lives.  
They were not born knowing  
how to kill.  
They could be stopped, changed,  
if only we could find them in  
time,  
keep instruments of death out of  
their hands.  
There may still be time to love  
them.

But some angry, hateful,  
sad young men in the name  
of Something Dark acquire  
weapons, choose a target, make  
the decision to sacrifice lives,  
those of innocents and  
sometimes their own, on the  
altar of self-loathing and despair,  
hopelessness and false belief.  
Who in God's name will love  
them now?

– Sheila D. Landre

## True Colors

Their struggle endures in images  
black and white  
without nuance of depth and hue;  
we picture them in white dresses,  
white shoes and hats,  
forget their strength of diversity,  
white women and women of  
color,  
as they marched together

from varying backgrounds –  
the educators and students  
dressed in green,  
artists in pale rose, writers in  
purple –  
we cannot see in one photograph  
the long history of their dedication  
as they continued to march.

Close to their hearts  
they wore sashes and rosettes

of white, purple and yellow  
to represent the purity of their  
cause,  
their loyalty to one another,  
the hope and optimism  
that they would prevail,  
that things would change,  
that they would, finally,  
become equal citizens.

Courageous and determined,

they showed their true colors,  
carried signs and banners,  
risked arrest and derision,  
just as we still do now  
as we stand with our sisters,  
march arm in arm for equality  
today

and into the future

– Nancy Haskett



# Great Programs on KCBP 95.5 fm, the Voice of the Valley

Streaming on [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

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

**The Children's Hour** - Sundays 3:00 pm. And Mondays at 4:00 p.m.

## SCIENCE

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

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

**Big Picture Science** - 1:00 pm Sundays.

**Planetary Radio** – 2:30 pm Sundays.

## PROGRAMS

**The Ralph Nader Hour**: Citizen advocate Ralph Nader and guests discuss topics important for consumers and our nation on Saturdays at 4 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sojourner Truth** - 4:00 pm – Tuesdays. Interviews and panels focus on issues that affect people of color.

**Democracy Now!** - 7:00 am, Monday thru Friday. Reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez.

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

**Julian Taylor's Jukebox** – 4:00 pm, Thursdays and Fridays. Eclectic, contemporary music.

**Nuestra Música** – 4:00 pm, Tuesdays. Eclectic, Latin-flavored music with a beat!

## LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

**Rockin' with MJC** – One-hour music shows by Modesto Junior College students. 1:00 a.m. Saturdays; 2:00 p.m. Saturdays; 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays.

**Triumphant Tuesdays** – Noon, Tuesdays. Inspirational thoughts & music with Catrice.

**Sports Talk Modesto** - Join Jay Freeda and Jimmie Menezes. Snappy banter to catch up on everything happening in the sports world. – Thursdays, 5 pm.

**Vibn with the West Modesto Collaborative** - Jasmine Corena and Likhi Rivas. Engage, Educate, and Advocate on behalf of the West Modesto Community. Showcases Voices of the West Modesto Community – Wednesdays, 7 pm.

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

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

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

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

**Women of the Valley** with Linda Scheller and Laura Stokes - 8:00 pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00 am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

**Modesto Sound** - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) – Tuesdays 5:30 pm, Wednesdays 11:30 am, & Sundays 11:00 am & 4:30 pm.

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

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

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

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

**Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA)** with Middagh Goodwin – Mon. 5:00 pm; Fri. 9:00 pm & Sat. 6:00 pm.

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

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

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

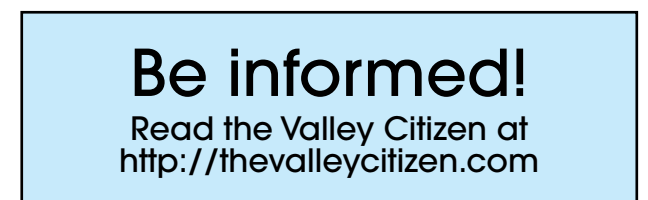
**Penny Bloods** – Fun, Victorian melodrama radio plays, often performed by local actors, written by Arnold Anthony Schmidt, CSU, Stanislaus. As scheduled.

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

**LISTEN TO OUR MUSIC PLAYLISTS AT SPINITRON** <https://spinitron.com/KCBP/calendar>

**Find a complete programming schedule on our website**, [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY RADIO STATION:** Donate here: <https://kcbpradio.org/donate/> Please consider a recurring monthly donation.





# Ten Reasons for Modest Optimism

from page 3

The nationwide protests are part of the 50501 Movement, which stands for “50 protests. 50 states. 1 movement.” One of its leaders, Potus Black, urged the crowd of protesters in Washington to stand united in order to “uphold the Constitution.”

“To oppose tyranny is to stand behind democracy and remind our elected officials that we, the people, are who they’re elected to serve, not themselves. The events over the past month have been built to exhaust us, to break our wills. But we are the American people. We will not break.”

I expect that in the coming weeks and months protests will grow larger and louder — and by summer perhaps a “Summer of Democracy” will sweep the nation.

Acts of civil disobedience are also on the rise, as are resignations in protest against the regime. This week, former NFL punter Chris Kluwe was hauled out of a Huntington Beach City Council meeting after speaking out against Trump during public comments against plans to include a MAGA reference in the design of a library plaque.

As cheers erupted from the audience, Kluwe told the council, in words that should be repeated across the land:

“MAGA stands for trying to erase trans people from existence. MAGA stands for resegregation and racism. MAGA stands for censorship and book bans. MAGA stands for firing air traffic controllers while planes are crashing. MAGA stands for firing the people overseeing our nuclear arsenal. MAGA stands for firing military veterans and those serving them at the VA, including canceling research on veteran suicide. MAGA stands for cutting funds to education, including for disabled children. MAGA is profoundly corrupt, unmistakably anti-democracy and most importantly, MAGA is explicitly a Nazi movement. You may have replaced a swastika with a red hat, but that is what it is.”

When he was done speaking, Kluwe said he would “engage in the time-honored American tradition of peaceful civil disobedience.”

## 8. Stock and bond markets are trembling.

Trump has not lowered prices; in fact, inflation is rising under his control.

Trump’s wild talk of 25 percent tariffs is spooking the market. Yesterday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which measures the performance of 30 large-cap U.S. stocks, dropped by more than 1.40 percent.

Treasury bonds also dropped after a report showed more U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than economists expected — an indication the pace of layoffs could be worsening.

Transcripts of the last Fed meeting showed that officials discussed how Trump’s proposed tariffs and mass deportations of migrants, as well as strong consumer spending, could push inflation higher this year.

Economic storm clouds like these should be troubling for everyone but especially for a regime that measures its success by stock and bond markets.

## 9. Trump is overreaching — pretending to be “king” and abandoning Ukraine for Putin.

Trump’s threats of annexation, conquest, and “unleashing hell” have been exposed as farcical bluffs — and his displays this week of being “king” and siding with Putin have unleashed a new level of public ridicule.

On Wednesday, following his attempt to kill a new congestion pricing program for Manhattan, Trump wrote on Truth Social: “CONGESTION PRICING IS DEAD. Manhattan, and all of New York, is SAVED. LONG LIVE THE KING!” The White House shared the quote accompanied by a computer-generated image of Trump grinning on a fake *Time* magazine cover while donning a golden crown.

Negative reaction was swift and overwhelming. Social media has exploded with derision. New York Governor Kathy Hochul said, “We are a nation of laws, not ruled by a king.” Illinois’s Democratic governor, JB Pritzker, said, “My oath is to the Constitution of our state and our nation. We don’t have kings in America, and I won’t bend the knee to one.”

The reaction to Trump’s abandoning Ukraine and siding with Putin has been more devastating, putting congressional Republicans on the defensive. Prominent Republican senators Roger Wicker of Mississippi and John Kennedy of Louisiana criticized Putin. Bill Kristol, a former official in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, noted that “Nato and the US commitment to Europe has kept the European peace for 80 years. It’s foolish and reckless to put that at risk. And for what? To get along with Putin?”

## 10. The Trump-Vance-Musk “shock and awe” plan is faltering.

In all these ways and for all of these reasons, the regime’s efforts to overwhelm us are failing.

Make no mistake: Trump, Vance, and Musk continue to



be an indiscriminate wrecking ball that has already caused major destruction and will continue to weaken and isolate America. But their takeover has been slowed.

Their plan was based on doing so much, so fast that the rest of us would give in to negativity and despair. They want a dictatorship built on hopelessness and fear.

That may have been the case initially, but we can take courage from the green shoots of rebellion now appearing across America and the world.

As several of you have pointed out, successful resistance movements maintain hope and a positive vision of the future, no matter how dark the present.

More than 55 years ago, I participated in the resistance to the Vietnam War — a resistance that ultimately ended the war and caused a once powerful president to resign. That resistance gave us courage we didn’t even know we had. It changed American culture, inspiring songs such as “The Times They Are A Changing,” and “Blowin’ In The Wind.”

No one person led that anti-war movement. It was an amalgam of groups and leaders spanning more than six years of mobilization and organization, at all levels of society.

The Civil Rights Movement that culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 required over 18 years of organizing, demonstrating, and mobilizing.

The current coup is less than five weeks old, and resistance has only begun. The Trump-Vance-Musk regime will fail. Even so, the Democracy Movement now emerging will require at least a decade, if not a generation, to rebuild and strengthen what has been destroyed, and to fix the raging inequalities, injustices, and corruption that led so many to vote for Trump for a second time.

Those of you who want the leaders of the Democratic Party to step up and be heard are right, of course. But political parties do not lead. The anti-war movement and the Civil Rights Movement didn’t depend on the Democratic Party for their successes. They depended on a mass mobilization of all of us who accepted the responsibilities of being American.

We will prevail because we are relearning the basic truth — that we are the leaders we’ve been waiting for.

## DRUG-RELATED OVERDOSE & POISONING DEATHS!

Stanislaus County has been impacted by a recent increase in suspected drug-related overdose and accidental poisoning deaths

**What you can do:**

- Carry Naloxone (NARCAN)
- If you suspect an overdose, call 911 right away - even if you administered Naloxone (NARCAN)
- Check in with friends and family with a history of substance use
- Seek treatment for substance use disorder
  - Call 1-888-376-6246

**HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY**

Stanislaus County Opioid Safety Coalition

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
Visit [StanCounty.com](http://StanCounty.com) or [StanRx.net](http://StanRx.net)



# calendar

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

## march

**MAPS - Modesto Area Partners in Science:** Free MJC science programs on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall 132 at 7:30 pm. unless noted otherwise. **March 21: Dr. Douglas Weiser - Adapt or Die:** How the Unfolded Protein Response Allows Cells to Decide Between Responding to Stress & Programmed Cell Death. Dr. Weiser discusses his research on the UPR, where he uses zebrafish as a genetic model for studying stress-induced apoptosis. He will also share the implications of this research on treating neurodegenerative diseases. West Campus Mary Stuart Rodgers Center.

**Modesto Science Colloquium,** Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m., MJC West Campus, SCC 115. Free to the Public. Talks recorded for the Science Colloquium's YouTube Site. **March 12: Who Was the Iceman?** A 5,300-Year-Old Mummy Reveals Details About Life and Death in the Copper Age of Europe. Dr. Susan Kerr, Professor of Anthropology, MJC. Discovered in a melting glacier in 1991, Otzi (aka "The Iceman") is one of the most studied mummies in the world, from analyses of his stomach contents to the clothes he wore. This presentation will share updates on Otzi, as we know him today. **March 26: Engineering Better Health: Possibilities as a Biomedical Engineer.** Alex Martin-Ginnold is a Product Engineer at Noah Medical. Engineering is applied to many areas of medicine to create new technologies that improve patient outcomes. From lab-grown organ replacements to autonomous assistive robotics to better medical diagnostic tests, biomedical engineers create the technology we increasingly rely on to stay healthy.

**The Prospect Theatre:** 24/25 season has continuing offerings. Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2024-2025-season/>

**1 SAT: 31st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration.** Speaker: Judge La Doris Hazzard Cordell. Gladys Williams will receive the MLK Legacy Award. The speaker meets the students at 4:00 pm in the MJC Little Theatre. The main event at 7:00 pm.

**4 TUES: VIGIL: SAVE OUR DEMOCRACY** at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five Points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Info: Call the Center at 209-529-5750 or email [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).

**16 SUN: The State Theatre** and Modesto Film Society presents *Seven Samurai* at 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/seven-samurai-032025/>

**22 SAT: The Golden State Road Warriors Wheelchair Basketball** Team returns to MJC for a KCBP 95.5 FM Community Radio fundraiser. See article p.1

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Saturday, April 5: MPLC Annual Meeting,** 9 am to 12 pm. All welcome.

**Saturday, May 17: "Invitation to Presence"** – Half-Day Contemplative Prayer Retreat, 9 a.m. to noon, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. For more information and to sign up, contact Mike Monson at 209-380-5832 or [michaelmonson9@gmail.com](mailto:michaelmonson9@gmail.com)

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

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

**Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship,** 10:00 am at the

MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email [modestovineyard@gmail.com](mailto:modestovineyard@gmail.com); All Welcome.

**IMCV Weekly Insight Meditation and Dharma Talk,** 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely; donations welcome. All are welcome. For more information, please email [charlie@imcv.org](mailto:charlie@imcv.org). Our mailing address is IMCV, P.O. Box 579564, Modesto, CA 95357.

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County** meets in person and on Zoom every Sunday at 10:30 am at 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Info: 209-788-3720; [www.stanuu.org](http://www.stanuu.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 Area Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the second Mondays at 7:00pm. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in this support group for families whose children have died at any age, from any cause. Call 209-622-6786 or email for details: [tcfmdestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmdestoriverbank@gmail.com); <https://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org/>

**Suicide Loss Support Group:** Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, [nandrews6863@charter.net](mailto:nandrews6863@charter.net).

**Walk with Me,** a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month. Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email [WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com](mailto:WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com) or call 209.577.1604.

### TUESDAYS

**Climate Action Justice Network-Stanislaus** meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Link-<https://tinyurl.com/CJAN-FirstTuesday>

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

**NAACP Meeting.** King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; For ZOOM link, visit <https://www.naacpmolestostanislaus.org/> email: [naacp.branch1048@gmail.com](mailto: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.

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

### WEDNESDAYS

**Retired Public Employees Association.** All seniors welcome! Meetings every third Wednesday. Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave. 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Call (209) 324-2060. Pay \$8.00 and order from the menu.

**The Almond Blossom Sangha** meets on Wednesdays, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, Zoom, and sometimes hybrid, for meditation and Dharma discussions. Call Anne at 209-404-4835 for more information.

**The GAP.** A place of support for Christian parents of LGBTQ+ or questioning kids every Wednesday 6:30 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church 1528 Oakdale Rd. Instagram: [Thegapmodesto](https://www.instagram.com/Thegapmodesto)

**Ongoing meditation class** based on Qi Gong Principals. Practice a 3 Step Guided Meditation Process I have been doing for over a decade. Fun and Easy. JOIN ME! Donations accepted but optional. Call 209.495.6608 or email Orlando Arreygue, CMT RYT, [orlando@arreygue.com](mailto:orlando@arreygue.com)

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS:** Held THE FIRST TUESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J St. (Five points), 4:00-5:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

**MEDIA:** Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the "Voice of the Valley" also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

**PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING,** FIRST Thursdays, 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:00 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom. Email Jim Costello for login information, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

**PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO,** 829 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

### SATURDAY

**Free Community Drum Circle** every third Saturday, 11 am to 12:30 pm, Gallo Center for the Arts, 10<sup>th</sup> & I St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. <https://drum-love.com/>

**Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction.** @Friends Coming of Age., 1203 Tully Rd., Ste. B., Modesto. Saturdays 8-9 am. FREE (donations accepted). Info: [RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:orkingenne@gmail.com)

### CalPride Stanislaus EVENTS

1202 H St., Suite C, Modesto, 209-408-8848.  
Open Monday-Friday, 10 am-6 pm.

### ONSITE GROUPS & PROGRAMS (Hosted at CalPride Stanislaus)

**QUEER POINT:** CalPride's harm reduction program supports individuals who use drugs and the broader community and provides on-site syringe services, safer injection kits, fentanyl test strips, and Narcan for overdose prevention. Available Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 6 PM.

**FOLX Group for LGBTQ+ Individuals** between the ages of 25-49, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 1-2 pm.

**Women's Group,** run by women for ALL women every Wednesday, Noon-1 pm.

**Dreams and Solutions Drugs and Alcohol Support Group,** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 1-2 pm.

**Writing Group Peer Support Group** for anyone looking to explore themselves through creativity every Friday, 4:30 pm-6 pm.

**BEADiFULL Peer Support Group** focusing on organic, peer-lead conversation and connection while making friendship bracelets and beaded jewelry, 1st and 3rd Fridays, 11:30 am-1 pm

**Wellness Wednesdays,** every Wednesday from 1-5 pm, for any individual receiving services in-center to be in community, create art, play games, etc.

**Legal Name Change Clinic,** every Tuesday and Thursday, 10 am-4 pm, and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by appointment only.

**Affirmation Station FREE Clothing Closet,** open during business hours, Monday-Friday, 10 am-6 pm.

**FREE HIV/HCV Testing and Counseling** available Monday-Friday, 11 am-5 pm.

### OFFSITE GROUPS (Hosted Elsewhere)

**The Men's Senior Group** meets every Thursday at 1 p.m. at the Queen Bean Coffee House, 1126 14th St, Modesto.

**We Thrive POZ Art Group** meets every Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Dragonfly-Art for Life Studio, 1210 J St, Modesto.

**Merced LGBT Community Center** offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on-site **Wed-Fri**, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: [mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org](mailto:mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org) – 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. [www.mercedlgbtcenter.org](http://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/>  
**TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP,** 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email [info@stanpride.org](mailto:info@stanpride.org), or [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgsupport@stanpride.org)

### THURSDAYS

**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: [jpmadesto@gmail.com](mailto:jpmadesto@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](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)

**3rd Thursday Art Walk,** downtown Modesto, third Thursdays, 5 to 8 pm. stroll to art displays and galleries. Info: <https://visitmodesto.com/arts-entertainment/#art-walk>

**VALLEY HEARTLAND ZEN GROUP:** every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

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

### FRIDAYS

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

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

**Ukulele On Funstrummer Fridays:** Every Friday morning from 9 am to 10:30 am Play Along Easy Songs from the Funstrummers Songbooks of over 500 songs. Funstrummers Performing Band Practice from 10 to noon and afternoon gig. Unitarian Church, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, 209-505-3216 for details. Donations accepted. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mej3gD0ZD40&list=LLB8Y19zZg660qHCXGoC60jQ&index=1>

**SIERRA CLUB:** Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, Office of Valley Improvement Projects, 1224 K St. Modesto., 6:45 pm. Info: 209-632-5473. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.