



## Farmland or Sprawl? Modesto Voters Decide

### Urban Growth Limits, The Preferred Planning Policy to Prevent Sprawl

#### From Stamp Out Sprawl About Measure I

The Great Central Valley of California is the scene of another valley, the great divide between representatives and the public over farmland protection. For decades, voters have supported farmland protection measures. And yet, their representatives support plans that are anything but farmland protecting.

Anyone who has been keeping up with Modesto news these last few months has seen a lot of coverage of the city's attempt to add

prime farmland located along the Highway 99 and 132 corridors to their General Plan. This area is better known as Wood Colony.

Wood Colony's influence and way of life are an indelible mark on the agricultural landscapes of the region; its unique ethno-religious cultural heritage is an example of how human identity and place are intertwined. It's not difficult to understand the claims made by the residents of Wood Colony – that their contributions have created a special place worthy of protection.

OK, then what? We protect farmland by directing development into our cities and away from our best farmland and important water recharge areas. Modesto citizens have been paying attention and advisory voting using Measures A (1979) and M (1997) to direct development. Measure E, a countywide



initiative, passed in 2008 with a super majority (70%) in Modesto!

Urban limits will allow citizens to stop sprawl over Wood Colony and north over our best farmlands and high water recharge area.

The Stamp Out Sprawl Initiative is an Urban Limit that will help the Modesto City Council plan the use of existing areas first. To go outside the Urban Limits, the council must

first get your vote of approval. The proposed limit uses common sense lines such as Fwy 99 and the city limit on the west, thus preventing the destruction of the Wood Colony area. East of Dale Road, Kiernan Avenue will provide an excellent buffer between Modesto and the best farmland and water recharge area in the world!

For details, visit <http://www.stampout-sprawl.com/#!initiative/c1vss>

**ACTION: VOTE!**

### Film, He Named Me Malala opens at the State Theatre

*Fri. 10/9 - Fri. 10/16 (Doc-PG-13) 2 Hrs. (Digital) In English*

The State Theatre is proud to present *He Named Me Malala*, an intimate portrait of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who was targeted by the Taliban and severely wounded by a gunshot when returning home on her school bus in Pakistan's Swat Valley.

The then 15-year-old (she turned 18 in July) was singled out, along with her father, for advocating girls' education, and the attack on her sparked an outcry from supporters around the world. She miraculously survived and is now a leading campaigner for girls' education globally as co-founder of the Malala Fund.

Acclaimed documentary filmmaker Davis

Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth, Waiting for Superman*) shows us how Malala, her father Zia and her family are committed to fighting for education for all girls worldwide. The film gives us an inside glimpse into this extraordinary young girl's life – from her close relationship with her father who inspired her love for education, to her impassioned speeches at the UN, to her everyday life with her parents and brothers.

Released by Fox Searchlight, the film is being promoted via National Geographic through all of the company's resources including its magazine, National Geographic Education Programs and National Geographic

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### The Modesto Peace/Life Center Invites You To A Harvest Gathering

A Benefit For The  
Peace Essay Contest

Friday, November 6, 2015  
5:00 P.m. – 8:00 P.m.

At The Home Of  
John Frailing & Maria Arevalo  
1125 Edgebrook Dr., Modesto

Enjoy:  
Delicious Hors D'oeuvres, Good Wines  
Special Coffees And Teas

Suggested Donation: \$20 Per Person  
Casual Attire

Help Us Continue Our Outreach To Our Community's Youth  
By Supporting The Peace Essay Contest

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#### READERS! Sign-up for our e-edition!

Get the latest e-edition of Stanislaus Connections delivered right into your email box!

Can enlarge text to read more easily! Print out if desired!

To sign-up, send your email address to Jim Costello, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

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

# MJC Civic Engagement Film and Lecture Fall 2015 Series

This Film and Lecture Series provides students and members of the community with the opportunity to engage in topics of social interest and relevance through the screening of thoughtful movies and by bringing in knowledgeable speakers. Each film will be followed by a discussion.

**WHERE:** Forum Building Room 110 (MJC East Campus)

**WHEN:** THURSDAY EVENINGS at 7 PM to 9 PM

**COST:** FREE and open to the public

**October 8 - Terms and Conditions May Apply** examines the privacy issues involved in online user-service agreements. What information about ourselves are we giving away when we click "I accept," and what might be the consequences of doing so?

**October 22 - Black in America.** In this CNN special, Soledad O'Brien investigates the growing tension between police officers and young African-American men. With incisive interviews and footage of confrontations, this documentary raises important questions about relations between police and communities of color.

**November 5 - The Hunting Ground,** about rape at American colleges, focuses on student activists who allege that school administrators are not doing enough in terms of punishing assailants, respecting the dignity of victims, publicizing sexual assault rates, and improving the safety of students.

**November 19 - Harvest of Empire,** subtitled *The Untold Story of Latinos in America*, argues that the growing presence of Latinos in America can be viewed as a "harvest of empire" and needs to be understood within the context of the United States' history of intervention in Latin America.

**December 3 - How to Survive a Plague** looks back at the early years of the AIDS epidemic and shows how a small group of activists—up against death, discrimination, and indifference—pressed hard for the government and the pharmaceutical industry to improve treatment for AIDS, turning a deadly disease into a manageable condition.

Questions? Contact Jason Wohlstadter, English Professor, 209.575.6180; wohlstadterj@mjc.edu

Film and Lecture Committee: Jason Wohlstadter (coordinator); Bill Anelli, Judy Cain, Joan Ferrell, Debbie Gilbert, Brian Greene, Jon Kropp, Ruth Luman, Liz McInnes, Dan Onorato, Mary Swier, Lillian Vallee, Theron Westrope.

<http://www.mjc.edu/president/cep/filmandlecture.php>

## Creative Non-violence Workshop: Peacemaking in the 21st Century

This all day event, sponsored by Pax Christi of Northern California, features several keynote speakers, including Sr. Megan Rice (Plowshares Activist), Rivera Sun (author and Pace Bene Trainer) and Elizabeth Murray (Ground Zero Center for Non-violent Action). Tri-Valley CAREs Executive Director Marylia Kelley will present two panel discussions about nuclear weapons and activism. Topics include Human Trafficking, *Laudate Si* and You, Immigration, the Housing Crisis, Restorative Justice, more.

**Date:** Saturday, October 17, 2015, 8:45 AM- 3 PM

**Location:** St. Elizabeth's High School, 1530 34th Ave. (off International Blvd), Oakland (walking distance from Fruitvale BART).

**More Info and registration** <http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/PaxChristi-assembly-2015.pdf>

## Video contest opens to engage youth in environmental issues at Livermore Lab

**From Tri-Valley CAREs**

The launch this month of Livermore-based Tri-Valley CAREs' second annual Youth Video Contest is part of the group's ongoing initiative to engage the next generation in nuclear weapons and environmental policy questions and to ensure that their voices are heard.

"Youth voices are often left out of environmental decision-making at Livermore Lab," noted Tri-Valley CAREs' Staff Attorney, Scott Yundt, who is coordinating the contest. "The 2015 Youth Video Contest allows young people to speak to issues that will impact their future through video, a format of interest to many youth."

"Nuclear Weapons or a Healthy Environment?" is the theme of this year's Youth Video Contest. The basic instructions are simple: Describe what you think and what is important to you through the medium of video.

Youth from ten to thirty years old are invited to submit videos of two minutes or less, with a Grand Prize of \$500, a Second Place prize of \$250, and a Third Place prize of

\$100. All videos are due electronically by October 31, 2015 and will be posted on the contest Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/youthvideocontest2015>. Details of the contest can be found at <http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/contest2015.html>

While submitters may take a broad perspective, contest rules require that the video address some aspect of environmental pollution or nuclear weapons activities at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Main Site in Livermore or its Site 300 near Tracy. Both locations are on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Superfund" list of the most contaminated sites in the country. Cleanup of contamination at both sites is scheduled to take another 40-60 years or more.

Contestants need not be from Livermore or Tracy. Nuclear contamination affects a wide area. A committee that includes a professional videographer has been empaneled to judge the videos.

Video submittals can be cartoons, live-action, documentary style, etc. Contestants can film with such technologies as cell phones and laptop web cams.

Winners will be notified in November 2015. The three winning videos will be shown at a special awards ceremony and party on December 8th at the Livermore Main Library, 1188 South Livermore Ave. The contest, now in its second year, attracted impressive entries last year, and the three 2014 winning videos can be viewed on Tri-Valley CAREs' website.

**CONTACT:** Scott Yundt, 925-443-7148, [scott@trivalleycares.org](mailto:scott@trivalleycares.org)



**NUCLEAR WEAPONS or HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT?**

What do you think? What is important to you?

**FACT:** Due to Nuclear Weapons research, both the Lawrence Livermore nuclear weapons lab's Main Site and its Site 300 High Explosives Testing Facility in Tracy are on the EPA's "superfund" list of the most contaminated sites in the country.

What does this mean to you?



Leaking hazardous waste drums at Livermore Lab

Create a Video that Represents Your Perspective

Enter your 2 minute (or shorter) video  
for a chance to win \$500!

Submission is open. All videos are due by October 31, 2015.

**More Contest & Background Information:**

[www.trivalleycares.org/contest2015](http://www.trivalleycares.org/contest2015)

[www.facebook.com/youthvideocontest2015](https://www.facebook.com/youthvideocontest2015)

Questions? (925) 443-7148 or [scott@trivalleycares.org](mailto:scott@trivalleycares.org)



The contest is sponsored by Livermore-based Tri-Valley CAREs (Community Against a Restorative Environment). Youth from 10 to age 30 are invited to submit a video. Winning videos will appear on our website. [www.trivalleycares.org](http://www.trivalleycares.org) and at a public awards ceremony on December 8, 2015 at the Livermore Public Library.

stanislaus  
**CONNECTIONS**

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Mailing address: P.O. Box 134,  
Modesto, CA 95353  
209-529-5750.

# Film Night, Oct. 21, presents "Matewan"

By DAN ONORATO

Like "Salt of the Earth" that the Peace/Life Center showed in August, "Matewan" focuses on a miners' labor strike, but this one took place in the small town of Matewan in the hills of West Virginia in 1920. It's "as important a movie about the American spirit as there is," writes a reviewer for TheBlueWolf. . . . "Director Sayles masterfully documents the nuances of the ageless conflict between those that would control others for profit and those that would not let themselves be controlled."

Matewan explodes when unionist miners clash with the owners of a tyrannical coal company. An earnest labor leader, Joe Kenehan (Chris Cooper), arrives to try to better the lives of the men and woman of the "company town" through unionization. But in his efforts to organize the workers of the Stone Mountain Coal Company, he ignites a powderkeg of racial hostility, corruption, and betrayal—and touches off one of the most violent incidents in the history of the Coal Wars of 1920-1921. Mary McDonnell, David Strathairn, and James Earl Jones also star in the film that film critic Leonard Maltin calls "compelling and compassionate. . . . John Sayles makes every note ring true."

Jack Garner of GANNETT News Services ranked "Matewan" as "One of the best films of 1987."

In his 1987 New York Times film review, Vincent Canby writes: "John Sayles has made a film with the sweetness and simplicity of an Appalachian ballad." But he "is also independently skeptical. He recognizes that good intentions sometimes leave as many victims dead on the street as greed."

Sayles is widely recognized as one of America's pre-eminent and best respected independent filmmakers. He has a reputation for refusing to abandon his values in favor of becoming a studio filmmaker. As a result, his films tend to be rich, nuanced explorations of personal and political relationships.

At a time when we often feel powerless against the international corporations that exploit the world for their profit, we need to be reminded that people before us, who faced their own set of overwhelming odds, didn't throw up their arms in defeat. They struggled. They organized. They joined together in strikes. They formed unions. They boycotted, marched, got arrested, reached out to others to help them. Sometimes they lost. But they didn't give up. They kept on. They didn't let go their vision of a better life for all.

Mark your calendar now: **Wednesday, October 21, 6:30 p.m.**, at the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13<sup>th</sup> St. As always, the film showing is free, and a discussion will follow.

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# 2016 Peace Essay Contest

We do not have to become heroes overnight.  
Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up...  
discovering we have the strength to stare it down.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Our world is filled with many kinds of peaceful heroes. Some are well-known men and women while others quietly work behind the scenes. Some deal with international situations while others work in their own communities. Acts of courage, special skills or talents, visionary thinking, and self-sacrifice are qualities these people possess, rather than the extraordinary powers of super heroes that are glorified in the media. The experiences of these peacemaking heroes are sometimes told in songs and stories, but only a few make the history books or headlines. The focus of each person's work may be different, but they all share a commitment to use nonviolent principles and actions to encourage and care for a more peaceful world.

The 2016 Peace Essay Contest challenges you to find and describe one of these peacemaking heroes who is living today and whose work has made the world a better place. You may find them in your family or neighborhood, in your community or nation, or in places all over the globe. Working for peace may be their chosen life's passion, or perhaps your hero simply saw a need to respond creatively to a crisis. In their work for peace, some of the things they may have used include words, music, science, determination, diplomacy, hope or heart.

## Division I (grades 11-12) and Division II (grades 9-10)

By talking with others and researching, choose a living peaceful hero who has helped to make our world a more fair and peaceful place. In an informative essay of 500-1000 words, do the following:

- Introduce this peacemaking hero. Describe who this person is and how they have worked for peace and justice. Share the specific nonviolent, non-military actions that are part of this person's peacemaking heroism. Explain what motivated or inspired this person to become involved in their work.
- Develop the description of your hero in more detail. Identify and discuss the principles or values that have guided this person's efforts. Develop your description thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant events as well as the challenges they faced in their peacemaking work. Be sure to include specific examples of their acts of courage, including citations to literature and/or insightful quotations when appropriate.
- In your conclusion explain why you think the work of this living peacemaker is significant for our world today, and how the work of your hero might influence your future life or inspire you to act for peace.

## Division III (grades 7-8) and Division IV (grades 5-6)

By talking with others and researching, choose a living peaceful hero who has helped to make our world a more fair and peaceful place. In an informative essay of 250-500 words, do the following:

- Introduce this person and explain what they have done as a peaceful hero. Be sure to include facts and examples, specific details, and any quotations that would help the reader get a complete picture of this person's actions.
- Explain the situation or personal experience that inspired this person to take action. Then, focus on one or two challenges they faced and explain how they dealt with these issues.
- In your conclusion, explain why you think the work of this peacemaking hero is important. Tell how their example might influence your future life or inspire you to act for peace.

To qualify for an award, your essay must answer each part of the prompt. Each essay will be judged on the quality of the writing, the strength of the case you make in support of the peacemaking hero or heroine, and the personal connection you make between the work of this person and your own life. At the end of your essay, please provide a list of sources you used in your research; do not include graphics (e.g. charts, tables).

**Deadline for Entries: November 20, 2015**  
**Notification of Winners: Late February, 2016**

AWARDS	1st	2nd	3rd	Honorable Mention
Division I	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division II	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$50
Division III	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25
Division IV	\$150	\$100	\$50	\$25

View, download/print the flyers and entry form at [www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest) or [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org) Email your questions to: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)



## Peace Essay Contest 2016 Rules & Submission Directions

1. The Peace Essay Contest is open to all fifth through twelfth grade students who are residents of Stanislaus County or attend any public, private, or home school in Stanislaus County.
2. Submit one copy of your essay. Essays in Division I & II must be typewritten, double spaced. Essays in Divisions III & IV must be either typewritten or written in dark ink, double spaced, using one side of white paper 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Number the pages consecutively. Your essay must be of a quality to photocopy legibly. **YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE ANYWHERE ON OR IN THE ESSAY.**
3. Give your essay a title. Place it on the first page where you begin your essay. **DO NOT** use a separate title or cover page.
4. Print & complete the Entry Form and attach to the front of your essay (may be found at: [www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceEssayContest) OR [www.stanislausconnections.org](http://www.stanislausconnections.org) OR request a copy via email at: [peaceessay@juno.com](mailto:peaceessay@juno.com)).
5. Cite any quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge. If you are uncertain about plagiarism, ask your teacher.
6. You must do your own work. However, you may ask a teacher, parent, or friend for constructive criticism..
7. The Modesto Peace/Life Center reserves the right to reprint entries. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries may be delivered to the **Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto, from 2pm-5pm**
9. **November 18 - 19 - 20, 2015.** You may also mail all entries, postmarked no later than **November 20, 2015** to:

2016 Peace Essay Contest  
Modesto Peace/Life Center  
P.O. Box 134  
Modesto, CA 95353-0134

## Judging

A distinguished group of local writers, educators, and peacemakers will judge the essays. Judging guidelines (in order of weight) include:

1. **Content**
  - A. Does the essay demonstrate concern for establishing a more peaceful world?
  - B. Has the writer used relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples to fully develop their ideas?
  - C. Does the essay address the given topic?
2. **Style**
  - A. Is the essay original and interesting?
  - B. Did the student establish and maintain a formal writing style?
  - C. Does the voice of the writer come through?
3. **Clarity of Expression**
  - A. Is the topic introduced clearly?
  - B. Is the essay well organized with a clear introduction and conclusion? Is the essay well organized with clear transitions from one idea to the next?
  - C. Are the ideas clearly stated with factual support?
4. **Mechanics**
  - A. Has the writer attempted to use appropriate transitions, precise language, and a formal style?
  - B. Are grammar, spelling, and punctuation reasonably correct?
  - C. Does the author cite all quotations, borrowed ideas, and facts that are not general knowledge?
  - D. Does the essay stay within the word limit?

First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded in each of the four divisions which have at least 15 entries. In the event that fewer than 15 entries are entered in any one division, all prizes may or may not be awarded in that division at the discretion of the judging panel. Up to 3 Honorable Mentions may be awarded in each division. Group entries (more than one author) are welcome; however, a student may only enter one essay.

The writer of the best essay in a division from a school which has ten or more entries in that division will be honored as the school winner. All participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

## Notification of Winners

In late February, 2016, winners will be notified through the student's teacher. Prizes will be presented at an Awards Reception in the spring. All participants, teachers, judges, and sponsors will be invited as guests of honor.

2016 Peace Essay Committee: Indira Clark, Elaine Gorman, Nancy Haskett, Peggy Hoover, Linda Lagace, Deborah Roberts, Sandy Sample, Shelly Scribner and David Tucker This 29th Annual Peace Essay Contest is a project of the Modesto Peace/Life Center (209) 529-5750 and is co-sponsored by: Department of Literature and Language Arts, Modesto Junior College

# Change for the Better is in the Bag

By JENIFER WEST

The Wonderbag, that is. And it's proof that anyone, with a little inspiration, imagination, and dedication, really can help make the world a better place.

The Wonderbag was created by Sarah Collins, who grew up in South Africa under Apartheid. She recognized the inequality of that system, and felt inspired to do something that would help improve the lives of impoverished families in her country. As in many Third World countries, the search for cooking fuel is a constant (and often dangerous) necessity, particularly in rural areas. The time and energy consumed by this task keeps women and children trapped in subsistence living, making the pursuit of education or employment opportunities impossible (and further straining already-stressed environmental resources).

Sarah found inspiration in her grandmother's kitchen, where food was sometimes slow-cooked using retained heat, in pots surrounded by



cushions and blankets – an improvised thermal cooker. A thermal cooker is a very well-insulated outer container that holds a smaller, inner pot that is filled with food and simmered briefly. The food in the pot then cooks over a period of time using heat trapped by the insulated container. ('Hay box cookers' are based on this concept, using bales of hay in place of the cushions and blankets.) Sarah created a large, pumpkin-shaped fabric bag, with a drawstring and a separate fabric top. The bag is sewn into foam-stuffed wedges, further increasing its resemblance to the familiar squash. This shape and design creates remarkable heat retention, while allowing the use of an ordinary cooking pot. The Wonderbag, available at Amazon, is sold on a buy-one-give-one basis, so that each purchase helps improve life for a family in need. As of March 2014, 750,000 bags had been distributed.

Over the course of a year, one Wonderbag can save 1.7 trees, 1000 liters of water, and 1,248 person-hours that would otherwise be spent collecting firewood.

But all the humanitarianism in the world counts for nothing, if the product doesn't work well – and the Wonderbag fulfills that requirement beautifully. It's elegant, if that word can be used for something so big and bulky, in its simplicity: Your own covered pot, filled with food and allowed to simmer briefly on the stove, is placed inside the bag, the foam-filled top is put into place, and the drawstring is pulled snug, tightly enclosing both the pot and top inside the bag. The heat retained due to the bag's ample foam stuffing will continue to cook the food gently, keeping it hot and ready to serve for up to 12 hours. While a heavy pot is best; copper, steel, enameled cast iron and glass can all be used in the Wonderbag.

Affordability is another huge point in the Wonderbag's favor. Selling for less than \$60 (which is actually for two –

# Green Tips: Climate Change and a Polar Bear

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

This picture by photographer Kerstin Langenberger says a thousand words... We can save the polar bears and us one person at a time.

When I asked Kerstin if we could share this sad and shocking picture with our readers, she wrote:

"As an environmentalist and climate activist I want to reach and inspire people.

So: please go ahead and use that picture: make people aware that climate change is an important issue and that everybody can do something at home to reduce his/her carbon footprint - and therefore help polar bears!"

Her picture is a strong reminder to:

1. Reduce in any way possible
2. Reuse in any way possible
3. Recycle as the last resort possible
4. Eat, vote, celebrate, encourage green

Kerstin Langenberger Photography

<https://www.facebook.com/kerstin.langenberger.photography>



## Wonderbag

from page 4

one to keep and the one that will be donated), it is much more affordable than the \$100 or more that other thermal cookers sell for. Its ability to accommodate pots with up to 9-quart capacity is also a plus - and the fact that it works as well with pots as small as 2 quarts is definitely an improvement over the metal thermal cookers on the market, the sizes of which can be limiting.

Although I'm just becoming familiar with it, I can foresee lots of uses for the Wonderbag. There is, of course, its intended use, but it would also seem possible to throw dinner into a solar oven before work, transferring it to the Wonderbag at lunchtime. After work, voilà: Ready-to-serve, 'instant' dinner, cooked to perfection without ever turning on the stove or oven. This approach would solve several major drawbacks of solar cookers: Solar cooking must be done in the middle of the day, when the light is strongest - regardless of when the food is wanted/needed. Also, food left cooking in the solar cooker for an extended period of time can dry out and end up overcooked. Finally, it is often necessary to move the solar cooker around during the day to take advantage of the best light - tough to do if no one's at home.

The Wonderbag can help busy households accommodate varying schedules, by keeping a hot, homemade meal at the ready whenever it's needed, for whoever's around & hungry. It would be great for little league or soccer games, and potlucks, too - it can keep things either hot or cold for hours. It would even make a good impromptu "cooler" for transporting perishables home from the grocery store on a busy errand day. A Wonderbag could also come in quite handy over the holidays, when stove and oven space - or refrigerator space - is at a premium.

Very few things in the world are practical, relatively inexpensive, and solve a real problem - all while improving lives and conserving scarce natural resources. With a Wonderbag, change for the better really is "in the bag!"

Learn more at <http://wonderbagworld.com/>

## The Search for Life in the Universe

**Dr. Lynn J. Rothschild,**  
Evolutionary biologist  
and astrobiologist at  
NASA-Ames

**TEDx speaker;**  
**Winner of the 2015**  
**Isaac Asimov Award**

**Friday, 10/02/15**

**7:30 pm**

**MJC West Campus**

**Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center**

**Free Admission and Parking**

Dr. Lynn Rothschild, an evolutionary biologist known for her work on life in extreme environments and a founder of the field of astrobiology, tells us about intriguing new data. At NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, CA, she leads a program in synthetic biology and works with researchers in industry, government agencies around the world and in academia. The prevalence of potential abodes for life in our solar system and beyond, the survival of microbes in the space environment, modeling of the potential for transfer of life between celestial bodies, and advances in synthetic biology suggest that life could be more common than previously thought.

*"Be passionate about what you do. Scientific curiosity should be like an itch - you can't sleep at night until you find the right answer or at least the next step."*

A presentation of MJC's **Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS)**, <http://maps.events.mjc.edu/>



## Next Clean-Up - Phase 2 South Bank Reaches Cleanup

### Information:

**Date:** Saturday, October 10th, 2015

**Time:** 9:00AM - NOON

**Meeting Location:** Zeff Rd. under Hwy 99 on the south bank

**Who:** Any Volunteers and Groups Available


**Bring:** Gloves, Water, Hat, Layered clothing in case of cool weather

Website: <http://tinyurl.com/operation9-2-99>

Future Clean-Up Dates:

Saturday, November 14th, 2015 - North Bank Reaches

Operation 9-2-99 is supported by and partners with the Tuolumne River Trust, Dry Creek Trails Coalition, and Love Modesto. To become a member of TRT or donate to TRT visit <http://www.tuolumne.org/content/article.php/donate>



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# President Obama's Mortal Sin

*President Obama's approval of Shell's Arctic oil drilling has tarnished his environmental legacy.*

By **BIANCA JAGGER**

President Obama is the first incumbent US President to cross the Arctic Circle. The purpose of his expedition was to "witness first-hand the impact of climate change on the region" and to announce new measures to address it. Speaking at the Glacier climate summit in Anchorage Obama recognised the role of the US "in creating this problem." He also stated "we embrace our responsibility to help solve it" because failure to do so will "condemn our children to a planet beyond their capacity to repair." Yet less than one month ago his administration gave the green light to Shell to drill for oil in the Arctic.

President Obama must know that it is impossible to protect the Arctic while allowing Shell to drill for oil 70 miles off the coast of Alaska. He cannot have it both ways. His policies and proclamations are irreconcilable.

During his three-day excursion to the Arctic Circle he climbed a receding glacier, saw the melting Alaskan permafrost, met vulnerable coastal communities and addressed the Glacier climate summit.

On the first day of his trip Obama participated in a round-table discussion with Alaskan Natives. At the Glacier summit he urged fellow world leaders to reach an agreement at the UNFCCC Paris climate summit, COP21 in December that "protects the one planet ... while we still can".

On day two Obama hiked the Exit Glacier in the Kenai Fjords National Park. He knows the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the US and he is aware that the Exit Glacier has receded more than a mile since the start of the industrial revolution, with the rate of melting accelerating in the last few decades. He called the glacier "as good of a signpost as any when it comes to the impacts of climate change" and said he wanted his grandchildren to be able to see it one day. If President Obama really means this, how can he justify his approval of Shell's plan to drill for oil in the Arctic?

On the third day of his trip Obama met with local fishermen and families and attended a cultural performance by the children of Dillingham Middle School. The President joined the children in their last dance, saying: "I've been practising." He visited Kotzebue's sea wall to see the effects of rising sea levels and the devastating impact of increased storm severity. President Obama must know that even if the world agrees to keep temperature rises to 2 degree Celsius, sea levels, due to the melting of the ice, may still rise by 20 feet (6 meters) by 2100.

## THE ARCTIC

In his weekly address on 29th August Obama tried to defend his approval of Shell's Arctic drilling. He said that Americans "are concerned about oil companies drilling in environmentally sensitive waters" and he had the audacity to say "that's precisely why my administration has worked to make sure that our oil exploration conducted under these leases is done at the highest standards possible, with requirements specifically tailored to the risks of drilling off Alaska."

President Obama must know that no safeguards or standards will be enough to prevent an oil spill. According to a February 2015 report by his Department of the Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (Alaska OCS Region) drilling in the Arctic has a 75% chance of a spill of more than 1,000 barrels of oil.

How can President Obama trust Shell to drill for oil in the Arctic when during their last attempt in 2012 their Kulluk rig ran aground off the coast of Alaska, due to what the US Coast Guard called Shell's "inadequate assessment and management of risks". Arctic oil drilling is a dangerous and high-risk enterprise. Shell does not have an adequate extraction and spill response infrastructure. When they first attempted to drill in 2012, their response plan prepared for a worst-case oil spill of 25,000 barrels released per day for 30 days. In the same report Shell also made the ludicrous promise to recover 95% of a spill before oil reaches the shoreline despite the industry having recovery percentages of around only 10%, a figure which includes spills in more favourable clean up conditions than the Arctic. A freedom of information request revealed that both of Shell's drilling rigs currently in the Arctic had operational failings. Basic fire drills and abandon ship drills were "botched", indicating the crew and equipment were not prepared. The decision to drill for oil in the Arctic is reckless and irresponsible even for Shell's shareholders. The company is only indemnified for \$1.15bn per incident, which means that a spill could be followed by a huge asset sale to cover financial liabilities, similar to the one BP had in 2010. A senior official at a Canadian firm that specialises in oil-spill response admitted that "there is

really no solution or method today that we're aware of that can actually recover [spilled] oil from the Arctic."

To approve Shell's Arctic gamble President Obama should have assessed the oil industry's record. He must be aware that the oil industry has proved unable to operate safely in the Arctic and that any spill could devastate the lives of the four million people who live there and the hundreds of unique species of fish, birds and mammals. According to the Center for Biodiversity all life is under threat in the Arctic, from plankton to great whales, including: reindeer, the Arctic fox, the Pacific Walrus, the gray, beluga and bowhead whales, the spectacled eider and ivory gulls.

Cleaning up after oil spills is always a difficult and traumatic task. The Arctic Ocean presents additional problems. The Ocean is covered by ice for eight to nine months of the year, with almost complete darkness for nearly three of those months. Booms and dispersants are less effective because petroleum sticks to ice and the cold temperatures mean there are no microbes present to break down leaked oil. According to WWF there is no ability to respond to a spill for 7-8 months a year and only a 44-46% ability to respond in favourable conditions. Additional spill support may come from the Coast Guard, but the nearest base is 950 miles away. According to Alexander Horne, Professor Emeritus of Ecological Engineering at Berkeley, an oil spill in the Arctic could have more long-term effects than BP's 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster where 11 people died, 17 were injured, 16,000 miles of coastline were affected, and more than 210 million gallons of crude oil leaked into the Gulf of Mexico over 87 days. Despite these overwhelming arguments, Ann Pickard head of Shell Arctic made the preposterous claim to be able to have a response in place, including a containment dome, capping stack, and surface booms, within 60 minutes of an accident.

The President must know that Shell's Arctic oil drilling will cause increased greenhouse gas emissions and catastrophic climate change. As people throughout the world are pleading "the melting Arctic is a dire warning, not an invitation."

Al Gore described Shell's plan to drill for oil in the Chukchi Sea as "insane" and called for a ban on all oil and gas activity in the Arctic. NGOs and environmental groups were quick

**President Obama must know that no safeguards or standards will be enough to prevent an oil spill.**

continued next page

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## Obama's sin

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to highlight Obama's paradoxical environmental message, with Rebecca Noblin, Alaska Director for the Center for Biological Diversity saying: "It's perplexing and depressing to hear President Obama say he wants to fix climate change but then approve Arctic drilling. It's like a doctor diagnosing a patient but then refusing to write a prescription". Even Hilary Clinton, President Obama's hopeful successor stated, "The Arctic is a unique treasure. Given what we know, it's not worth the risk of drilling." Ahead of COP21 this sends a terrible signal to the world, that window dressing is all we can expect from the US President at this critical Climate Summit.

The Arctic is often referred to as the 'canary in the coalmine' for climate change. It is our early-warning system. The canary is in bad shape. Arctic ice is melting at a record rate. This year's seasonal minimum is set to be the third or fourth lowest on record, with the four lowest ice coverages occurring since 2007. As the ice retreats there are fewer reflective surfaces to reflect sunlight and the tundra and water that remain when the ice has melted absorbs more heat, causing further warming and making more ice disappear. In a few years, the children of Dillingham Middle School, who the President danced with on his recent visit, will not recognise their home.

Melting of the Arctic sea ice is a global threat that could disrupt major ocean circulation patterns and affect the world's climate. This would have severe consequences throughout the world affecting food production, causing price increases and food shortages.

Oceans and currents that move waters around the world help regulate the Earth's temperature. El Nino and La Nina weather systems that bring hotter or cooler weather are part of the larger Pacific decadal oscillation system that delivers periods of warmer weather or cooler weather, over decades. This system is currently in a cooling phase, which is "dampening" the rise of global average surface temperature. According to a study by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) this respite is only temporary. After the hiatus will follow a period of accelerated global warming unless urgent action is taken to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions.

Rising sea levels will endanger between 147 and 216 million people, particularly those in low-lying countries such as Bangladesh, the Marshall Islands and the Maldives as well as

people in Tokyo, Shanghai, New York and London. According to UNEP a melting Arctic will result in "more intense and longer periods of rainfall and drought, summer heat waves and cold snaps in winter".

Americans have already experienced the impacts of climate change. In 2005 Hurricane Katrina, one of the most deadly and damaging hurricanes to hit the country, flooded 80% of New Orleans, causing the deaths of 1,833 people and forcing 273,000 people to seek disaster relief. In 2011 and 2012 the Midwest experienced the worst droughts for 50 years, and in 2014 New York was plunged into chaos by record breaking rains and snowstorms.

According to the IPCC climate change will increase droughts and floods to the USA, declining water quality, and increased animal and plant mortality. Risk of wildfires has already increased. 2011 and 2012 saw near-record numbers of fires. In 2012 an area the size of the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut combined was set ablaze. The Whitehouse

has reported that climate and weather disasters cost the country more than \$100bn in 2012 alone. Air pollution, extreme weather events, and diseases carried by food, water, and insects all bring health risks. There is far more to come. Florida will see further rises in sea level. California will experience further droughts.

The President is right to say, "This is not a problem for another generation. Not anymore. This is a problem now. It has serious implications for the way we live right now." Obama has now seen the

impacts of climate change during his visit to the Arctic. He must know that to prevent catastrophic climate change 88% of the world's known coal reserves, 52% of gas and 35% of oil must be left untouched. Now is the time for him to choose his side and rescind Shell's permit to drill for oil in the Arctic.

According to the Earth League, which includes Lord Nicholas Stern, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber advisor to Angela Merkel and Pope Francis, and US economist Jeffrey Sachs, three-quarters of known fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground if average global warming is not to breach a rise of 2 degrees Celsius. In their statement, released on 22nd April 2015 to coincide with Earth Day, they warn that failure to leave oil in the soil and coal in the ground would bring a 1 in 10 risk of going beyond 6°C by 2100, a "high risk of disaster" that would be "equivalent of tolerating about 10,000 airplane crashes every day worldwide."

When he was elected President Obama promised to deliver a "new era of responsibility" and to "roll back the spectre of a warming planet". Millions of people around the world

including me believed in him and his vision.

At the UNFCCC climate summit in Copenhagen, COP15, President Obama proved to be a galvanising force. Attended by 120 Heads of State, COP15 was the largest gathering of its kind, apart from the annual UN General Assembly in New York. The conference was the focus of unprecedented public and media attention but the President's leadership failed and the Copenhagen Accord that resulted was a shameful compromise. Obama missed that opportunity to set the world on the right path to avoiding catastrophic climate change. At this point he was a President in his first year in office, very aware that Congress could override his pledges. Now he only has months left.

When COP21 takes place in Paris at the end of 2015, six years will have passed since Copenhagen. COP21 is Obama's last chance to define his environmental legacy.

## OBAMA'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY

To date, what is President Obama's environmental legacy? He has implemented policies that reduce fossil fuel demand: a meaningful bilateral agreement with China to cut emissions where the US agreed to cut carbon emissions 26-28% by 2025, relative to 2005 levels, efficiency standards for road vehicles and aircraft, and CO2 regulations for new power plants. However he has failed to tackle the supply side of fossil fuel, doing little to halt the rampant determination of coal, oil, and natural gas corporations to extract all the resources they can. In July 2014 Obama's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management opened up the Eastern seaboard, from Florida to Delaware, for oil and natural gas exploration. The Whitehouse boasts that it has opened up 59 million acres for oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and has increased leases for oil and gas drilling on federal land.

President Obama did veto the Keystone XL pipeline but now he has given license to Shell to drill in the Arctic. This will be the mortal sin of his administration.

In his acceptance speech in 2008 President Obama pledged to make the "planet in peril" one of his top three priorities. In his State of the Union address in 2014 Obama said, "Climate change is a fact. And when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world, with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say yes, we did." But has President Obama really done all he could?

On 3rd August President Obama announced the Clean Power Plan, an unprecedented initiative that promises to revolutionise power plant emissions, the USA's largest source of pollution. The Plan is an ambitious pledge to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions of the nation's power plants by 32% by 2030, relative to 2005 levels.

President Obama introduced the Plan as "the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change". The Plan was well received: Lord Nicholas Stern, Chair of the London School of Economics' Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change called the Plan "a very important announcement by President Obama which will reinforce the credibility of the commitment by the United States to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions as

The Arctic is often referred to as the 'canary in the coalmine' for climate change. It is our early-warning system. The canary is in bad shape.



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## Obama's sin

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a new international agreement on climate change is being finalised... It shows the determination of the world's richest country to maintain better economic growth while also cutting greenhouse gas pollution."

The Editorial Board of the *New York Times* said the Plan was "unquestionably the most important step the administration has taken in the fight against climate change" and Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club went further calling it "the most significant single action any president has ever taken."

President Obama recognised that "[climate change] is one of those rare issues - because of its magnitude, because of its scope - that if we don't get it right we may not be able to reverse it and we may not be able to adapt sufficiently. There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change." Indeed there is, and all the scientific evidence indicates that we are nearly past the point of no return.

In announcing the Clean Power Plan Obama quoted Governor Jay Inslee of Washington State "We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it." On hearing Obama introduce the Plan my hopes for COP21 were lifted. Unfortunately, my optimism didn't last long - the Plan sets achievable goals and contains several concessions.

Power plants produce a third of the USA's total domestic carbon dioxide emissions. Under Obama's Plan the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) gives each state a goal for cutting power-plant emissions. States decide for themselves how to achieve this target. They can switch from coal to natural gas or nuclear, expand their generation of renewable energy or increase energy efficiency. All states must submit their plans by 2016-2018, start making reductions by 2022 at the latest, and continue reducing emissions through to 2030.

This all sounds very promising. However under the original version of the Clean Power Plan States did not have this two-year grace period before they had to start reducing emissions. The two-year grace period would allow them to burn fossil fuels for two more years. During this time, carbon dioxide concentrations will continue to rise and the impacts of climate change will continue to be felt across the world. This concession is not just unnecessary but reckless. As Ken Kimmell, President of the Union of Concerned Scientists confirms, many "states are already on track to cut their emissions through actions they've put in place, including state renewable energy and energy efficiency standards and coal plant retirements."

The Plan is ambitious by the standards of America's climate commitments to date but conservative in terms of the CO2 reduction targets in line with scientific estimates required to avoid catastrophic climate change. Coal - the dirty industry most impacted by the President's Plan - is already a steadily declining contributor to the country's electricity production. According to Politico, increased electricity generation from natural gas and renewable energy sources and energy efficiency initiatives mean the USA has already met

the halfway point of the goal set by the Clean Power Plan. The Plan could have gone much further.

One of the most positive aspects of the Plan is its promise of 30% more renewable energy generation by 2030. But this figure is testament to the expansion of the renewable energy market, which is reliant on the federal production tax credit (PTC) incentive. Favourable conditions for solar and wind energy have enabled the pledges of the draft Plan to be increased. According to Rob Gramlich of the American Wind Energy Association the current boom requires the PTC subsidy. The draft Plan, formulated prior to the boom estimated that renewable energy would only make up 22% of the market by 2030.

President Obama said the Clean Power Plan is, "the biggest, most important step the USA has ever taken to combat climate change". He is right but more, much more, is required if we are to keep average global temperatures from rising above 2 degrees Celsius.

To put the Plan's goals in perspective, last week California passed legislation that will see the State reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050, relative to 1990 levels. Tim O'Connor, Director of California policy for the Environmental Defense Fund said, "This is how California can really shake up the national conversation on climate."

In response to the President's announcement of the Plan Craig Bennett, Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth said, "Obama's climate initiative is politically significant, but falls way short of

what scientists say is required to tackle catastrophic climate change. In the face of huge US vested interests that oppose any measures on climate change, the President's plan at least pushes the issue up the agenda... [T]hese measures are just a drop in the ocean, when a sea change in energy policy is what's desperately required. It would have been more significant if the President said no to drilling in the Arctic, and stopped his support for new fossil fuels such as fracking and tar sands."

350.org spokesman Jamie Henn agreed that more is required. Reducing the emissions of power plants is not enough by itself: "Taking on King Coal is the easy part ... It's standing up to Big Oil that will require real courage. That's why decisions on things like the Keystone XL pipeline, fracking and Arctic drilling are so important — they're the true test of climate leadership for this and any future presidents."

Hilary Clinton has promised - if elected as President - to produce 33% of America's electricity from renewable sources by 2027. This is an additional 7% to what Obama has promised by 2030. Clinton has also vowed to install half a billion solar panels by 2020. This is seven times the number of panels currently being built and would produce enough energy to power every home in America within 10 years. Clinton said, "I personally believe climate change is a challenge of such magnitude and urgency that we need a president who will set ambitious goals".

Indeed, President Obama's Clean Power Plan and some of his environmental policies have set ambitious goals, and his expedition to the Arctic gave us reasons for optimism. Unfortunately, his decision to give the green light to Shell

to drill in the Arctic has irreparably undermined his environmental legacy. I had hoped for more from President Obama.

## CONCLUSION

We all know it is not the sole responsibility of President Obama and the USA to singlehandedly prevent catastrophic climate change but the international community is in dire need of leadership if member states are to achieve a meaningful agreement in Paris.

Soon after President Obama took up office, in a 2009 speech on climate change he said, "Our generation's response to this challenge will be judged by history, for if we fail to meet it - boldly, swiftly, and together - we risk consigning future generations to an irreversible catastrophe."

COP21 is the President's last chance to put his climate change legacy back on track.

We are all hoping that when COP21 takes place in Paris in December President Obama and world leaders will bring substantial commitments to the table, to achieve a global, binding climate agreement to drastically reduce emissions and slow the perilous warming of the planet. If they fail COP21 will be an appalling abdication of responsibility.

Bianca Jagger is a prominent international human rights and climate change advocate. She is the Founder and Chair of the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador, Member of the Executive Director's Leadership Council of Amnesty International USA, Trustee of the Amazon Charitable Trust, and on the advisory board of the Creative Coalition. For over 30 years, Bianca Jagger has campaigned for human rights, social and economic justice and environmental protection throughout the world.

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**"Obama's climate initiative is politically significant, but falls way short of what scientists say is required to tackle catastrophic climate change."**

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# Mourning the Suffering of the Refugees

September 4, 2015

**Tikkun editor's note:** The poem below presents the most authentic understanding of the situation of the world's refugees in the contemporary world. The refugees are momentarily in the media and hence in the consciousness of the world's humanity, but will too soon fade from popular memory as do all who suffer. People have momentarily been moved by the great suffering of these refugees, and particularly their children, but politely ignore the role that the US and other "advanced" industrial European societies have played in creating the economic and political conditions which have led to the vast increase of refugees in the past twenty years.

For the U.S., that responsibility includes both the economic devastation wrought in South and Central America, Africa and Asia by the trade agreements (championed by the Clintons and more recently by Obama) that destroyed subsistence farming and forced millions of people into the barrios and slums of the big cities where they were often forced to choose between armed opposition to ruling elites or selling their children into slavery or sexual exploitation rather than see them starve to death; and also the devastation created by the U.S. wars against Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and drone strikes in Yemen all of which gave rise to the Islamic State of Iraq & Syris (ISIS) with its brutality now spreading through populations driven crazy by the violence that the US and its allies intensified in the Middle East. So while Americans sit around looking in shock at this situation, deploring the growing xenophobia that not only is growing in Europe but which is being played to for political advantage by the Trump candidacy and other candidates for the Republic Presidential nomination, many willfully ignore the role of our own country in creating the preconditions for this growing horror show.

What a disgrace that politicians on the Right can rally support by calling for an expulsion of 11 million undocumented refugees in the U.S. (most of whom came here because it was impossible to make a living anymore in countries devastated by global capitalism and run by military elites trained in the torture and oppression that the School of Americas teaches to Central and South American militaries at Ft. Benning Georgia). It makes me want to cry, to yell, and to mourn. (Plenty of material for the days of repentance and atonement that we will be observing from September 13th to September 23rd). Warsan Shire's poem below helps that process of mourning and repentance. We will be reading her poem as part of our High Holiday service at Beyt Tikkun Synagogue Without Walls in Berkeley, Ca. (Details at [www.beyttikkun.org/hhd](http://www.beyttikkun.org/hhd).)

Rabbi Michael Lerner

*Warsan Shire is a Kenyan-born Somali poet, writer and educator based in London. Born in 1988, Warsan has read her work extensively all over Britain and internationally – including recent readings in South Africa, Italy, Germany, Canada, North America and Kenya- and her debut book, 'TEACHING MY MOTHER HOW TO GIVE BIRTH' (flipped eye), was published in 2011. Her poems have been published in Wasafiri, Magma and Poetry Review and in the anthology 'The Salt Book of Younger Poets' (Salt, 2011). She is the current poetry editor at SPOOK magazine. In 2012 she represented Somalia at the Poetry Parnassus, the festival of the world poets at the Southbank, London. She is a Complete Works II poet. Her poetry has been translated into Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Warsan is also the unanimous winner of the 2013 Inaugural Brunel University African Poetry Prize.*

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## "No One Leaves Home"

by Warsan Shire

September 2, 2015 by Alam

no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark  
you only run for the border  
when you see the whole city running as well  
your neighbors running faster than you  
breath bloody in their throats  
the boy you went to school with  
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory  
is holding a gun bigger than his body  
you only leave home  
when home won't let you stay.  
no one leaves home unless home chases you  
fire under feet  
hot blood in your belly  
it's not something you ever thought of doing  
until the blade burnt threats into  
your neck  
and even then you carried the anthem under  
your breath  
only tearing up your passport in an airport toilets  
sobbing as each mouthful of paper  
made it clear that you wouldn't be going back.  
you have to understand,  
that no one puts their children in a boat  
unless the water is safer than the land  
no one burns their palms  
under trains  
beneath carriages  
no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck  
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled  
means something more than journey.  
no one crawls under fences  
no one wants to be beaten  
pitied  
no one chooses refugee camps  
or strip searches where your  
body is left aching  
or prison,  
because prison is safer  
than a city of fire  
and one prison guard  
in the night  
is better than a truckload  
of men who look like your father  
no one could take it  
no one could stomach it  
no one skin would be tough enough  
the

go home blacks  
refugees  
dirty immigrants  
asylum seekers  
sucking our country dry  
niggers with their hands out  
they smell strange  
savage  
messed up their country and now they want  
to mess ours up  
how do the words  
the dirty looks  
roll off your backs  
maybe because the blow is softer  
than a limb torn off  
or the words are more tender  
than fourteen men between  
your legs  
or the insults are easier  
to swallow  
than rubble  
than bone  
than your child body  
in pieces.  
i want to go home,  
but home is the mouth of a shark  
home is the barrel of the gun  
and no one would leave home  
unless home chased you to the shore  
unless home told you  
to quicken your legs  
leave your clothes behind  
crawl through the desert  
wade through the oceans  
drown  
save  
be hunger  
beg  
forget pride  
your survival is more important  
no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear  
saying-  
leave,  
run away from me now  
i dont know what i've become  
but i know that anywhere  
is safer than here

# Afghan Girl, Sakina, Buries Toy Gun and Says...

By DR HAKIM, Voices for Creative Nonviolence

Ten-year-old Sakina, an Afghan street kid, had this to say, "I don't like to be in a world of war. I like to be in a world of peace."

On 27th August 2015, Sakina and Inam, with fellow Afghan street kids and the Afghan Peace Volunteers, held a mock funeral for weapons and celebrated the establishment of a green space in Kabul.

Dressed in long black coats, they broke and buried toy guns in a small spot where, over the past two years, they have been planting trees.

Sakina breaks a toy gun before burying it. Inam and other street kids await their turn.

Inam, a bright-eyed ten year old, caught the group's energetic desire to build a world without war. "I kept toy guns till about three years ago," he acknowledged with a smile.

On the same day, Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias Sanchez, ex-President of Costa Rica, was in Mexico for the Arms Trade Treaty's First Conference of States Parties.

In his statement at the Conference, he told the story of an indigenous Guatemalan woman who thanked him for negotiating a peace accord 28 years ago. The mother had said, "Thank you, Mr. President, for my child who is in the mountains fighting, and for the child I carry in my womb."

No mother, Guatemalan or Afghan, wants her children to be killed in war.

Oscar Arias Sanchez wrote: "I never met them, but those children of conflict are never far from my thoughts. They were [the peace treaty's] true authors, its reason for being."

I'm confident that the children of Afghanistan were also in his thoughts, especially since he had a brief personal connection with the Afghan Peace Volunteers in 2014, having been part of a Peace Jam video message of solidarity to the Volunteers, wearing their Borderfree Blue Scarves which symbolize that "all human beings live under the same blue sky".

I thank Mr Oscar Arias Sanchez for his important work on the Arms Trade Treaty, though I sense that an arms trade treaty isn't going to be enough.

Afghan children are dying from the use of weapons.

To survive, they need a ban against weapons. Regulations about buying and selling weapons perpetuate a trade that is killing them.

I saw Inam and other child laborers who work in Kabul's streets decisively swing hammers down on the plastic toy guns, breaking off triggers, scattering nozzles into useless pieces and symbolically breaking our adult addiction to weapons.

Children shouldn't have to pay the price for our usual business, especially business from the U.S., the largest arms seller in the world. U.S. children suffer too, with more U.S. people having died as a result of gun violence since 1968 than have died in all U.S. wars combined. U.S. weapon sellers are killing

their own people; by exporting their state-of-the-art weapons, they facilitate the killing of many others around the world.

After burying the toy guns, surrounded by the evergreen and poplar trees which they had planted, the youth shed their black coats and donned sky-blue scarves.

Another world was appearing as Sakina and Inam watched young friends plant one more evergreen sapling.

Inam knew that it hasn't been easy to create this green space in heavily fortified Kabul.

The City Municipality said they couldn't water the trees (though it is just 200 metres away from their office). The Greenery Department weren't helpful. Finally, the security guards of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission just across from the garden, offered to help, after the Volunteers had provided them with a 100-metre water hose.

Rohullah, who coordinates the environment team at the Borderfree Nonviolence Community Centre, expressed his frustration. "Once, we had to hire a private water delivery service to water the tree saplings so they wouldn't shrivel up. None of the government departments could assist."

Sighing, he added ironically, "We can't use the Kabul River tributary running just next to the Garden, as the trash-laden trickle of black, bracken water is smelly and filthy."

Meanwhile, in the rest of the country, according to figures from the National Priorities Project, a non-profit, non-partisan U.S. federal budget research group, the ongoing Afghan War is costing American taxpayers US \$4 million an hour.

It is the youth and children who are making sense today, like when Nobel Laureate Malalai Yousafzai said recently that if the whole world stopped spending money on the military for just 8 days, we could provide 12 years of free, quality education for every child on the planet.

"I don't like to work in the streets, but my family needs bread. Usually, I feel sad," Inam said, looking away, "because I feel a sort of helplessness."

Oscar Arias Sanchez said at the Arms Trade Treaty's First Conference, "And we must speak, today – in favour of this crucial treaty, and its swift and effective implementation. If we do, then when today's children of conflict look to us for guidance and leadership, we will no longer look away in shame. We will be able to tell them, at long last, that we are standing watch for them. We are on guard. Someone is finally ready to take action."

That morning, I heard the voices of Sakina, Inam and the Afghan youth ring through the street, "#Enough of war!"

Sakina breaks a toy gun

It wasn't a protest. It was the hands-on building of a green spot without weapons, and an encouraging call for others to do so everywhere.

Through their dramatic colours and clear action, they were inviting all of us, "Bury your weapons. Build your gardens." "We will stand watch for you!"

<http://vcnv.org/afghan-girl-sakina-buries-toy-gun-and-says>

After burying the toy guns, surrounded by the evergreen and poplar trees which they had planted, the youth shed their black coats and donned sky-blue scarves.

# Town Meeting: Nuclear Tests, Polluted Water & Tracy's Future

From Tri-Valley CARES

Join us for this important meeting on our water, health and the status of the "Superfund" cleanup of Livermore Lab's toxic and radioactive wastes, with a focus on pollution at Site 300.

Expert speakers will lead a discussion on actions we can take today to protect our precious resources now and into the future.

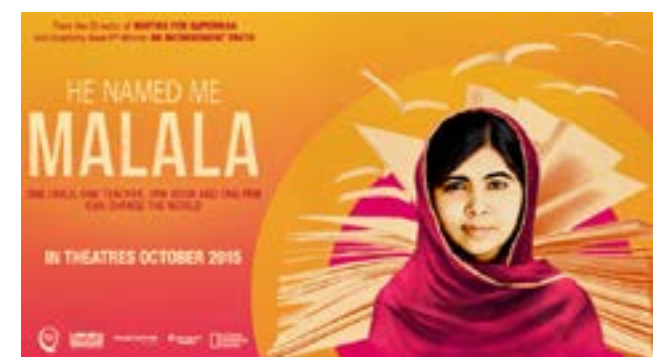
**Date:** Thursday, October 22, 2015 7 PM

**Location:** Tracy Transit Center, 50 E 6th St., Rm. 103

**More Info:** (925) 443-7148

## Malala film

from page 1



Kids. In presenting this film, The State hopes to encourage educators to send their students to see *He Named Me Malala* with a **special student admission of only \$5 with a valid student ID**. Educators may also go to <http://www.malala.org/schools/> for information about how the Malala Fund will send you and your students on a free field trip to see *He Named Me Malala*, and will also send you resources to use in your classroom.

*"If you believe in teachers' power to change the world, stand with us."* ~ Ziauddin Yousafzai, Malala's father

*"One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world."* ~ Malala

<http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/589>

## ART CLASSES FOR ADULTS AND KIDS



ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE AT  
[WWW.MISTLINGALLERY.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://WWW.MISTLINGALLERY.EVENTBRITE.COM)

1015 J Street, Modesto • (209) 529-3369  
Tues. - Fri. 11:30 - 5:00, Saturday 12-4  
Email: [class.ccaa@gmail.com](mailto:class.ccaa@gmail.com)

# Humanize, not modernize

By DAVID KRIEGER

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is now in its 33rd year of working for peace and a world free of nuclear weapons. We seek these goals for the people of today, and also for those of the future, so that they may have a healthy planet to live on and enjoy.

Science and technology have brought great benefits to humanity in the form of health care, communications, transportation and many other areas of our lives. An average person alive today lives a better and longer life than did kings and nobles of earlier times. Yet, science and technology have not been universally positive. They have also given us weapons capable of destroying civilization and most complex life on the planet, including that of our own species.

In the Nuclear Age, our technological capacity for destruction has outpaced our spiritual and moral capacity to control these destructive technologies. The Foundation is a voice for those committed to exercising conscience and choosing a decent future for all humanity.

The Foundation continues in its role as consultant to the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) in its courageous Nuclear Zero lawsuits against the nine nuclear-armed Goliaths. The Marshall Islanders, who have been victims of US nuclear testing, know the pain and suffering caused by these weapons. Their lawsuits seek not compensation, but to assure that the nuclear-armed countries fulfill their obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and customary international law to negotiate in good faith to end the nuclear arms at an early date and to achieve nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. We are proud to stand with the RMI in these lawsuits that seek an end to the nuclear weapons era.

There is no way to humanize weapons that are inhumane, immoral and illegal. These weapons must be abolished, not modernized. And yet, all nine nuclear-armed countries are

engaged in modernizing their nuclear arsenals. The US is leading the way, planning to spend more than \$1 trillion on upgrading its nuclear arsenal over the next three decades. In doing so, it is making the world more dangerous and less secure. The US could lead in humanizing rather than modernizing by reallocating its vast resources to feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, providing safe drinking water, assuring an education for the poor, as well as cleaning up the environment, shifting to renewable energy sources and repairing deteriorating infrastructure.

Join us in making the shift from modernizing nuclear arsenals to humanizing the planet.

David Krieger is President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation; [www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)



## Poem for The International Day of Peace

By DAVID KRIEGER

On this day, like any other,  
soldiers are killing and dying,  
arms merchants are selling their wares,  
missiles are aimed at your heart,  
and peace is a distant dream.

Not just for today, but for each day,  
let's sheathe our swords, save the sky  
for clouds, the oceans for mystery  
and the earth for joy.

Let's stop honoring the war makers  
and start giving medals for peace.

On this day, like any other,  
there are infinite possibilities to change  
our ways.

Peace is an apple tree heavy with fruit,  
a new way of loving the world.

*David Krieger is President of the  
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.*



Veronica Jacuinde and Haylee White pass out information at MoPride Festival in September.



Peace Camp 2015 attendees enjoy a moment of togetherness playing ukelele.



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

## ACTIONS FOR PEACE Sonora - Stockton

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

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

## OCTOBER

**2016 Peace Essay Contest** applications available at <http://stanislausconnections.org>. **Entry deadline: November 20, 2015!**

**ONGOING: Modesto Area Partners in Science,** Fridays, 7:30 pm, Sierra Hall 132, MJC West Campus; <http://maps.events.mjc.edu/>. **October 2:** "The Search for Life in the Universe." Dr. Lynn J. Rothschild, Astrobiologist, NASA Ames. NOTE: This talk will be in the MJC West Campus Mary Stuart Rogers Student Center. **October 23:** "New Insights into Human Evolution." MJC Professor Dr. Debi Bolter presents her recent work on remarkable fossils discovered at Rising Star Cave. **November 20:** "Grapes in our Lives." Dr. Peter Cousins, E. & J. Gallo Winery with a scientific analysis of the cultural connections between grapes and people. **December 4:** "Making Fuels from Sunlight, Water and Air." Dr. Frances Houle, Joint Center for Artificial Photosynthesis discusses how artificial photosynthesis can produce new fuels.

**To January 10, 2016: Alphonse Mucha: The Golden Age of Art Nouveau,** includes more than 70 original works by the artist many consider the creator of the Art Nouveau style. The exhibition drawn from the holdings of the Dhawan collection, Los Angeles, one of the largest and finest collections of Mucha's work in the United States. Carnegie Arts Center: 250 N. Broadway Turlock. (209)-632-5761. Open: Wednesday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Fridays 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. <http://www.carnegieartsturlock.org/#!muchacf6v>

**9 FRI:** Film, *He Named Me Malala* opens at State Theatre. See article, this issue. <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/589>

**10 SAT: California Native Plant Society,** North San Joaquin Valley Chapter **Native Plant Sale.** Many different plants available. Merrill F. West High School, 1775 W. Lowell Ave., Tracy. 9 am to 1 pm. 209-535-8075. <http://nsj.cnps.org>

**18 SUN: The Modesto Film Society** presents *The Wolf Man* and *An American Werewolf in London.* State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/511>

**18 SUN: Sunday Afternoons at CBS** presents Jewish Jammin'. Rabbi Shalom, CBS's spiritual leader, puts on his musician hat and invites you to an afternoon of traditional modern Jewish music, original songs, and music from his influences, including Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, and

the Grateful Dead. Joining him will be Rom Rosenblum—a fine musician, sound tech to the stars, and a group of talented friends. This afternoon puts the "F U N" in fun. 3 pm 1705 Sherwood Ave., Modesto. Tickets: All 6 concerts for just \$75/ Adults, \$65/Seniors & Students. Single Tickets: \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors & Students; \$7 children. Call (209) 571-6060. <http://sundaysatcbs.com/>

**21 WED: Film Night at the Center** presents John Sayles' *Matewan.* Discussion after. 6:30 pm, Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. See article, this issue.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**January 12, 2016: Annual John McCutcheon Concert.**

**January 23, 2016: 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration.** Speaker: historian Taylor Branch.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

### SUNDAYS

**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.

**LifeRing Secular Recovery:** Sunday 10:00 am, Kaiser CDRP, 1789 W Yosemite Ave, Manteca. LifeRing Secular Recovery: Support group for people who choose to live free of alcohol and other addictive substances. We avoid discussion of politics and religion in our meetings so each person can focus on building their personal sobriety recovery plan. (209) 591-8741, [www.liferingmodesto.org](http://www.liferingmodesto.org)

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

### MONDAYS

**Walk With Me,** a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email [WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com](mailto:WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com) or call 209.577.1604.

### TUESDAYS

**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.

**LifeRing Secular Recovery.** Tuesday 6:30 pm, Jana Lynn Room, 500 N 9th St, Modesto. 591-8741.

**Ukulele class/play-a-long** led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m. Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. [www.funstrummers.com](http://www.funstrummers.com)

**Weekly mindfulness meditation** and dharma talk, 6:30-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori for more information at 209-343-2748 or see <http://imcv.org/>  
**Adult Children Of Alcoholics,** Every Tuesday, 7 pm at 1320 L St., (Christ Unity Baptist Church). Info: Jeff, 527-2469.

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS:** held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), (NOTE TIME), 4:30-5:30 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

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

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

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

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

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

### WEDNESDAYS

**Unity Tai Ji Qi Gong (A Journey Within)** - First United Methodist Church Multipurpose Rm - 6 pm - Wednesdays - freewill offering. Michele, 209 602-3162.

**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/>

**LifeRing Secular Recovery.** Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. , Center for Human Services Building, 1700 McHenry Way, Room 12 Modesto.

**Modesto Folk Dancers:** All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 480-0387.

**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](mailto:info@stanpride.org) , or [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgsupport@stanpride.org)

**Mindful Meditation:** Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha. 7 - 9 pm. Info: Stan, 549-7770, [stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com](mailto:stanhopecunningham@yahoo.com) , or Anne, 521-6977.

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

### THURSDAYS

**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)

**Third Thursday Art Walk,** Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-9 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>

**Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery** from Addiction Insight Meditation Central Valley. Jana Lynn Community Rm., 500 N. 9th St., Modesto. Thursdays 6:30-8 pm. FREE (donations accepted). Info: email [RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com](mailto:RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com)

**Latino Community Roundtable (LCR)** meets on the second Thursday of each month at Noon at Bel Piatto Italian Cucina, 1000 Kansas Ave., Modesto, CA. Info: call Maggie Mejia, (209) 303-2664, <http://lcrstan.org>

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: [mzjurkovic@gmail.com](mailto:mzjurkovic@gmail.com)

**The Compassionate Friends,** Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter. 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact: Joanna Rose-Murray, 209-484-8276, [jrmcompassionate@gmail.com](mailto:jrmcompassionate@gmail.com), <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.org>

**NAACP.** King-Kennedy Center, 601 S M.L. King Dr., Modesto, 7 pm, 3rd Thursdays. 549-1991.

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

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

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

### FRIDAYS

**Funstrummer Ukulele Band** every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 505-3216; [www.funstrummers.com](http://www.funstrummers.com)

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

**Village Dancers:** Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7:30-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

**Sierra Club:** Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 549-9155. 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:** 1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Other meetings at Terrace Cafe, Double Tree Hotel. Info: Yamilet Valladolid, 523-2860.

### SATURDAY

**Citizens' Climate Lobby,** Modesto Chapter, meets every second Saturday, 10:30 a.m., 937 Oxford Way, Modesto. Questions: Call Kathy, 523-5907.

**So Easy ~ So Good:** Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabee Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of the month, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM. Info: Kathy Haynes, 209-250-9961; email [kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com](mailto:kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com)

**SERRV:** Saturdays, 10 - Noon and after church Sundays or by appointment. Call Mary, 522-6497 or 523-5178. Gifts from developing countries. Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland, Rm. #4, Modesto.

**For complete calendar information and regularly scheduled activities, visit <http://www.stanislausconnections.org/calendar.htm>**

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