

Homeless: The False Promise of “Affordable” Housing

By **ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen**

California needs affordable housing now, but no one should be led into thinking affordable housing will bring a solution to the state’s widespread homelessness. We need affordable housing because even working people with good jobs have been priced out of California’s housing market.

A great many homeless people, on the other hand, can’t work due to disability, mental or physical illness, or because they’re elderly and their retirement incomes are too low to meet fundamental costs of living, especially rent. Through no fault of their own, many are dependent on failed systems of care, especially health care.

Affordable housing in the San Joaquin Valley, one of the more affordable regions of California, can cost anywhere from just under \$200,000 per unit up to \$400,000 per unit to build. In Modesto, the Archway Commons affordable housing project will ultimately feature 150 units; it is now in Phase II.

The project was proposed in 2008; Phase I was completed in 2014. Phase II will be finished by next year. Obviously, the lag time for affordable housing makes it an inappropriate tactic for reducing homeless numbers, and the expense makes it cost-prohibitive. Phase II of the Archway Commons complex is projected to come in at a total cost of \$30.7 million for 76 units, over \$400,000 per unit.

Even container-built housing and tiny homes are costly. The City of Turlock recently approved 50 container-built apartments for homeless people at a cost of just under \$10 million, or roughly \$200,000 each. The decision to build the apartments was highly controversial, with some Turlock City Councilmembers and members of the public opposing the project because of the high cost per unit.

Rather than commit to costly housing



that takes years to complete, state and local officials should be supporting transitional housing and shelter options that can be implemented within weeks or months, including permitted parking and campsites, Pallet Shelters, Dignity Moves communities, Conestoga Huts and other serviceable and inexpensive accommodations that come in at \$35,000 per unit or even much less.

In a Catch-22 ruling, California Governor Gavin Newsom has called for cities to show results on homelessness before qualifying

for state funding. The catch is that few cities have near enough funding to reduce homelessness and, in any case, Newsom has always been vague about what he means by “results.” Smart cities will devise plans for reducing homelessness that feature effective, inexpensive, and timely housing/shelter options.

Recent admissions by local officials that they are overwhelmed by homelessness and lack sufficient funds to reduce the manifold harms it brings offer a flicker of hope that California may finally end years of denial about homelessness and finally face uncomfortable realities. Homelessness is a growing humanitarian crisis that cannot be met with traditional housing options, including “affordable” housing.

There are multiple reasons for homelessness and multiple needs among the homeless population. The one common and urgent need is for a safe place to rest and recover. Transitional housing and shelter options offer the fastest and least expensive tactic to reduce homelessness and provide the one fundamental service all homeless people need now, a safe space they can call their own.

STANISLAUS SERVICE CENTER'S
EQUITY TEAM PRESENTS

East of Salinas

Join us for a free screening of a documentary about a bright student and a dedicated teacher.

Stay after the movie for a discussion led by Oscar Ramos, the teacher featured in the film.

MAY 13, 2023 • DOORS OPEN AT 12:00 • PROGRAM STARTS AT 1:00
THE STATE THEATRE, 1307 J. STREET, MODESTO

Limited seating available.
For more information call 537-0702 or email emccorkell@cta.org

Stanislaus Service Center's Equity Team presents: East of Salinas

Join us at the State Theatre **Saturday, May 13**, for a FREE screening of a documentary about a bright student and a dedicated teacher. Stay after the movie for a discussion led by Oscar Ramos, the teacher featured in the film.

East of Salinas takes us to the heart of California’s “Steinbeck Country,” the Salinas Valley, to meet a bright boy and his dedicated teacher — both sons of migrant farm workers.

With parents who are busy working long hours in the fields, third grader Jose Ansaldo often turns to his teacher, Oscar Ramos, for

guidance. But Jose is undocumented; he was born in Mexico. Like many other migrant children, he is beginning to understand the situation — and the opportunities that may be lost to him through no fault of his own.

This is a FREE Community event. Doors at 12; program at 1 p.m. The State Theatre, 1307 J. St., Modesto.

Limited seating is available. For information, call (209) 537-0702 or email emccorkell@cta.org

<http://itvs.org/films/east-of-salinas>

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

The 38th Annual Peace Camp Registration is Open!

June 23-25, 2023

REGISTER FOR CAMP, PAY FOR CAMP

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's rescheduled 38th Annual Peace Camp in the Sierras will take place on June 23-25, 2023. Spend a weekend in nature building community and working toward peace, justice, and a sustainable environment through nonviolent action. You'll enjoy workshops, good food, singing, crafts, a talent show, recreation, and stimulating people of all ages in a beautiful mountain setting.

Peace Camp Registration

FULL WEEKEND 2 nights, 5 meals, workshops & activities

- Adult (18+): before May 15 - \$80; May 15-May 31 - \$90; After May 31 - \$100
- Youth (4-17): before May 15 - \$50; May 15-May 31 - \$60; After May 31 - \$70
- Child (0-3): FREE

PARTIAL WEEKEND 1 night, 4 meals, workshops & activities

- Adult (18+): before May 15 - \$70; May 15-May 31 - \$75; After May 31 - \$80
- Youth (4-17): before May 1 - \$40; May 1-May 31 - \$45; After May 31 - \$50

- Child (0-3): FREE
- **SATURDAY DAY** 3 meals, workshops & activities
- Adult (18+): before May 15 - \$35; May 15-May 31 - \$40; After May 31 - \$45
- Youth (4-17): before May 15 - \$25; May 15-May 31 - \$30; After May 31 - \$35
- Child (0-3): FREE

Registration: <https://www.jotform.com/form/230625713663051>

About Peace Camp

Peace Camp officially opens with supper at 6:00 pm on Friday and closes after breakfast and the morning gathering on Sunday. Volunteers and campers run the camp, share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work around the camp, including assisting with recreational activities and programming. Families and individuals of all ages are welcome. Minors under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

The camp fee covers the program, food, and lodging for the weekend. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated.

If you are interested in volunteering or want to be added to the Peace Camp 2023 Interest list to get the latest updates, contact Megan Parravano (information provided below).

About Camp Peaceful Pines

Camp Peaceful Pines, on Clark Fork Road off Hwy. 108 in the Stanislaus National Forest, is the venue for Peace Camp. Camp Peaceful Pines features a kitchen/mess hall, bathroom facilities with showers, rustic cabins, and platform tents. A cabin with special needs may be requested. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared.

In 2018, the Donnell Fire burned much of the surrounding area but the Camp itself remains intact and is still a place of beauty and tranquility surrounded by Mother Nature's continuing restoration. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp.

For more information: Megan Parravano, 209-497-7220, meganparravano@gmail.com

Central West Ballet presents Peter Pan at the Gallo

Central West Ballet presents Peter Pan, the ultimate magical story ballet, on May 5th, 6th, and 7th! Journey with Peter, Tinker Bell, Wendy, John, and Michael as they actually fly to Neverland and cross paths with Captain Hook!

Buy tickets for a Tinker Bell party after the May 6 matinee! Visit the boutique to buy Peter Pan t-shirts, pirate hooks, eye patches, and Tinker Bell jewelry!

Purchase tickets are at the Gallo Center for the Arts, <https://tickets.galloarts.org/9067>



SAVE THE DATE!

June 23-25, 2023

Camp Peaceful Pines
Dardanelle, CA

Families & Individuals Welcome!

Spend a weekend in nature building community and working toward peace, justice, and a sustainable environment through nonviolent action

More details at:
<http://peacelifecenter.org/peace-camp/>

IN MEMORIAM



Harry Belafonte

March 1, 1927 - April 25, 2023

Singer, Actor, Civil Rights Activist

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ART EXHIBIT - McHenry Museum

1402 I STREET MODESTO, CA 95354

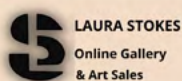
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Bob Hackamack — “Godfather of the Tuolumne”

By ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen

Known variously as “The Godfather of the Tuolumne” and “Mr. Tuolumne,” legendary Sierra Club member and activist Bob Hackamack passed away last week. An avid rock climber, canoeist and kayaker, Hackamack was one of the earliest conservationists to realize the ecological value of San Joaquin Valley watersheds. His training as a Chemical and Systems Engineer enabled him to provide meticulously detailed criticisms of proposals that would have weakened the Tuolumne River’s esthetic and natural values, especially with regard to migrating salmon and Steelhead Trout.

A longtime resident of Modesto, where his home was located along the banks of the river he so loved, Hackamack moved to Twain Harte with his wife Jean several years ago. Jean passed away at age 92 in 2020.

Hackamack was a major player in the effort to achieve the “Wild and Scenic” designation for the Tuolumne, a federally protected status that prohibits development that would damage the river’s recreational and ecological value.

In an April 24 letter to Friends of the River and other interested parties, Tuolumne River Trust Executive Director Patrick Koeple wrote,

“Bob Hackamack is a Tuolumne River legend and was an early advocate for protecting the river from San Francisco’s proposed Clavey-Wards Ferry project, a series of hydroelectric dams, reservoirs, and penstocks on the last remaining whitewater stretch of the Tuolumne. It’s hard to understate the important role Bob played in protecting the Tuolumne from this massive project, which would have drowned the world famous whitewater run, world-class trout fishery, and beautiful, wild river canyon under unnatural reservoirs. Bob was so devoted to the Tuolumne River that it is difficult to separate his personal biography from a history of campaigns to protect and restore the Tuolumne River since the late 1960’s.”

Hackamack’s leadership and expertise set new standards



for conservation as he demonstrated again and again the flawed analyses of those who would commodify and retail water for private gain. A founding board member of the Tuolumne River Trust since 1981, he continued to serve on the board until last year.

In a 2012 interview with The Valley Citizen, Hackamack commented on the illusory value of water sales by saying:

“Water sales are legal and encouraged by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to transfer water from low value uses to higher value uses, which is thought to reduce waste of water and reduce the need for more dams. The FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) can tip that scale of uses toward protecting and enhancing natural values by requiring more water be devoted to fish, wildlife, recreation, and the aesthetics of the Tuolumne from La Grange to its confluence with the San Joaquin if there is enough public interest in doing so. Also, the SWRCB is now pressing diverters in all of the Sacramento and San Joaquin river watersheds to use less water and send more of the water under their control into the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta for the health of that water body. Increased fall, winter, and spring release of water into the Tuolumne at La Grange is one of those higher value uses to the California economy as well as in the other values for this river.”

As fitting for a man who has a whitewater rapids named in his honor (“Hackamack’s Hole”), Bob Hackamack’s words are as relevant today as they ever were.

May he rest in peace.

Increasing the Commercial Availability of Source-Identified California Native Seed And Plants

Speakers: Michele Ranieri & Douglas Jon-Iten

Friday, May 19

Sierra Club Monthly Programs Socializing and Snacks: 6:45 p.m. Presentation: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., College Ave. United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto.

The need to increase the supply of source-identified native seed is a significant limiting factor in habitat restoration. It has garnered increasing attention, particularly with the release of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine’s 2023 report on the Assessment of Native Seed Needs and the Capacity for their Supply.

The availability of source-identified native seed is a significant challenge in habitat restoration. We will introduce two companies, Heritage Growers and Great Valley Seed Company, working on increasing the commercial availability of source-identified native seeds and plants. We will also discuss the process and challenges of producing high-quality seeds of known genetic origin for habitat restoration.

Michele has a rich history of working with plants in the organic farming

industry as well as studying medicinal herbs and permaculture principles. After 10 years in organic farming, including running the vegetable and medicinal herb nursery at Soil Born Farms in Rancho Cordova, CA, she transitioned to the role of Assistant General Manager at Hedgerow Farms, where she was able to apply her deep knowledge of plants and her expertise in data management and organization.

Doug has an extensive farming background with in-depth knowledge of agronomic practices to optimize the success of the production of native plant species. Doug has overseen operations at Great Valley Seed since December 2020. During that time, he has been working to amplify local native seed that is critical for farming and restoration efforts in the San Joaquin Valley.



The YOKUTS GROUP

Stanislaus County, California



Misinformation about Food Kids Eat in Schools

By MEGHAN MARONEY, Campaign Manager,
Federal Child Nutrition Programs, Center for Science in
the Public Interest

Myth #1: Kids won't eat healthier food, so food will just end up in the garbage. Food waste is a real issue across our entire food system, but it's not the result of healthier school meals. In fact, after school meals became healthier over 10 years ago following passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, researchers found that students ate more nutritious foods and discarded the same if not less food than before.

Myth #2: We don't need to focus on reducing sodium.

Did you know that nine out of ten kids consume too much salt, putting them at risk of heart disease as adults? Many children rely on these school meals as their two healthy meals that day. The USDA's proposal sets gradual 10-percent reductions over several years, keeping up the progress to rein in excessively high amounts of sodium.

Myth #3: Schools won't be able to meet these standards.

There's no doubt that schools will need more support to implement these standards. But there's hope – many schools across the country are already exceeding current standards or meeting the proposed standards ahead of schedule, and what the USDA has proposed will be phased in over time.

Read more about what's true and what's not [here](#). If you'd like to see healthier choices at school breakfast and lunch, take action and urge the USDA to finalize a strong rule. **And we've made it easy — use our pre-filled template to submit a comment to the USDA by May 10th.**



Community Gathering - FREE Tacos

As a way to build community, spend time together and eat delicious food, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County (UUFSC) is hosting a FREE taco truck event on Sunday, May 7th at Noon at 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. As we start the Spring season in community, we are reaching out to others to join in this social event. Learn more about UUFSC, meet great people, enjoy delicious tacos and soak up the Central Valley's Spring beauty.

This is a free event, please register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-connections-event-tickets-608738923507>

Our Mission Statement:

Growing the Beloved Community, a haven of hope, by working for love and justice.

Our Vision Statement:

We empower members to express love for themselves, for each other, for all people, and for the natural universe. We dedicate ourselves to building Beloved Community,



UU Fellowship of Stanislaus County
A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

recognizing and caring for those of us, and the parts of ourselves, that are most marginalized and oppressed.

To accomplish that:

We gather for regular worship and spiritual growth.

We provide opportunities for people to collaborate and organize in projects that live our UU values.

We join other religious communities in joint endeavors to promote shared values.

For more on the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County visit www.stanuu.org

Contact: Leah Silvestre Franklin, (209) 605-1700, shootingstar1888@sbcglobal.net Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, CA, P O Box 1000, Salida, CA 95368

Valley Air District Gives up to \$5,000 for Residents Upgrading Their Home Heating and Air Conditioning

Residents willing to disable their fireplace and install an electric heat pump are eligible for the program

The Valley Air District allows Valley residents to save up to \$5,000 on a new home heating and cooling system when decommissioning their fireplace and installing an electric heat pump system. The District's Fireplace & Woodstove Change-Out program provides incentives for residents to reduce emissions from their wood-burning stoves or fireplace by replacing their devices with an electric heat pump or a gas device. Residents must work with a District-approved participating program retailer or HVAC company. Businesses interested in becoming a program partner should call 559-230-5800. To participate in this program, residents should visit www.valleyair.org/change-out.

Watch a short video testimonial [here](#) from one of the grant participants.

A heat pump heats and cools your home, serving as a combined furnace and HVAC system. Heat pumps bring high-efficiency heating and cooling to homes throughout California. They are a crucial part of electrifying a home. Heat pumps are an energy-efficient and environmentally friendly alternative when coupled with cleaner electricity sources, such as solar. For more information about electric heat pumps, please visit: www.energy.gov/energysaver/heat-pump-systems.

[pump-systems](#).

The benefits of a heat pump include:

- Combined heating and cooling in one system
- Can connect to existing central ductwork or be a ductless system for homes without ducts
- Can be powered by clean electricity
- Lowered heating and cooling costs
- Quiet and efficient operation

This is a great year to replace your old wood- or pellet-burning device with a heat pump because of the additional incentives offered through the federal Inflation Reduction Act. Applicants are eligible for a tax credit of 30% of the total costs of heat pump installation. To learn more about the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act, visit [Clean Energy Connection](#).

As part of the comprehensive Residential Wood Smoke Reduction Strategy, the District urges all Valley residents to help reduce harmful PM2.5 emissions and heat their homes by means other than burning wood whenever possible. Residential wood burning is one of the Valley's largest sources of wintertime PM2.5 emissions and is shown to have a direct effect on neighborhood air quality.

"During the winter, residential woodsmoke is a leading contributor to public health impacts in neighborhoods where we live, work, and play," said District Chief Communications Officer Jaime Holt. "Choosing to replace or remove wood-burning fireplaces is an important part of our collective efforts to reduce air pollution and improve the quality of life in our communities. We're excited to offer increased funding assistance to our residents, with the highest funding going to residents converting to electric heat pumps for home heating".

For additional information about the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, visit www.valleyair.org or call 559-230-6000

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CELEBRATE

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IN THE 10TH STREET PLAZA
ON THURSDAY MAY 4TH 5-9 PM

FOR co-hosts world premiere of 'The 5 Powers Revolution'

A new animated documentary tells the true story of the interconnected friendships and mutual influences of four extraordinary peacemakers and spiritual teachers.

FOR Staff

June 2022 marked the world premiere of "The 5 Powers Revolution," an animated feature documentary film that tells the inspiring true story of the deep interconnected friendships and profound mutual influences of Thich Nhat Hanh, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Sister Chan Khong; and Rev. Alfred Hassler.

These four extraordinary peacemakers and spiritual teachers built an unprecedented partnership that changed the course of human history, working together to stop the massive war in Vietnam and ultimately laying a foundation for progressive social and environmental consciousness that continues to impact the world to this very day. The "5 Powers" named in the title are Faith, Diligence, Mindfulness, Concentration, and Insight, and the narrative provides a groundbreaking and artistic framework for considering each of those essential characteristics to help end war, heal our planet, and heal ourselves in the process.

"The 5 Powers Revolution" creatively describes how this quartet of Zen Buddhist teachers and Christian leaders, representing radically different faith traditions and cultural backgrounds, remarkably connected

in the mid-1960s. Those relationships were facilitated in large part thanks to Hassler, who served as executive secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) from 1958- 1974. Upon taking that leadership position at FOR, Hassler had just created and published the famous comic book, "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story," which was distributed to tens of thousands of Black families in the U.S. South with the approval and support of Dr. King.

This one-hour film, directed and co-produced by FOR member Gregory Kennedy, was inspired by the success of that historic 1957 comic book. With new documentary footage, new animation, and new narration provided by Rev. Dr. Emma Jordan-Simpson, who served as FOR-USA executive director from 2018-21, the Summer 2022 launch of the film has received plaudits from around the world.

Multiple screenings have already been held since its launch, followed by live panel talkback sessions with participants from Asia, Europe, Africa, and North America. Featured speakers have included Kennedy and co-producer



Noam Dromi; Laura Hassler (daughter of Alfred and executive director of the Netherlands-based Musicians without Borders); and members of the Order of Interbeing (the Zen Buddhist lineage founded by Nhat Hanh), including Dr. Anthony Nicotera (FOR-USA director of advancement). A series of graphic comic books in multiple languages have also been released alongside the film to help its message touch diverse audiences worldwide.

Twenty percent of the net income derived from sales of the film, comic books, and NFT products will be devoted to the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation, and six percent will be sent to the Fellowship of Reconciliation in recognition of the fact that FOR was the sole organization that both Dr. King and Thich Nhat Hanh both joined during their lifetimes.

To learn more and purchase or rent the film, visit the5powersrevolution.com.

This story was produced by Fellowship Magazine.



Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center Nature Photo Contest Now Open!

Anyone with a camera or cell phone is encouraged to sort through their photos and enter a "Nature Photo Contest" sponsored by the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center. CSERC is a non-profit conservation organization in Twain Harte. Between now and May 15th, entrants may submit up to 10 photos that they have taken to compete for cash prizes.

Prizes will be awarded in two categories: (1) WILDLIFE PHOTOS of local native wildlife species and (2) SCENIC LANDSCAPE PHOTOS of natural areas within the region. In addition to the \$150, \$75, and \$50 cash prizes for Adult contestants in each photo category, CSERC will also award a first-place prize of \$100 in each category for "youth" photographers 16 years of age and younger. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to make students aware of the opportunity to compete.

CSERC uses the Nature Photo Contest to raise public awareness about local wildlife and to gain attention for nature in the region. Photo entries are often used in CSERC's educational programs. Since 1990, CSERC has given free



presentations to more than 155,000 students and members of community groups – mostly across the foothills and in the Central Valley.

HOW TO ENTER: Entrants should email their photo(s) as a JPEG file at the highest resolution possible to chelsea@cserc.org along with their name and contact information.

All photos must be taken by the contestant and must be original, unaltered photos. While CSERC may use any submitted photos in the Center's educational and outreach materials, contestants retain all commercial rights to their photos.

Winning entries will be announced on the CSERC website (and often in local media). Readers can learn more about the contest at the CSERC website: www.cserc.org The Contest closes Monday, May 15, 2023.

**The Flying Dutchman:
A Live Reading**

MONDAY, MAY 8TH
4PM - 5:30 PM
LIBRARY EVENT HALL (L102)

Enjoy a live, performative reading of Professor of English Dr. Arnold Schmidt's adaptation of *The Flying Dutchman*, complete with music, sound effects, props, and costumes!

Free popcorn and refreshments provided.

University Library
STANISLAUS STATE

Veterans Push Back Against Military Recruitment in Schools

The branches of the U.S. military have long seen high schools as optimal recruiting grounds. Some veterans are beginning to fight the propaganda and tell students the truth about military service.

By **RUBEN ABRAHAMS BROSBE**

March 20 marked the 20th anniversary of the United States' invasion of Iraq. The war took hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives, with some estimates of Iraqi casualties putting the number at over 1 million. More than 4,600 U.S. soldiers died in Iraq during and after the invasion, and thousands more have died by suicide.

Meanwhile, and not coincidentally, the U.S. military is facing its worst recruitment crisis since the end of the Vietnam War. The Defense Department's budget proposal for 2024 outlines a plan for the military to slightly cut back on its ranks, but to reach its projected numbers, it will still need to embark on a heavy recruitment push. Across the country, anti-war veterans and their allies are working together in an effort to stop the U.S. military from reaching its goal.

We Are Not Your Soldiers is a project of New York City-based nonprofit World Can't Wait. The organization sends military veterans into schools to share honest stories of the harm they have caused and suffered. In doing so, they hope to prevent young people from signing up.

"I wish I had somebody who told me when I was young," says Miles Megaciph, who was stationed in Cuba and Okinawa with the U.S. Marine Corps from 1992 to 1996. "The experiences I've lived, as painful as they are, and as much as I don't like to relive them, are valuable to help future adults not live those experiences," Megaciph told me.

"We wanted to get to the people who were going to be the next recruits," says Debra Sweet, the executive director of World Can't Wait. When We Are Not Your Soldiers launched in 2008, the experience was often intense for veterans. "They were all fresh out of Afghanistan and Iraq," Sweet remembers. "It was very raw, it was very hard. [It was] really hard for them to go talk to people in public about what had happened. And we learned a lot about PTSD, up close and personal, and how it was affecting people."

Since then, over 50 veterans have participated in We Are Not Your Soldiers. Currently, the project relies on a group of nine veterans, who receive a stipend of \$125 for each visit. Teachers affiliated with World Can't Wait also offer curricular support to veterans so they can connect their stories to class lessons.

"I'm trying to respect these kids by telling them the truth that other people are not telling them." — Joy Damiani

Sarah Gil, a school teacher at the City-As-School, a transfer high school in New York City, has brought veterans from We Are Not Your Soldiers to her classroom to speak to students in classes focused on just war, race and racism, economics, and moral responsibility. "They share their vulnerability, and it's more than I could ever do with any of my lessons," Gil says of the veterans' visits.

Joy Damiani, an Iraq War veteran who served six years in the U.S. Army, has learned how to use that vulnerability more

**"I'm trying to respect these kids
by telling them the truth that other
people are not telling them."**

— Joy Damiani

selectively over time. "I used to go into the classroom and spend a lot of time talking," Damiani says. "[I was] trying to scare kids into not joining the military, because I was still so freshly traumatized from that." More recently, Damiani says her role is less about trying to scare young people and instead providing an alternative perspective. "I'm trying to respect these kids by telling them the truth that other people are not telling them. I'm trying to give them something I didn't have, which was somebody to bring the real talk right into my face where I needed it."

"Usually, the students don't have any idea of what it's actually like," Megaciph says. "Their narrative really comes from television and comes from the national narrative. 'Thank you. Thank you for your service. It's an honor to be a member of the military. Travel the world' stuff." While most students have a generally positive view of the military, Megaciph has noticed a shift in recent years. "I think in the past two years, maybe since the pandemic, there's been a lot more talk about mental health in our country. And so I think in the past two years, I've seen more students aware of the trauma that veterans have."

Susan Cushman is a professor at Nassau Community College and Adelphi University on Long Island, where military recruiters have a heavy presence, particularly on the Nassau campus. She hosts veterans from We Are Not Your Soldiers to help her students "think about alternative ways to achieve an education and get a pension and get a job and travel, without feeling the only option is to join the military."

In order to counter both the narrative and incentives that military recruiters offer young people, veterans try to share the truth about traumatic personal experiences as well as practical information.

"It's very meaningful to hear from a veteran that when you enlist, that you are the property—literally are seen as the property—of the U.S. government," Gil says. Damiani works to put the seemingly attractive military salary and benefits in context for students. "Considering you're on duty 24 hours a day or on call 24 hours a day, you've sold them your body, mind, and soul, essentially. You might not get it back."

Megaciph also tries to place the role of the military in the context of broader social issues that he knows students care about, including police violence and climate change.

"The U.S. military is the global police, so I like to put that in the students' head that the way that the police treat Black and Brown and poor people in this country is the way that the military treats people around the rest of the world," he says. He also tells students that the U.S. military is the largest single

contributor of greenhouse emissions in the world.

Ultimately, stories told by veterans like Megaciph and Damiani can be an effective tool to disrupt the mainstream narrative about militarism. But is it enough?

Rick Jahnkow is a steering committee member and an administrative staff volunteer and organizer at the nonprofit National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY). "Simply having veterans doesn't take into account the way that military recruiters have been trained to convince young people to want to go in the military," Jahnkow says. "The recruiters have been trained to use basically psychological methods to turn people around if they're being reluctant to enlist, and if a recruiter knows that a veteran has visited the same class, they have ways to negate that."

In addition to the military's preparedness for counter-recruitment, there's also the issue of simple math. The Pentagon has a multibillion-dollar budget for recruiting alone. By contrast, We Are Not Your Soldiers has an annual budget of \$25,000. Meanwhile, Megaciph, Damiani, and the seven other volunteers are up against a much larger body of veterans who generally support military recruitment. According to a 2019 survey conducted by Pew Research Center, 81% of post-9/11 veterans would advise a young person to join the military.

With these challenges in mind, NNOMY produced a video called "Before You Enlist!" The 16-minute video seeks to lay out a case against military service that preempts the military's psychological recruitment tactics. With veteran stories and statistics, the video debunks perks, such as "free education" and job training, that the military uses to appeal to potential recruits. The video explains that college benefits are not guaranteed and a "general" discharge can completely disqualify a veteran from receiving benefits. Furthermore, a college education paid by the U.S. military still bears a cost, even if it is not financial. As Matt Stys, a U.S. Army veteran featured in the video, says, "You might not be paying monetarily, but you're paying with your body, you're paying with your soul, you're paying with your mind." Other veterans share stories of struggling to find meaningful, well-compensated work after their service. According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics figure cited in the video, unemployment for young veterans aged 25 to 34 was 42% higher than non-veterans of the same age.

The video also offers a way to bring this message into a greater number of classrooms given the limited number of veterans who are able to make classroom visits. Jahnkow also describes the video as a training tool to develop students' critical thinking skills so they will be prepared to handle recruitment conversations themselves.

Also central to the video's message is an explanation of the idea of the "economic draft" or "poverty draft." The video ends by directing viewers to Peaceful Career Alternatives. Jahnkow and others explain that understanding the economic constraints of young people and offering alternative pathways is essential to counter recruitment efforts.

"I feel like empathizing with them is the first step," Damiani says. "Acknowledging that right now they don't

“Usually, the students don’t have any idea of what it’s actually like,” Megaciph says. “Their narrative really comes from television and comes from the national narrative.”

have a lot of choices and the military offers a lot of at least money. It seems to them to be a lot. A \$10,000 signing bonus sounds like a shitload of money to a teenager.”

Transforming the pre-K-12 education system is an important component of countering recruitment drives. The ways in which students are filtered and tracked into remedial courses starting from an early age has a limiting effect on their post-secondary options. Students who have been excluded from higher-level courses and the college and career pathways that accompany them become ripe targets for military recruiters. Other resources educators can tap into include texts like Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz’s *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States* and the Zinn Education Project, which present U.S. history with a more honest context.

Aside from creating more opportunities for poor and working-class students, targeting policy changes at the school and district level to protect students from recruitment is another important tactic. Jahnkow cites victories by the Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities’ Education Not Arms campaigns to limit recruitment activity at schools that other communities could replicate.

At the same time, the curriculum itself has a role to play. Currently, the standard school curricula often valorizes war and soldiers, while leaving out the U.S. military’s historical role in genocide and colonization. “You know, the Department

other platforms in ways the counter-recruitment movement currently does not.

Meanwhile, Jahnkow believes that in today’s poor recruiting environment, the military will “pull out all the stops” in both digital and personal recruitment.

“I think it’s super trippy, that there are children who are old enough to be in the military and being deployed to Iraq, who were not born when the war started. That is something that is just devastating and tragic to me,” Damiani says. “It fuels my fire to keep talking to the kids, because they need to know.”

RUBEN ABRAHAMS BROSBE currently facilitates workshops on racial equity and restorative justice for the Center for Racial Justice in Education and Ramapo for Children. He is also the editor for The Educator’s Room and a member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. He can be reached on Twitter.

See “Combat Veterans Tell Us What We Need to Know About War” at Yes Magazine.

Jahnkow also describes the video as a training tool to develop students’ critical thinking skills so they will be prepared to handle recruitment conversations themselves.

of the Army was started for clearing Natives off their land and eradicating them, and that still goes on today,” Megaciph says, referring to the original Department of War established in 1789.

Lastly, veterans and organizers like Jahnkow say there is an urgent need to build up the capacity of anti-war, anti-recruitment organizing. Damiani says that includes “finding ways to de-stigmatize sharing the dark side of the military so that more veterans, when they get out, feel safe and comfortable talking about the real shit rather than continuing to glamorize it.”

But growing the pool of veterans—and starting other counter-recruitment strategies—will take money. Counter-recruitment organizing efforts are severely underfunded, Jahnkow says. At the same time, many counter-recruitment and anti-war organizations are being outmaneuvered by the military in digital and social media spaces. This is partly an issue of funding, but Jahnkow adds that the volunteer base for anti-war organizations also skews older. Fighting recruitment online more effectively will require more younger volunteers with the skill set to use Instagram, TikTok, and

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988
SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

988
LÍNEA DE PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO Y CRISIS

Bethany Saint-Smith – A Modesto Poet Producing Stunning Poetry

I'm Bethany Saint-Smith, a Modesto native and mama who has spent several years in other parts of the world (SF, NYC, Buenos Aires) and have circled back to Stanislaus County with my son.

I was a frontwoman/musician that has moved to write poetry chapbooks and finish high school (2019). I'm graduating from Stanislaus State with honors (McNair Scholar and Summa Cum Laude!) this spring with a BA in Social Sciences. I will attend UC Merced as a Ph.D. candidate for the Interdisciplinary Humanities, Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Program and have been awarded the Chancellor's Fellowship for Inclusive Excellence. My work and research are largely inspired by the Black voice (the central one inside of me/them that has been set aside for me for many years), and my ongoing research on Black women.



Departures

To be instantly dominating
and watch them ponder
is it always this joyous?
*imagine the world this way, where the power is –
you stay, we say*

imagine the infinite glory perched on the harbor of my chest
one glow from the rising sun to the settlement of it's leaving on the west
where coastal abruptness begs
for your departure
it begs for your departure to its cove, inland like the
between of thighs where

joy
departs from the
constant of virtuosity

Tree

I might as well make friends with a tree
At least they will let me sing, sway, hang –

Over this

Black body -

freely, if even by the jagged rounds of my neck

I'd at least

Be

As hollowed as she.

it would be too powerful to hold
but wonderment keeps the snappiness of the image glossy.

All the Pretty Black Babies

It's a girl!
read it through the frame of someone else's moment, a time to announce
their brilliant wonder
where, they are almost home
blackened girls are born dusted by light
the rapidity like breath- go in, come out
and she wasn't even there, but I could see the glimmer of her
notoriety and the turn of her aesthetically appeasing lips, like luck
come around- bend my mental stain, reminiscent of
the blood of failure is
loss- and loss of blood is loss
once upon a minute
gut below the tide, anchor heavy eyes
and no, we don't get whole, human-concern, our sister, auntie, and pastor can't be everywhere
ain't nothing the same, but our mother's milk

I hope that babe does alright,
that the doctor cradles her being into the porcelain poise of her mother's breast
and I'll hold myself and cradle the recollection
painfully waning
all the pretty black babies who
didn't make the morning to hear their name.

I ain’t the same, Sis

Tally up the times -
going out there, damned
see brightness in the leaves
the flickering white of sun
it ain’t nothing like they see me

hate ingrained from the stain of birth
one canvas to paint the deadened wood of a blood-hungry fence
where I catch the loosened threads of this forsaken forced dress
after I am pressed
by the lethargic fists of objectification and lip licks, like
the prospect of rain keepin’ you inside

but no, I ain’t the same,
Sis

cause when we go out there, there is a stench, and the poplars close their eyes
oh, I see that damn dead wood cocked to trigger me, and have to close mine
brow sweat to cheek shine
it stiffens me, and I know it from the longest lick
from the bottom shadow of my fullest lip, and there

I put up, Sis -
even if only
to suck the tear
ain’t yet had a chance to fall.

Porch-talk

Ain’t no navigation system where I come from
there’s no help in this enterprise of black commodity, I ain’t for sale, they fixed on trading me up
trading me down
don’t touch me –
you need to be strong, brick-type, like
diamonds guarded by perfectly molded steel, cut down to shine, like
water lilies and lavender benedictions trapped in bottles lickin’ necklines, like
bras without wire, personalized and glamourized panties
yes!
realize, like
typewriter clicks after the mind methodizes ways to regurgitate lies, like
crow law that drags you behind the wall and cuts flesh while you await trial for...
years and years and years, like
backhanded compliments on this hair –
oh, *hell no!*
the more they tell me, *you can be, you can do, oh honey child, you you you* –
I begin to think I’m strong enough, but no, we sit here cradling the hot porch cement
pavement burning our sighs
and I’m certain I work twice as hard.

The Bowery Over my Body

What a delight,
my Black body
justified
rollin’ against the light, eyes high and up
under the precision of heat mangling these childlike springing coil curls
can’t quite see the seafoam of my broken-hearted stench, unveiling this shore
sore, tired, sure – fight the empire
waves of confusion throbbing words in songs
lips tremor, bleeding grit, oh, they barely part
songs you will never sing to, sweet child, but keep that whisper loud enough
the sound of my -
how-dare-I-dark skin
ageing over time, sweet child
crackling like the flee of an ember climbing fire, you keep that whisper loud ‘nuff
they hear you
the back of my throat signs another form
take this while you can
this is not the man’s world
this is what you rise for
don’t sleep now
this is what you rise for, walk –
wild child, and mutter the truth
when you move, they will follow your lead.

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

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PROGRAMS

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

Sports Talk Modesto - Join Jay Freeda and Jimmie Menezes. Snappy banter to catch

up on everything happening in the sports world. - Thursdays, 5 pm.

Vib'n with the West Modesto Collaborative - Karlha Davies and Jasmine Corena. Engage, Educate and Advocate on behalf of the West Modesto Community. Showcases Voices of the West Modesto Community - Wednesdays, 7 pm.

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

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

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

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

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

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



LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

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.

People Not Profit - with Pegasus Formerly Peril and the Promise. No new episodes. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp-peril>.

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

Local Music Programs

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

Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA) with Middagh Goodwin - Mondays 5:00 pm; Fridays 9:00 pm & Saturdays 6:00 pm.

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

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

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

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Weekdays (Monday - Friday)

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

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

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

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

Sojourner Truth - 4:00 pm. Interviews, panels focusing on issues that affect people of color.

Democracy Now! - 7:00 am. Reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez.

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

Children's Programming

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

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

Science

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

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

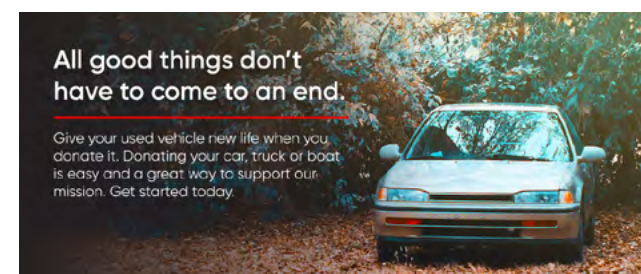
Big Picture Science - 1:00 pm Sundays.

Planetary Radio - 2:30 pm Sundays.

Got Science - 4:00 pm Sundays.

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

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Montana GOP Bars Trans Lawmaker From House Floor Over Protest

“If you use decorum to silence people who hold you accountable, then all you are doing is using decorum as a tool for oppression,” said Rep. Zoëy Zephyr.

By JULIA CONLEY, Common Dreams

Montana’s first transgender lawmaker, state Rep. Zoëy Zephyr, was barred from entering the House floor on

Wednesday afternoon as the Republican majority voted in favor of formally disciplining her over remarks she made last week about a ban on gender-affirming healthcare.

Under the motion, Zephyr (D-100) will be permitted only to cast votes remotely for the duration of the legislative session, which ends May 6.

The House voted 68-32 along party lines to bar Zephyr from the House floor just over a week after she told Republicans that they would have “blood on their hands” if they supported a ban on gender-affirming care for youths.

GOP leaders claimed the motion to formally punish Zephyr was in response to a protest by her supporters in the House gallery on Monday, which they accused her of encouraging. During the protest, Zephyr stood on the House floor and held up a nonfunctioning microphone as the protesters, seven of whom were arrested, were led out of the gallery.

Since Zephyr’s comments last Tuesday, she has not been recognized by House Speaker Matt Regier (R-4), who has demanded Zephyr apologize.

On Wednesday, she spoke on the House floor for the first time since being silenced by the GOP.

“We have seen bills targeting our art forms, our books, our history, and our healthcare,” Zephyr said of the transgender and nonbinary community. “And I rose up in defense of my community [last Tuesday], speaking to harms that these bills bring.”

She condemned the Republicans for accusing her of lacking “decorum” during Monday’s protest and last week’s debate.

“If you use decorum to silence people who hold you accountable, then all you are doing is using decorum as a tool for oppression,” she said.

Zephyr also noted that in accusing the Republicans of having “blood on their hands,” she was referring to studies showing that transgender youths are significantly less likely to experience depression or suicidal ideation if they receive gender-affirming care, which is strongly supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and other groups representing health experts.

The vote to bar Zephyr, who represents 11,000 constituents, from the House floor is “blatantly anti-democratic,” said Alejandra Caraballo of the Harvard Law Cyberlaw Clinic.

Montana House Minority Leader Kim Abbott (D-83) noted that “there is an opportunity cost to choosing this path” as the body debated the motion.

“We don’t have a state budget, we don’t have a plan for housing, we don’t have a plan for childcare,” Abbott said. “And today we’re on this floor, debating this motion.”

“I’m not sure what comes next here,” said Zephyr, “but I will do what I have always done. I will rise in support of my community. I will take the hard and moral choice to stand up for the people who elected me to do so. And I am grateful for those who stood up in defense of democracy.”

As the Montana House voted to bar Zephyr from the floor, Nebraska state Sen. Megan Hunt (D-8) said she had been informed that she was under investigation for a conflict of interest due to her vote against a bill to limit gender-affirming care. Hunt has a transgender child.

“They are going full in on fascism by targeting any state representatives that stand up for trans people,” said Caraballo. “It’s not enough to pass these hurtful laws, they also have to silence and make examples of anyone who stands up to them.”

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calendar

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

may 2023

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

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

May: Plein Air Artist Susan Rossmann's art featured at the Kruse Lucas Art Gallery, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mondays - Fridays (holidays excepted), 525 Tully Rd., Modesto. Info: 209-529-9111.

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

3 WED: VIGIL: PROVIDE SHELTER TO HOMELESS, 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm, McHenry & J. St., Modesto.

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

6 SAT: Friends of the Library Used Book Sale. 8 am to 2 pm., the Modesto Library, 1500 I St.

13 SAT: Stanislaus Service Center's Equity Team presents *East of Salinas*. The State Theatre, 1307 J. St., Modesto, 1:00 pm. <https://thestate.org/films/stanislaus-service-centers-equity-team-presents-east-of-salinas-052023/>

21 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society present *The Conversation*. 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. Visit <https://thestate.org/films/the-conversation-052023/>

LOOKING AHEAD

June 23-25: Peace Camp returns! See p. 2 for registration.

ONGOING

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

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

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

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

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

Habitat for Humanity's RE-STORE: used and new quality materials. Funds benefit homes built by Habitat in Stanislaus County. 630 Kearney Ave, Modesto. Mon-Sat., 9:00 AM - 6:00 pm. Closed Sunday. Visit <http://www.stanislaushabitat.org>

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

D&D Champions Group, Noon. Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative and Resource Center, 1202 H St., Modesto.

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

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

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

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

MONDAYS

Queer Cuts, last Monday of the month. Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto, 209-408-8848.

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter meets on the second Mondays at 7:00 pm at 2201 Morill Rd., Riverbank. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in this support group for families whose children have died at any age, from any cause. Call 209-622-6786 or email for details: tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com; <https://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org/>

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

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

TUESDAYS

Women's Support Group for Womxn in all stages of life. Join us in a safe and judgment-free environment where you can give and receive support for the many issues that we struggle with as Womxn. Every Tuesday from 1 pm-2 pm at the Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto CA (Ages +18). Contact Sandra Vidor- 209.652.3961 or Kellie Johnson 209.918.0271.

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

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

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

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

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

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: Held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), 4:00-5:00 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, 6:30 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom. Email Jim Costello for login information, jcostello@igc.org

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

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

The GAP. A place of support for Christian parents of LGBTQ+ or questioning kids every Wednesday 6:30pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church 1528 Oakdale Rd. Instagram: Thegapmodesto

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

Merced LGBT Community Center offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on-site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org - 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

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

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

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

THURSDAYS

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

Laughter Yoga, Every other Thursday at The Bird's Nest, 422 15th St., Modesto. The dates are February & March 7th & 21st, April 4th & 18th, May 2nd & 16th. 5:30pm-6:30pm. \$15.00 per class. To register, call or text Nicole, 209-765-8006 or visit www.nicoleottman.com

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

IMCV Grupo de Meditación en Español, cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172.

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

3rd Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 529-3369, www.modestoartwalk.com

Valley Heartland Zen Group: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland

Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

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

FRIDAYS

Trans Support Group, 1 pm, Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

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

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

Funstrummers: A Fun-loving Ukulele group gets together live to practice and play. Play along with us or work up to playing out in gigs. Friday mornings, 10am to Noon at the Telle Classrooms, Trinity Presbyterian, 1600 Carver Rd., Modesto. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mej3gD0ZD40&list=LLB8YI9zZg660qHCXGoC60jQ&index=1>

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

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

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

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

SATURDAY

First and Third Saturdays - **Gay Men's Group,** 1 pm. Positive Support Group for folks living with HIV, 12 pm. All at Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative, 1202 H St., Suite D, Modesto. Call 209-408-8848.

12-Step/Buddhist Meeting starts with a 30-minute meditation and then open discussion. Held monthly every second Saturday, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto at the UUFSC in Sarana (small building, rear of the east parking lot). Freely-offered donations welcome. Information: 209 606 7214.

Free Community Drum Circle every third Saturday, 11 am to 12:00 pm, Gallo Center for the Arts, 10th & I St., Modesto. No experience or drums necessary to participate. All levels welcome. <https://drum-love.com/>

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

DEADLINE to submit articles to

CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month.

Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org
Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.